

Augusta, Georgia and North Augusta, South Carolina Urban Area

# 2009 Master Plan for a sustainable future

## Part 2: Final Report

February 4, 2009



## Acknowledgements

This plan is prepared for Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., Dennis C. Skelley, President, and the Cities of Augusta, Georgia and North Augusta, South Carolina. The work is supervised by Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., who has provided policy direction for this Plan. This is largely done through its Master Plan Oversight Task Force, who has reviewed and commented upon the work in progress. Chaired by Braye C. Boardman, advisory members include the following:

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The opinions, findings and conclusions of this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. the City of Augusta or the City of North Augusta.



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# Preface

*The Augusta region and the encompassing counties and communities in both Georgia and South Carolina, are at a crossroads. Not since the early days of the 1840s, when city leaders decided to make this area into a major manufacturing center, the “Lowell of the South,” has the potential for a dramatic repositioning of the region been as high as it is today. National trends are taking the nation in new directions and this five-county region has the assets and attributes to be in the vanguard of that movement. This series of documents lay out a Master Plan for perhaps the most important of these, the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area.*

Augusta and North Augusta, its sister across the river, have all the ingredients with which to build a sustainable regional urban setting which is unique in the country. It has a rich history, from the pre-Columbian era into the cutting edge twenty-first century, with many a compelling story and a host of historic settings in which to tell them. The golf and equestrian traditions of the region give it international sports prominence, and its rowing regattas and ball sport competitions attract national participants. Its opera, symphony, theater companies and museum collections are unmatched by cities of much larger size. It has one of the preeminent fine arts public education programs in the nation. The mild climate and its immediate accessibility to nature and water soothe the soul. Its citizens are diverse, energetic, well-traveled and well-educated. It is a major center for the health sciences and has Fort Gordon, the Savannah River Site and other

cutting-edge research/high-tech institutions and businesses nearby. Key leaders build their lives in this community when they easily could seek fortune elsewhere. Newcomers want to stay.

... there's magic here.

Thanks to its natural and cultural resources and the inspiring work of its citizens, past and present, this Urban Area is at a very pivotal place today. The shared vision of this master plan is to realize a dynamic and sustainable Urban Area, here at this spot on the Georgia/South Carolina line, spanning and incorporating its river, harnessing its untapped potential and the energy in the air, and then building on the best that both shores have to offer.





## **The Westobou Vision**

*The name given the Urban Area for purposes of this report and for the encouragement of this on-going process is “The Westobou Vision,” hereafter referred to in these reports as Westobou or the Westobou Urban Area. The name Westobou is a Native American name for the Savannah River. This phrase is used to represent Augusta and North Augusta’s “shared vision” for the area that encourages a spirit of collaboration and cooperation across this river, devoid of political, special interest or proprietary boundaries.*



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# **1. Introduction**



# 1.1 Purpose of this Plan



*A view of Augusta and North Augusta's Urban Area*

***The overarching goal of this plan is to develop and realize a shared vision, for both Augusta and North Augusta, of what this location, the urban heart of a five county region, can become and what it can provide for all the residents of the region, whether they want to enjoy it as a place to work, live or play.***

A major objective is to establish this Urban Area as a unique and special place. To this end, it must be economically healthy, safe, vibrant and a place where “people want to be and to be seen.”

The Plan must preserve and enhance the area’s natural environments, its heritage and its history. The plan will build upon and develop its cultural and recreational attributes, as well as the energy and activity of its current citizenry. It will create an urban oasis of accessible open space that link key destination venues. It will be built upon sound practices in sustainable, environmentally-sensitive planning and design.

The Plan follows a “Best Practices” approach to setting future directions. While promoting the Urban Area, the Plan will work in the best interests of the entire community, within this area and in the larger region.

It is the intent of this master plan to guide both long range and more immediate decision-making and actions within the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area for the next two decades. To this end the study looks at what the area could become if all parties took a ‘fresh eyes’ look at this area identifying both the unique attributes and also key factors that are preventing the city from reaching its full potential.

The study was also charged with finding common themes upon which the Urban Area could build and could identify itself across both state and municipal lines. As an initial step, a logo was designed that emphasizes the oneness of this place, but with the added benefit of the Savannah River, which runs through it. “A shared vision” became the tag line for the study phase. This search for common ground and points of future collaboration became one of the principal objectives on this work. The Native American word for the Savannah river is Westobou, and this word is used in this report in an attempt to capture the spirit of this area and of this plan.



## 1.2 Process

### The Study's Point of Departure



*A view down the Savannah River of both North Augusta, SC and Augusta, GA*

In early 2008, Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., working in collaboration with the City of Augusta and the City of North Augusta, launched this master planning effort to update and to build upon prior planning work done over the past two decades. This plan was charged with building upon the successes of those planning efforts, and the directions set thus far, as well as to develop new ideas to realize a stronger Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area over the coming decades.

The plan is designed to be inclusive and recognizes that the Urban Area is part of a greater whole, i.e. the entire five county region, spanning state lines with three counties in Georgia and two in South Carolina. To this end the plan seeks to develop links and gateway corridors, both physical and programmatic, into the reaches of these counties, from Aiken and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, to South Augusta and Fort Gordon in the south of Richmond County. The plan also recognizes the special relationship between the two cities' urban cores and seeks ways to build on the best that both have to offer to realize a stronger urban area for the region.

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## Planning Approach

The planning process began with meetings of the Augusta Tomorrow Master Plan Advisory Group to finalize the overall goals, schedule and products of this effort. It was agreed that the plan be built around both the area's existing assets and attributes, i.e. natural, historic, social and cultural, plus the accumulated success of the combined efforts of the two communities over the past two decades. The planning team was specifically charged with identifying and conceptualizing new projects that would reinforce what exists, but also set new directions for this area over the next twenty years.

A core component of the plan approach is to use these attributes and recent efforts as a platform for creating a set of program initiatives and projects which can act as a catalyst to create whole new markets for the area. This "Market Creation" approach lies at the heart of this Master Plan.

The planning effort was organized around three major tasks:

### Task 1- Data Collection

The initial task was to collect and review data, which led to a series of initial findings. These were set forth in a detailed Findings Report which was submitted

to the Advisory Committee in August 2008. Data sources included prior reports, field observations, census information, public workshops and individual interviews over a five-month period.

### Task 2- Synthesis of Findings

As information was collected, the team and the client were involved in on-going synthesis and analysis, such that the Findings Report was able to identify a wide range of issues and opportunities, at the urban area and the regional level, upon which this Final Master Plan is built. The Findings Report, which incorporated both Task 1 and 2 efforts, included the broad outline of the more specific recommendations contained within the body of the Master Plan as laid out in this final report.

### Task 3- Final Master Plan

With the Advisory Committee's approval of directions set forth in the Findings Report and subsequent meetings and discussions, an initial draft of major recommendations and proposed projects was presented to the committee in September of 2008. After follow-up meetings and discussions, a progress draft document was presented in December, with review and comment in early January and a final presentation in early February of 2009.

## Community Outreach

One key factor in the ability to secure useful information and direction, for both the Findings Report and the final Master Plan is the extensive amount of public input and support the effort has achieved over the course of this work. In addition to the five public workshops held in both cities, the planning team met with more than 100 persons individually, as well as additional group sessions with downtown business owners, interested members of Beulah Grove Baptist Church, East of East Boundary residents, and the Harrisburg community.

As recommendations were developed, the master planning team organized a series of "stakeholder briefings" in Augusta in October to brief interested parties on the details of specific recommendations for each of the districts identified in the Urban Area. Several afternoon drop-in sessions allowed Augusta Commissioners, North Augusta City Councilpersons and members of the Georgia state delegation to discuss the plan.



## Setting the Study Boundary

Ultimately, the essence of this Master Plan is a series of interconnected, integrated projects and initiatives, each with its own stakeholders and potential “Champions.” Taken together, these can bring about a dramatic transformation of this Urban Area (See Figure 1: The Urban Area Boundary).

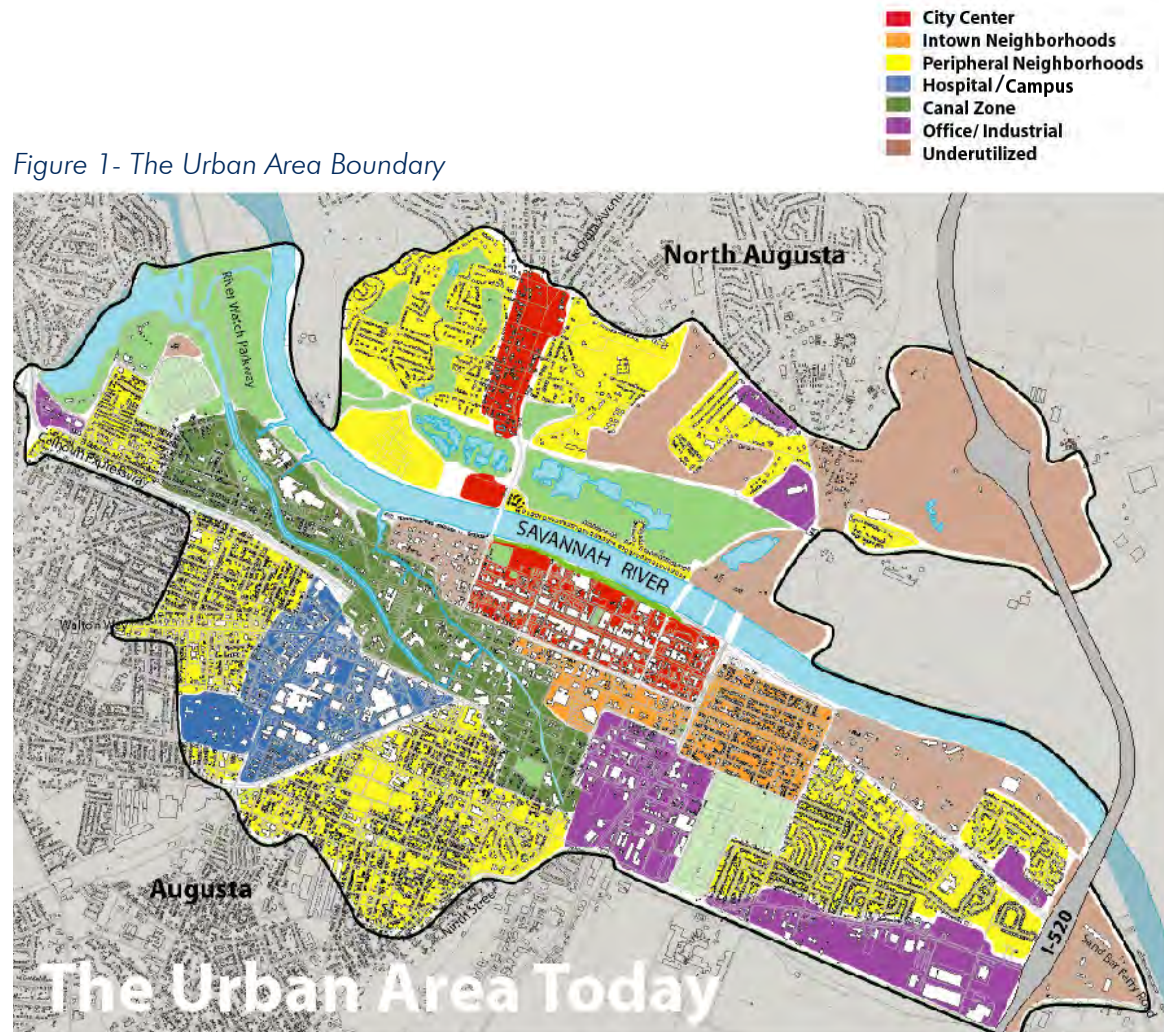
Working with city officials and the client, the working limit for this study was established to include the traditional downtowns of North Augusta (Georgia Avenue and West Street) and of Augusta, (Savannah River to Laney Walker and 5th to 13th Street).

The Urban Area was expanded to include the surrounding neighborhoods of Olde Towne (Pinch Gut)/East of East Boundary, portions of Bethlehem, and Harrisburg to Lake Olmstead. The medical and St. Sebastian areas were included as well.

In North Augusta, the area encompasses the original North Augusta neighborhood, Buena Vista, Hammond’s Ferry, the River View neighborhood, the original site of Hamburg, as well as the US 1/I-520 interchange corridor.

While the Urban Area boundary is elastic, its limits are set by what is judged to be a practical area of influence around the respective city cores.

Figure 1- The Urban Area Boundary



## 1.3 Organization of this Report

**T**he bulk of this Master Plan document focuses on specific projects, organized around a tour of each of the districts comprising the Westobou Urban Area. The Appendices, a separate document, offers ready reference to more detailed information and assumptions, which underlie these recommendations. The Plan is fully described in the following sections:

### 1. Introduction

Sets forth the Goals and Objectives of this Master Plan, the planning process, including the overall approach, as well as community outreach efforts, and the organization of this report.

### 2. Context for the Plan

Includes a brief review of prior and ongoing planning efforts, the history of the area, and critical issues and opportunities affecting the Urban Area at national, regional and local levels with an emphasis on the assets and attributes, which provide the foundation for the Master Plan.

### 3. The Idea of Westobou

This section introduces the word ‘Westobou’ as a unifying and branding name for the Urban Area and its surrounding community, sets forth three main themes for the area, and identifies action districts within the Urban Area.

### 4. Westobou- North Augusta Districts

Identifies three action districts in North Augusta, describes each and outlines elements of an action plan for each, including two potential Market Creation Projects on this side of the river.

### 5. Westobou- Augusta Districts

Identifies six action districts in Augusta, describes each and outlines elements of an action plan for each, including seven potential Market Creation Projects in this city.

### 6. Other Worthy Projects and Initiatives

While specific actions are called for in each district, the Plan has identified a number of broader area-wide and region-wide projects and initiatives which support this Plan and are essential to achieving its goals.

### 7. Conclusion

The separate document, **Part 3: Appendices**, provides a more detailed description of each of the nine Market Creation Projects identified in this report.





## **2. Context for the Plan**



## 2.1 Prior and On-going Planning Activities

*This Master Plan is built from several points of view, including an understanding of:*

- *prior and ongoing planning efforts*
- *the history of the Urban Area*
- *the state, regional and local geopolitical scenes*

*The broader geopolitical scenes provide the framework for key initiatives and recommendations which are set forth in Section 6 of this report.*

**T**his master planning effort is a continuation of a process begun more than twenty years ago by Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., which focused initially on the Augusta riverfront and levee area. This Plan and subsequent updates identified a number of specific projects within downtown Augusta, the bulk of which have been accomplished.

In the interim, other initiatives have moved forward on their own, including new housing development in Laney Walker and Bethlehem, significant growth in the health sciences sector, and the creation of the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area. Private development has focused on historic building reuse, primarily along Broad and Greene Streets, and in major former mill complexes, i.e. the Enterprise and Sutherland Mills along the new St. Sebastian Way extension.

Over this period, in North Augusta, plans were developed for its riverfront and Georgia Avenue, successfully using TIF funding and setting forth design guidelines for future development. To date successful projects have included Hammond's Ferry, a new municipal complex, streetscape improvements and new commercial development at the corner of Georgia Avenue and West Buena Vista Avenue. The city has also developed a comprehensive Greenway system.

The City of Augusta has an active Downtown Development Authority, and a new Business Improvement District (BID). Programs they are involved with include streetscaping and assisting the funding of new development.

A number of important transportation improvements are in planning or construction in both communities, including St. Sebastian Way in Augusta and East Buena Vista Avenue and US 1 in North Augusta. The comprehensive plan for Augusta has recently been completed, as have neighborhood plans for Laney Walker and Bethlehem, and a 2003 ARTS sponsored plan for an area-wide bicycle/pedestrian trail system.

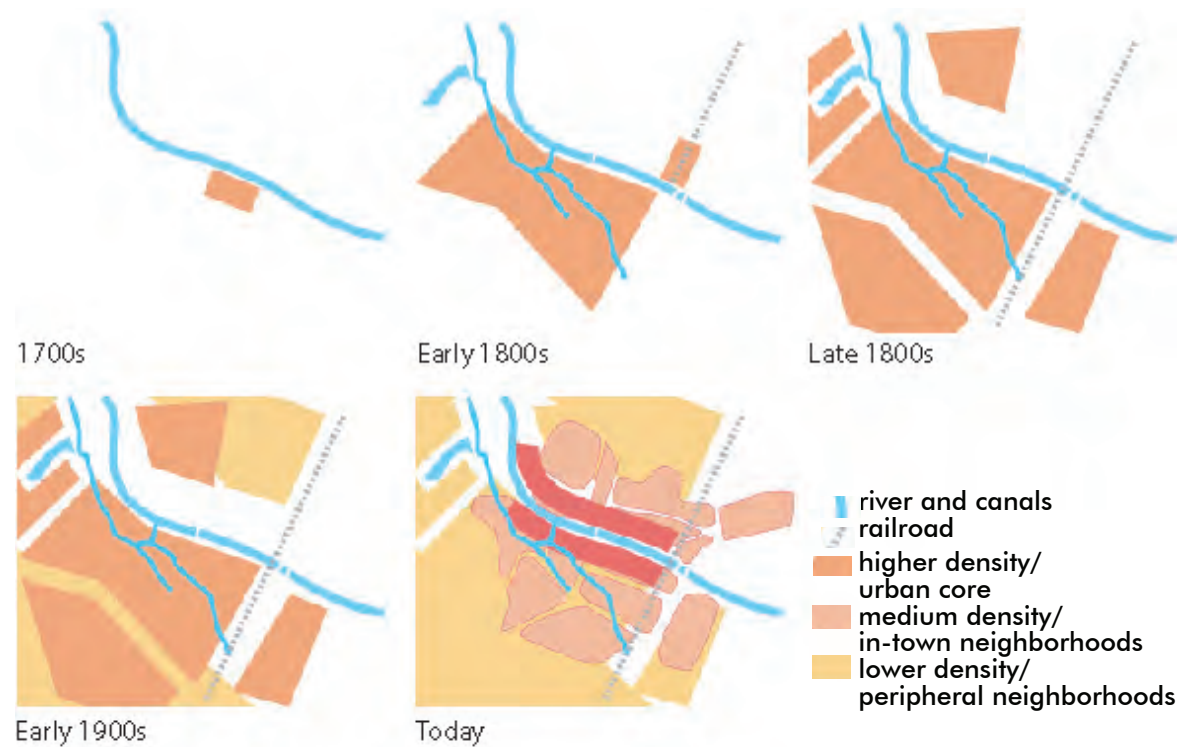




## 2.2 History as a Guide

The history of both Augusta and North Augusta has been not only one of typical growth and evolution, but also of wholesale reinvention. It is within the context of this framework that, with this master planning effort, the two cities can step back and re-examine where they each are and how they got here, explore the full potential of the Urban Area, and determine how they might begin to work together to realize these new directions.

Figure 2: General Development Pattern





## Augusta

Founded in 1736 on the banks of the Savannah River as an Indian trading post, Augusta was named in honor of the Princess of Wales. It is Georgia's second oldest and largest city.

In the past two and a half centuries, the city has served as a colonial military outpost, an Indian trading town and a Revolutionary War battle site. It was the state's eighteenth century tobacco trading center, and served as the capital of Georgia after the Revolution.

In the nineteenth century, it became a major cotton market, an important Southern manufacturing center and the site of the Confederate Powder Works. Its suburban areas served as summer resorts for Southerners, and later, winter resorts for Northerners.

In 1996, the governments of the City of Augusta and Richmond County combined to form a single governing body of Augusta-Richmond County, today known simply as "Augusta, Georgia."

Today, the city is best known for its state-of-the-art medical facilities and as the home of the US Army's Fort Gordon and the world's premiere golfing event, 'The Masters,' at the Augusta National Golf Club.

## North Augusta

On the South Carolina side of the river, the town of Hamburg was established directly across from Augusta in the early 1800s. As an early railroad head, it was designed to siphon this frontier region's trade from Savannah toward Charleston. Frequent floods made the original low-lying site non-sustainable, leading the North Augusta Land Development Company to establish the planned city of North Augusta upstream from Hamburg on the bluff, well above the river floods. The city has since flourished as a bedroom community to Augusta.

While urban sprawl remains an issue, within the past twenty years, North Augusta has reinforced its downtown character and recognized the opportunity of its long undeveloped riverfront. With new flood protection controls in upriver dams and impoundment areas, land which was originally deemed flood plain has been approved for development. Within a long range plan to insure a greenway network and public access to the river, private development has been encouraged, including three waterfront development projects, an innovative and environmentally sensitive 'traditional neighborhood development,' and a public/private golf course.



## 2.3 Image of the Area within the Southeast

Figure 3: In the Southeast



**A**ugusta is the second largest city in Georgia, but is not quite as familiar to the general public as similar sized cities in the south, such as Savannah, GA, Greenville, SC, Chattanooga, TN, or even college towns such as Athens, GA.

She lies along the “Fall Line” that marks the end point of navigable water of the Savannah River, in rolling country between the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the north and the coastal lowlands to the south.

The Urban Area spans the Savannah River and, as seen in Figure 3: In the Southeast, falls both in Georgia and South Carolina. Originally, on the north-south main roadway, US 1, the new interstate system does not serve her well in the north/south direction.

### **What’s in a name?**

Augusta is a name with world-wide recognition due to its being the home of the Augusta National Golf Club, where the annual Masters Tournament, one of golf’s premier events, is held. This association gives the region a very positive image on which to build.



*“Amen Corner” at the Masters Tournament*

Figure 4: In the Region



## Assets and Attributes

### Connections

As seen in Figure 4: In the Region, Augusta and North Augusta lie directly along I-20, approximately halfway between the two state capitals of Atlanta, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina making it an easy drive to and from either. Geographically, it is located within the general migration corridor for people fleeing northern winters for the warmth of the South, despite not being along a major travel route. A major highway improvement is underway between Augusta and Savannah.

### The River

The Savannah River is one of the largest in the South, running from the mountains to the sea, in a continuous stream of natural environments, punctuated by an important regional system of dams and lakes that provide a host of unique recreational opportunities.

### The Historic Scene

Both cities have historic pasts that tell important lessons and have contributed to the development of the South, from Augusta's founding in 1736, by James Oglethorpe, to the coming of the railroads and the birth of the Industrial South. With the establishment of the area as a center for medical excellence, the build up of the Savannah River Site and US Army Signal Corps at Fort Gordon, Augusta has had an important story.

### A Well-known Sports Venue

This area has a well developed system of sports facilities and programs including southeastern basketball and baseball tournaments, national rowing regattas, speed boat racing and two major national equestrian events.

### A Recognized Arts Scene

The area is recognized as offering a very important collection of Southern Art at the Morris Museum and a variety of performing arts programs, including the highly regarded Augusta Symphony, Augusta Opera, Augusta Ballet, and various theater companies. It is also the home of the emerging annual Westobou Arts Festival, celebrating excellence in the arts.





*A view looking eastward along the Riverwatch Parkway*

### Regional Obstacles and Challenges

#### Competition from Similar-sized Cities

This region has not yet won its mega manufacturing plant, as have several other cities in the Southeast, though both the land and the labor resources are here. While it has its history and its various cultural and recreational activities, it has yet to compete with Savannah or Charleston, though it certainly could.

#### Lack of a Good North-South Connection

A good north-south multi-lane highway has yet to connect the region to key centers to the north or south. US 1, which passes through the Urban Area was once the main national highway, connecting the northeast to Florida. However, the construction of I-95 to the east and other interstates further west has taken this area off major north/south national corridors. Part of this will be remedied with the completion of the I-520 connection to I-20 and the construction of the four-lane Savannah River Parkway. However, Augusta still needs a true North/South roadway directly to Savannah such as the proposed Route 3.

#### Problematic Airport Access

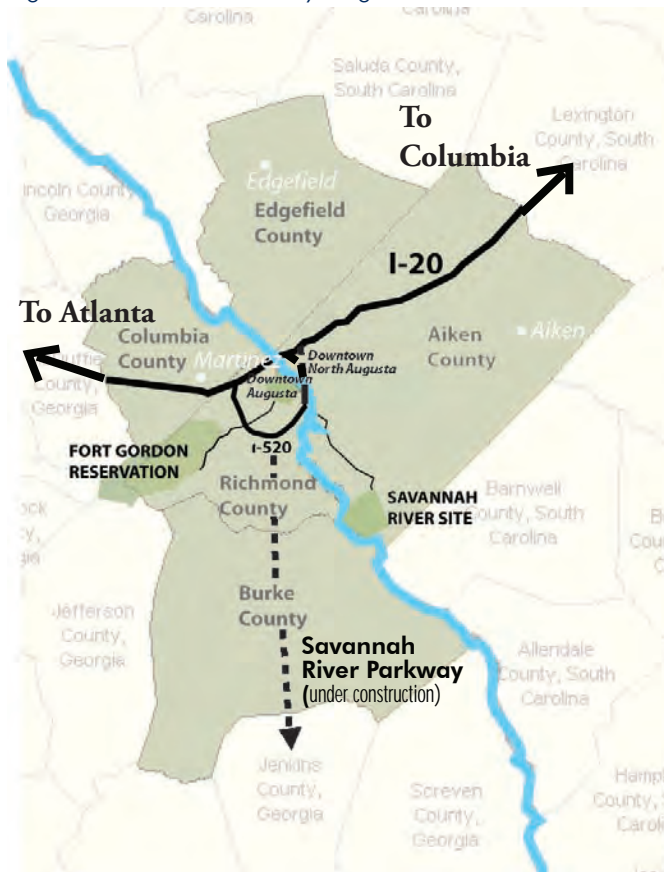
This area lies between two larger airports, in Atlanta and in Columbia, both of which have limited connecting routes into the Augusta Regional Airport. Disruption of these routes could have a dramatic impact on the area's growth potential.

From the point of view of growth, this 'in-between' capitals status may be seen as a negative, particularly in that both capitals have large and growing airports. On the other hand, if its features and amenities are properly developed and promoted, it can be seen as an accessible 'get-a-way' or retirement destination alternative to these larger urban centers.



## 2.4 The Five-County Region

Figure 5: The Five-County Region



**A**ugusta and North Augusta lie on either side of the Savannah River, just south of Interstate I-20 approximately midway between two state capitals, Atlanta, GA and Columbia, SC. The five-county, Augusta regional economy is growing. Jobs are moving into the region at large. The urban area includes the home of the Medical College of Georgia, and a number of major hospitals and related health care facilities, which together provide a significant economic engine for the area. A growing number of private industry jobs have been created over the past few years, and there is major growth at Fort Gordon and within all sectors of the health sciences industry.





*A view eastward down the Savannah River*

### **Regional Assets and Attributes**

#### **Fort Gordon, The Savannah River Site, and The Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy at Phinizy Swamp**

The US Army brings a lot of smart and professional personnel and contractors into Augusta through their programs at Fort Gordon. Similarly, people assigned to the nuclear research facilities at the Savannah River Site and the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy at Phinizy Swamp enrich the culture and the capability of the area. In combination with the Medical College of Georgia and other potential new or extension campuses, they can together form the backbone for the development of an innovative technologies learning and applications industry in the region.

#### **The Savannah River and the Augusta Canal**

From Stallings Island, the dam, head-gates and backwater to the north and the Savannah River Bluff and dam to the south, the Savannah River is the single major natural feature of this region. Properly managed, it will continue to be a cornerstone of the region. Its banks and waterways extend the experience and the idea of ‘accessible urban wilderness’ for miles up and downstream. The historic Augusta canal system reinforces that experience and potential, bringing water and waterfront deep into the downtown.

#### **A Mild Climate**

Augusta and North Augusta are situated in a part of the country blessed with four distinct seasons within an overall mild climate. Given its upland location and its other various attributes, this makes the area attractive to ‘northerners’ seeking a milder setting, closer to their northern base of family and friends.

#### **Affiliation with the “Masters”**

As stated previously, Augusta is synonymous with the Masters Golf Tournament’s positive name and reputation. Ways should be found to work together to the mutual benefit of both.

#### **A Good Regional Airport**

While there are larger facilities in Atlanta and Columbia, Augusta Regional Airport is an attractive and well-performing facility near the Urban Area. Having an airport of this quality is a definite plus in attracting new business to the city. Assuming demand is high and stable, there will be little problem in extending services and expanding the flight schedule.





*The Gordon Highway Bridge over Sand Bar Ferry Road*

## Obstacles and Challenges

Suburban sprawl is a problem not only for the health of the Urban Area, but also for the protection of the inherent natural and rural landscape quality that gives this region such a special character. At the regional level, perhaps the greatest challenge for the Urban Area is to attract persons now living in the suburban sectors to come back downtown to live, work and/or play.

### Economic Competition within the Region

The Plan must insure that regional growth and sprawl do not continue to suck the oxygen out of the air for the Urban Area. Competition within the region includes Aiken, SC and Martinez, GA, as well as a number of suburban malls and ‘big box’ developments both in Richmond County and parts of North Augusta. This trend away from the core has developed over the past 50 years, as retail activities have tended to chase population growth as it has spread outward and westward.

### The lack of Coordinated Growth Management Planning

There is a great need for a region-wide, comprehensive, strategic plan, perhaps following guidelines established by the Congress of New Urbanism. Such a plan should study growth at a number of levels and densities throughout the region. This is particularly true for Augusta-Richmond County.

### Unattractive Linkages

Just as the Urban Area would benefit from strong, navigable and attractive gateway corridors to and from the outlying communities, these more suburban communities profit from easy access to the Urban Area. Development along these gateway corridors would also profit from such attention to the line of travel, particularly in Augusta. The Gordon Highway, Washington Road/Broad Street (West) and Sand Bar Ferry Road, Wheeler Road/Walton Way (at the foot of “the Hill”) in Augusta are just a few of several which should be addressed.





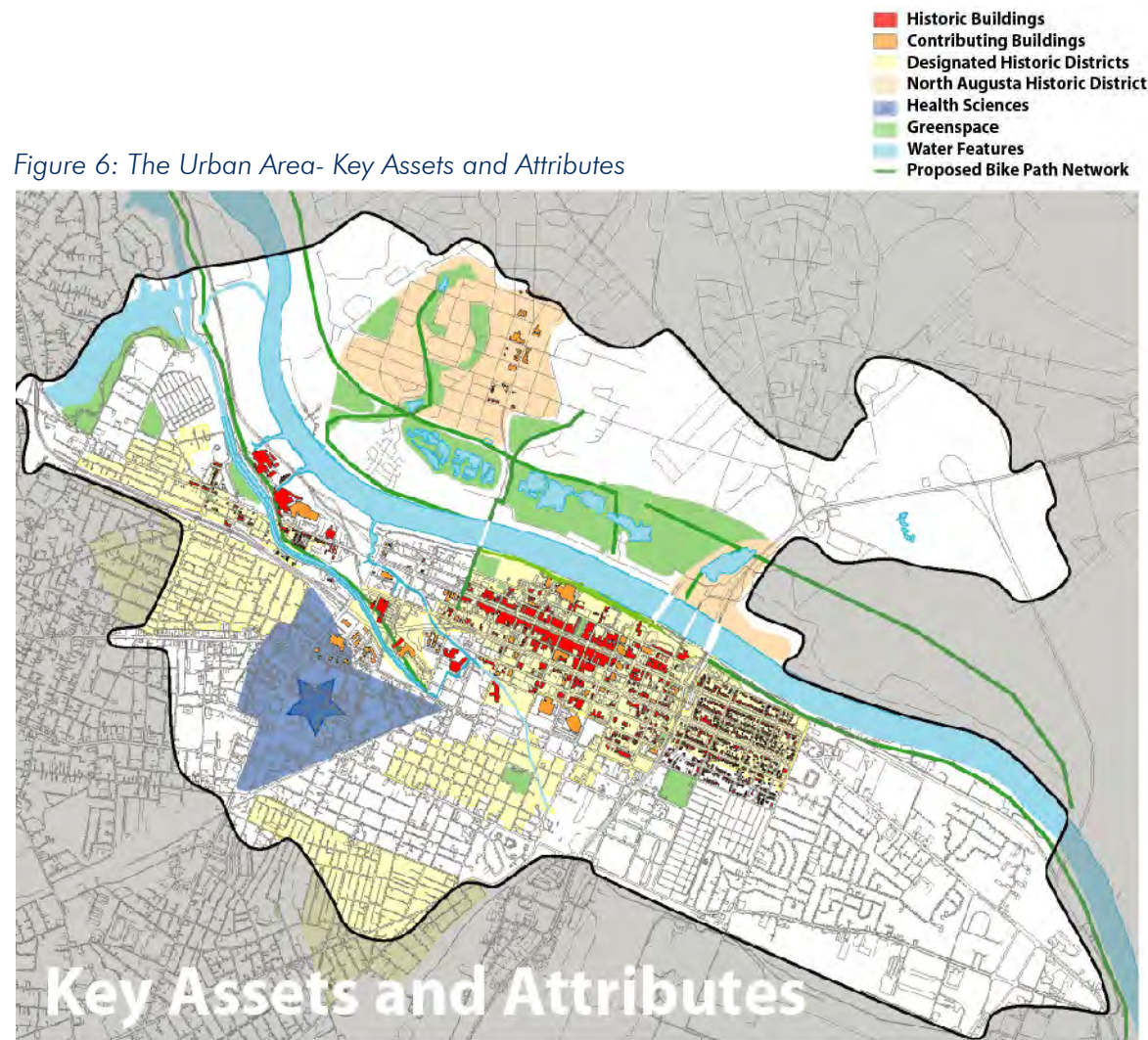
## 2.5 The Urban Area



*An early etching of Broad Street*

As stated earlier, the Urban Area lies within a unique physical setting, on a majestic river with cascades and falls a few miles to the north, Lake Olmstead to the west, the Phinizy Swamp to the east, and peppered all round with shallow ponds, remnants of brick clay mining. The historic Augusta canal system, a much underutilized wonder of the nineteenth century industrial era that transformed the town into a city, commands a prominent place within the Urban Area and connects the city to the natural beauty of the Savannah River environment. North Augusta in particular has abundant recreation facilities, greenways and forested swales reaching from high on the bluff down to the river.

## 2.5 The Urban Area



### The Urban Area's Assets and Attributes

There are a number of positive issues and opportunities, both physical and programmatic, upon which the Master Plan will focus. These serve as our key building blocks:

#### The Savannah River, Canals and Ponds

First and foremost, these two cities share a dramatic stretch of the river and the river is the source of their being here in the first place. Water is an essential aspect of the Urban Area and offers more potential for framing new directions than most urban centers. The new Savannah Bluff lock and dam, a few miles downstream, provides a calm basin for a host of river activities, enjoyed by both communities. Brick ponds and Hamburg's borrow ponds offer their own water uses.

#### Health Sciences Urban Economic Engine

Unto itself, the medical area is the largest employer in the region. If properly coordinated internally and if affiliated with other science/technology programs in the area, it can be a catalyst for much more economic growth in the Urban Area. This health sciences resource can also become a major catalyst for development of the Urban Area as a very significant retirement venue.

### Broad Street

Laid out by Oglethorpe initially as both a thoroughfare and public space, at 165 feet wide, Broad Street is one of the widest main streets in America. The proportions of this street offer the opportunity to think of it as a true urban place, not only for cars, but for a myriad of uses and activities, with its character changing as one travels its one mile plus length.

### Augusta's Urban Grid and North Augusta's Georgia Avenue

The downtown grid, extending from East Boundary to 13th Street and from the river back to beyond Telfair Street, defines Augusta as a city. Georgia Avenue with its formal, 'main street' layout with the new Municipal Center at one end and the historic Lookaway Hall at the other, gives North Augusta the basic framework for developing a classic southern town center.

### Significant Historic Fabric (Buildings)

Both Augusta and North Augusta are blessed with significant historic structures. In North Augusta, Lookaway Hall commands the top of Georgia Avenue, surrounded by other historic nineteenth century residences. In Augusta, Broad Street is largely intact, as are the Old Towne (Pinch Gut), Greene Street/Telfair Street and Harrisburg

neighborhoods. There are many contributing buildings, such as churches, industrial buildings and residences, scattered throughout the Urban Area.

### Support for Arts and Culture

There is a genuine arts scene within the Urban Area. There are active opera, ballet, theater and symphony companies in Augusta. There are also a number of vocal groups and chorales in the area. The John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School has received significant state and national recognition in the past and is a major part of Augusta's art and culture scene today.

Both Paine College and Augusta State University have strong music programs. Fairs and festivals are common in both communities. A new major festival, Westobou, modeled on Charleston's Spoleto, successfully kicked-off last year. There are a number of existing theaters and other venues for these activities and there is energy and enthusiasm to build new facilities that will better develop and showcase this aspect of the Urban Area.

There are a number of local museums, and open historic homes. Both the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area Interpretive Center and the accompanying canal boat tours present the area's industrial heritage in interactive ways. The National

Science Center's Fort Discovery offers kids exciting ways to learn about science and technology. Plans are afoot to expand the Augusta Museum of History and to create a new history museum in North Augusta.

Perhaps most importantly nationally, Augusta is home to the Morris Museum of Art, which has one of the most significant collections of the work of southern artists to be found anywhere.

### A Strong Sports Scene

Foremost, Augusta has its golf mystique, given its association with the Masters Tournament and the Augusta National Golf Course. Its year-round mild climate has attracted other outdoor activities and events, in addition to exploration of its nearby natural areas, particularly accessible via the river way and the canal system.

North Augusta has become a sports tournament destination for the Southeast. Augusta regularly hosts the Georgia Games. Nationally significant rowing regattas and power boat races take place regularly on the river. Augusta has a minor league baseball team. Both the James Brown Arena and the Hippodrome in North Augusta host important equestrian events. Augusta has become a national center for Disc Golf, an increasingly popular young sport.





## 2.5 The Urban Area



*Summer night at the GreenJackets stadium*



*Rowing crew on the Savannah River*

### Greenways and Open Space

North Augusta has an extensive Greenway system and a number of natural corridors, spilling down to the river. Augusta's bikeway system is growing and includes the Augusta canal greenway system. The River Walk and levee provide easy access along the Savannah River's edge. Opportunities can be found to expand a network of connected recreational and park nodes that provide the full range of open space needs within the Urban Area.

### Business Friendly Governments

Both Augusta and North Augusta have active programs to promote development of new manufacturing sectors in close proximity to the Urban Area.

## The Urban Area's Obstacles and Challenges

While both cities have much that is positive, both have problems in the existing built environment, including:

### Deteriorating Urban Fabric

While there is effort to reverse the trend, time and shifting economic conditions over the past half century have taken their toll on the built environment of both cities. This is manifested in several ways:

**Dilapidated and abandoned buildings** exist throughout the Urban Area in both North Augusta and Augusta with many structures are in disrepair, having been either poorly maintained or having had non-contributing additions added to them over the years.

**Vacant parcels**, either abandoned, or under-utilized or with poorly sited open parking lots and storage yards, are found throughout the Urban Area.

**'Suburban' style replacement structures** were interjected into the cities' respective downtown areas, following the decline and removal of urban buildings. They were often structures and uses typically found outside the downtown center, including typical 'strip commercial' structures, such as gas stations, repair facilities, drive-thru banks, fast food and other buildings usually surrounded by surface lot parking.





*Vacant and deteriorating housing*



*Dilapidated house with overgrown yard bordering Dyess Park*

### Obsolete Housing Inventory

In some parts of the Urban Area, there are residential buildings which have outlived their original purpose, including those which are:

- Too small and poorly laid out to meet today's market demands
- Too large for their lots, preventing adequate outdoor play/gardening space
- Non-code compliant and too costly to bring into compliance

To the extent that some of these structures are historic properties, they should be renovated and occupied by new uses to the extent possible.

### Problematic Public Infrastructure

In retrospect, decisions concerning the placement of several specific public safety, utility and transportation improvements have become clear obstacles to revitalization. While each of these facilities serves an important public purpose, their location in the Urban Area and their proximity to key positive attributes of the city have a negative impact that prevents the city from taking full advantage of each amenity and their relationships with each other.

These include:

**Power Lines and Substations** particularly along the First Level Canal, at Hammond's Ferry, and within the redevelopment zone of the Third Level Canal in the Laney Walker neighborhood, remain unsightly barriers to new development.

**Railroad tracks** bisect Augusta's city center and cross-cut historic areas. Tracks in North Augusta hamper the completion of a desired bikeway/multi-purpose path.

**The J.C. Calhoun Expressway** bisects historic Harrisburg, flies over the most important part of the Canal's historic scene, creates a barrier to health science expansion toward the downtown, impacts the Sacred Heart Cultural Center and Greene Street historic setting, and generally contributes to the deterioration of this area.

**The US 1/East Martintown Road interchange** prevents easy and logical access to downtown Georgia Avenue and hampers growth in this area.

**Augusta's levee** cuts the city of Augusta off from having direct and open access to its downtown riverfront.



*John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School*

### **Lack of organized open space network in Augusta**

With the exception of Lake Olmstead (outside the Urban Area) and the Augusta Common, Augusta lacks a major, events-oriented, central open space (such as the Boston Common). There are a few playgrounds and recreation facilities associated with schools in the area, though there is no open space associated with the John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School. While there are a number of small parks and playgrounds scattered throughout, they are not joined in any discernible network or system.

Moreover, while both cities are developing individual plans, there has been little effort to date in developing a cross-river open space system that can better connect the two cities.



*Railroad tracks running through the Urban Area*

### Implementation issues

For more than a century, there has been little organized, cooperative interaction at the governmental level between the two cities, and in the case of Augusta, even among the urban vs. suburban interests. This must change in order to achieve a workable Plan for the Urban Area.

The area's public servants are experienced, professional and dedicated. Overall, on the political scene, there is an emerging sense of collaboration regarding this Master Plan. Based on recent successes, North Augusta appears to have the in-house capability to act aggressively and efficiently on authoring and implementing redevelopment. However, Augusta's consolidated government does not yet have a strong coordinated redevelopment capability. For this work, the city/county government typically relies on ad-hoc committees, private or institutional interests and, in some cases, state appointed authorities to carry out and operate development initiatives.

Specific attention needs to address either development of new or reinforcement of existing mechanisms for:

- integrated strategic thinking and brainstorming
- providing a clearing house for ideas and initiatives
- facilitating coordination and cooperation between interest groups and the city
- integrated follow-up and implementation

In order for the Plan set forth in the following pages to come to coordinated fruition, an improved system for implementation will likely be necessary. A major purpose of this Master Plan is to establish a foundation on which these issues can begin to be addressed and remedied.





### **3. The Idea of Westobou**



## 3.1 Why Westobou?

**W**estobou is an evocative Native American word for the Savannah River. As with the spirit of this Plan, this word transcends man-made boundaries and their traditional rivalries. This Plan is founded on the notion of a “Shared Vision.” This community, long separated by state lines, shares the Savannah River, *Westobou*, as a major determinant of its character and of its future. Additionally, one key attribute identified in this study, upon which to build the area’s future, is the interest and dedication of many to providing high quality performing arts to their community and beyond. The Westobou Arts Festival had a very successful debut in Fall 2008. Both the festival and the Urban Area can benefit from a mutual use of this name, which slips so delightfully off the tongue and is so memorable.

From public meetings and individual discussions, three overarching goals for the Urban Area have clearly emerged over the course of this study. They build on the natural, historic and cultural attributes of the area:

### **We are . . . Linked Garden Cities**

*in the midst of a green and natural region with a green environment, waterfront, recreation, and proximity to nature.*

### **We are . . . a Center of Learning and Innovation**

*providing extraordinary health services, research, science, and education*

### **We are . . . a Vibrant Place to Live, Work and Play**

*with high-quality in-town living, culture, and arts*



*The Augusta skyline with a view of the Augusta Marina and 6th Street Bridge*



## 3.2 Linked Garden Cities



*The North Augusta Greenway*

### **Public Open Space is the Loom upon which Westobou's Master Plan is Woven...**

The Urban Area, hereafter Westobou, is blessed with a system of existing waterways, parks and greenways which, if properly augmented and connected, will become one of the main attractions to the area. Most importantly, this becomes the framework upon which other recent and proposed projects, initiatives and Market Creation Projects are interwoven.

### **In North Augusta...**

North Augusta has several existing projects and programs upon which to build including the River View Park, the North Augusta Greenway, which includes a riverside park in Hammond's Ferry, the River Golf Club and the historic Hampton Place Park on Georgia Avenue. Proposed future initiatives include:

- The original 1891 Boeckh Plan for North Augusta proposed using the steep ravines, which run from the toe of the bluff well up into the original North Augusta neighborhood. These recommendations are as relevant now as when first proposed and should be implemented.

- The North Augusta Greenway, through the Buena Vista area, is currently blocked by railroad right-of-way. The Plan calls for easing this multi-purpose pathway up the bluff and onto the abandoned 5th Street Bridge approach viaduct in the Hamburg area. Additional connections can be extended to East Buena Vista Avenue, East Martintown Road and potentially beyond as new development projects emerge in this area.

Once the Hamburg Viaduct connection is realized, the Greenway can be extended downriver adjacent to the River North subdivisions, as well as the Savannah River to I-520 and Horse Creek.

### **In Augusta...**

Augusta has a number of important existing parks, trails and places which need to be interconnected and augmented to meet the needs of a revitalized Urban Area. These include Lake Olmstead Park in the west, Chaffee Park in Harrisburg, Dyess Park in Laney Walker, and May Park in Old Towne. There is the Augusta Common on Broad between 8th and 9th Streets and the Augusta River Walk on the levee and the riverbank between 5th and 11th Streets. There are also two thematic parks: the Springfield Heritage Park and the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame Botanical Gardens.

The Augusta Canal National Heritage Area includes a historic towpath along the First Level Canal and an on-street bikeway through the Third Level Canal area. A dedicated multi-purpose path from 10th Street to Rae's Creek and Olmstead Lake Park is currently being constructed. A designated bike-path connects Lake Olmstead Park along the canal system to Dyess Park in the Laney Walker neighborhood.

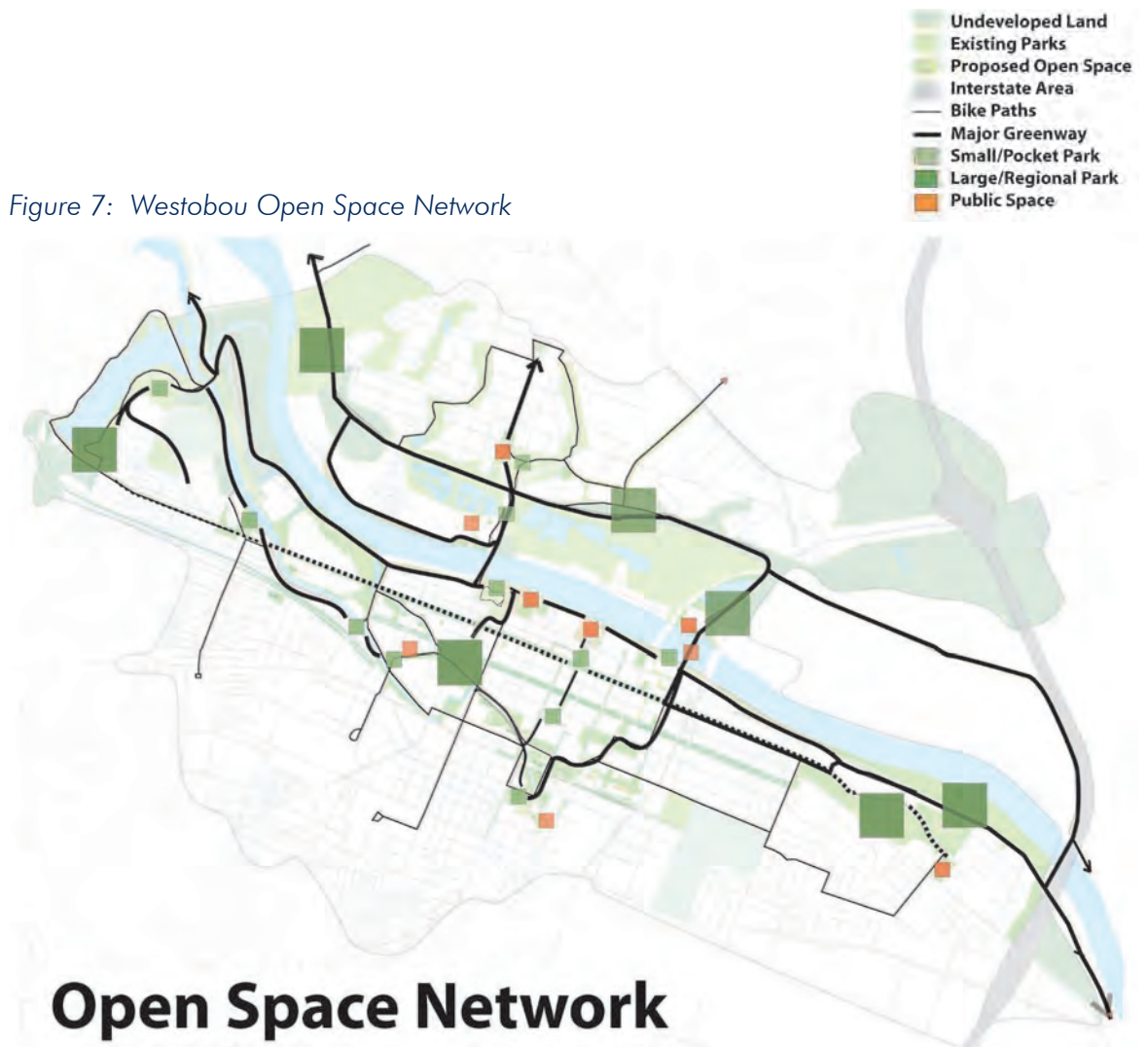
### Proposed New Initiatives

The core idea is to develop a continuous open space walking/bikeway, connecting a system of individual park nodes of varying uses and purposes. While there are a number of good parks, plazas and connecting corridors within and leading into the Urban Area, the system is incomplete and often disconnected. New proposed improvements include:

#### Nodes

These are the active and passive open space destinations scattered at strategic points throughout the Urban Area. In addition to advocating revitalization of existing facilities, proposed new nodes include:

Figure 7: Westobou Open Space Network



## 3.2 Linked Garden Cities

### In North Augusta

- *The new Town Center plaza*, a focal point for new development opposite the new Municipal Building
- *Schultz's Bluff Park*, overlooking the golf course and the river
- *Hamburg Pond*, a destination fishing venue
- *Hamburg Waterfront*, a catalyst for new waterfront development and a major access point to the river for all of North Augusta

### In Augusta

- *Butt Bridge Park*, a commemorative setting around the Butt Bridge
- *The Green at Enterprise Mill*, a new organizing feature in front of Enterprise Mill
- *Augusta Canal Park*, a large passive landscape bounded by Telfair, Greene, 11th and 13th Streets
- *Third Level Canal Terminus*, a focal point for redevelopment in Laney Walker near 7th Street
- *Broad Street (4th to 6th Street/ 6th to 10th Streets/ 10th to 13th Street, i.e. Marbury Village)*, a central park spine running the length of the traditional downtown
- *Westobou Crossing Park*, a linear park spanning the river on either a new bridge on existing piers or on

the existing 5th Street Bridge

- *Sand Bar Ferry Park*, a large open area for active recreation, special events and outdoor/rural (farm/fair/stables) uses
- *Savannah View Park*, a multi-use water-oriented recreation area with outdoor picnic/activity areas, boating/fishing docks, open lawns, a camping/RV park, and existing structures reused as river oriented activities venue (i.e. boat building)

### Linkages

These are the connecting pathways that tie the system together. Areas needing particular attention include:

### In North Augusta

- Extension of the Greenway eastward into Hamburg and toward Horse Creek
- Connections to Town Center plaza through Water Works Park
- Connection via existing street along riverfront between Westobou Crossing and Hammond's Ferry
- Pathways through the ravines in Old North Augusta
- Future pathways through East Buena Vista area, from Martintown Road to the Greenway system

### In Augusta

- Extension of multipurpose path along the Levee into Augusta, GA
- Upgrade First Level Canal path from Lake Olmstead to 13th Street
- Pathways crossing and along proposed Calhoun Parkway
- Third Level Canal linear park from 7th to 15th Streets with passive nodes and plazas along the way
- Calhoun Greenway, assuming eventual elimination of the J.C. Calhoun Expressway flyover, allowing a direct connection from 15th Street to Greene Street along the former 'flyover' right-of-way
- River Walk Extension to 13th Street

### Reaching across the Savannah River

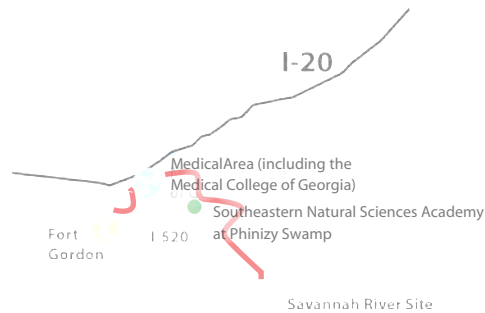
- Multi-purpose path on new pedestrian/bike bridge or along dedicated lanes on the 13th Street Bridge connecting the two cities
- Multi-purpose path proposed on the Westobou Crossing Bridge
- Possible new connection at I-520





## 3.3 A Center of Learning and Innovation

Figure 8: Technology and Science Centers



### Utilize the Area's Technology Connection...

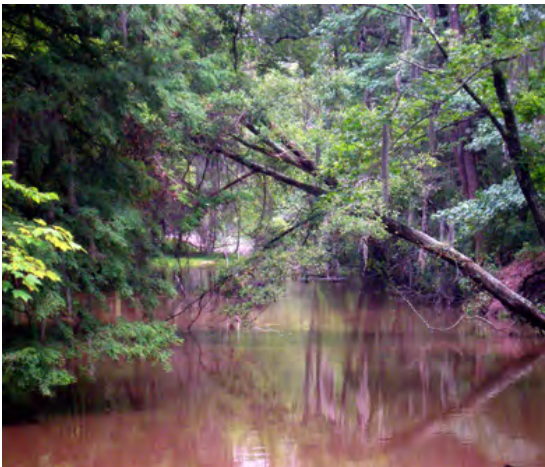
At least four nationally recognized centers of science and technology (See Figure 8: Technology and Science Centers) lie within the region and are readily accessible to the Urban Area:

**The Augusta medical complex**, led by the Medical College of Georgia, is an emerging center for research in the Health Sciences. The state of Georgia's Life Sciences Innovation Center, located in Augusta, is managed through the Medical College of Georgia.

**The Savannah River Site**, just south of North Augusta, is one of the nation's leaders in developing and managing new directions in Nuclear Physics, including research into nuclear medicine.

**The US Army facility at Fort Gordon**, home of the Army Signal Corps and Homeland Security's National Security Agency- Central Service Georgia (NSA- CSS GA), is expanding its role dramatically in the sophisticated applied sciences for world-wide electronic intelligence gathering and analysis.

**The Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy**, headquartered within the Phinizy Swamp and an affiliated program are developing a program to build a 'virtual' model of the Savannah River. This technology would enable a study of future impacts, natural and man-made, including factors, such as the river's flow, water quality, natural environment, and overall usability.



Phinizy Swamp near the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy





## 3.4 A Vibrant Place to Live, Work and Play

### Herald its Natural Beauty, its History, its Arts and Its Sports Heritage

The Westobou Urban Area has it all:

- The river, with its lakes and dams, the Phinizy Swamp, the Augusta canal system, and nearby forests, fields and farms provide ideal settings for hiking, biking, riding, boating, swimming, fishing, hunting and learning about and enjoying nature. This is particularly due to the area's mild-climate.
- History and heritage come alive in all the counties, but nowhere more so than in Augusta, GA, and North Augusta, Edgefield and Aiken, SC.
- Both the fine arts and performing arts are well represented here and are attracting more and more people from outside the region.
- The word "Augusta" is synonymous with the "Masters," the world's premier annual golf event. In addition to the "Masters," both North Augusta and Augusta host exciting national and regional sporting events.

#### What's the "Elevator Speech" going to be?

If you were at or in an elevator in, say, Chicago, and during the short trip to your destination you were asked by a fellow traveler to describe this Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area, aside from where it is and how big, etc., what would you say?

#### The long-winded version might go something like this...

*"I live in North Augusta, South Carolina, just across the Savannah River from Augusta, Georgia, home of the Masters. Our Urban Area, Westobou, is in both cities and is linked across the river with bike and pedestrian bridges, a bridge park, water taxis and shuttle boats. By the way, Westobou is the first Native American word for the Savannah River.*

*Four colleges call Westobou home including the Medical College of Georgia, and we're working on developing several more focusing on high-technology and the performing arts. We have strong academic links to the Medical College of Georgia, Fort Gordon, the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy, the Army's National Science Center at Fort Discovery and the Savannah River Site for nuclear research.*

*The medical community is the area's largest employer, but a lot of people work on Broad Street and in the new research and health sciences facilities along the Third Level Canal.*

*We have one of the best fine arts magnet schools in the country and a new riverfront arts center, which houses undoubtedly, the best collection of southern art in the world. Our symphony, ballet, theater and dance companies, provide state of the art facilities for a continuous stream of national groups coming through.*

*It also uses two historic theaters and lies next to the convention center, the Trade, Exhibit and Event center and several downtown hotels.*

*The River View Golf Club lies across the river from the Westobou Arts Center. For walkers and cyclists on both sides of the river, there is an interconnected system of parks, shaded paths, bikeways and well-maintained playing fields throughout, with greenway links to one of the largest greenway multi-path systems in the country. Our new Riverside Ball Park is home to the league winning GreenJackets and is modeled on Baltimore's Camden Yards with mixed-uses and year-round events.*

*I live in Old North Augusta near the town center, which fronts on our new, multi-purpose municipal building. There's always something going on there.*

*Everyone goes down to Marbury Village, a three block section of our very historic main street, for dining, entertainment and a rollicking night life. In fact, most of Broad Street is now a long and wide, mostly pedestrian place with all sorts of activity along it day and night, year-round.*

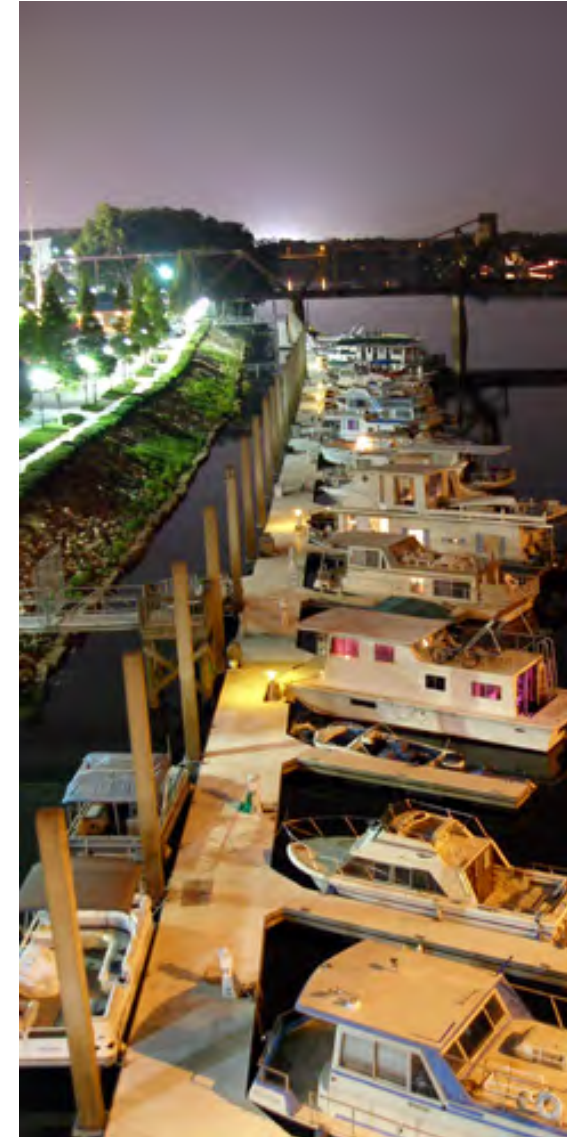
*Coming by RV? We have a fabulous camping and RV park on the river. It's in a new riverside park, less than a five minute bike ride to the arts*

*center or across the 'bridge park' to Hamburg, where you can 'fish and fry' them right there. Also there's great riverside dining there.*

*Want to live in Westobou? Besides having easy access to the best healthcare anywhere and an easy walk to work and amenities, we've got a varied housing stock, from old, historic bungalows and Victorians to new single-family and town house neighborhoods, to new posh mid-rise and high rise condominiums on the river, along Broad Street and at Canal Park. You might check out our two new "New Urbanist" neighborhoods in North Augusta overlooking the river or the golf course and Augusta's downtown. There's also Sand Bar Ferry Village on the Augusta side and 'Dutch style' canal villages in Harrisburg and Laney Walker. There's lot's of space in the downtown lofts and in the historic Sibley and King Mills in that area.*

*It's just about perfect, unless you want to snow ski, but, for that, we've got a great airport just 2 miles away.*

*Come see us! "*



*The Augusta Marina at night (Photo by: Jurgen Brauer 2006)*

## 3.5 The Action Districts

The Master Plan has sub-divided Westobou into a number of action districts. While these districts typically enjoy a mix of uses, each has a thematic emphasis. Numerous projects have been identified which could support the goals of the Urban Area. Many are already underway and should be supported. The plan will build on these. Based on current and past trends and on a review of new and proposed project locations, a logical pattern is emerging. These districts are identified on Figure 9: Westobou Action Districts, along with recent and proposed new projects including the nine Market Creation Projects.

### In North Augusta

District NA.1- Historic North Augusta

District NA.2- River Crossing/Hamburg

District NA.3- Buena Vista./I-520 Gateway

### In Augusta

District A.I- Augusta Downtown Core

District A.2- Medical District

District A.3- Harrisburg

District A.4- Laney Walker/ Bethlehem

District A.5- Old Towne/East of East Boundary

District A.6- East End Higher Education Area

Within these districts, the Plan identifies more than 30 individual projects. While most are existing proposals and ongoing efforts, a few new projects have been identified in the course of this planning effort. These are presented in further detail in Sections 4 and 5.

### Market Creation Projects

One or more illustrative Market Creation Projects have been identified in most of the action districts. Market Creation Projects, by definition, are high impact initiatives, which can set a new direction for an area. These are typically clusters of projects, which taken together, form a single Market Creation Project. The criteria for these Market Creation Projects include:

1. Create a **strong regional attraction** that brings people back downtown.
2. Offer a **new product or service** for the Urban Area that's proven economically viable and sustainable in similar size market areas.

3. Demonstrate a **high degree of creativity and innovation** leading to broader recognition and 'branding' of the Urban Area (the "WOW" factor).

4. Offer the potential to bring the two cities and their communities to a new level of **economic and social vitality and collaboration**.

5. Build **connections to community and other initiatives** via gateways, open space nodes and greenways.

6. Support **existing projects** and spawn new initiatives.

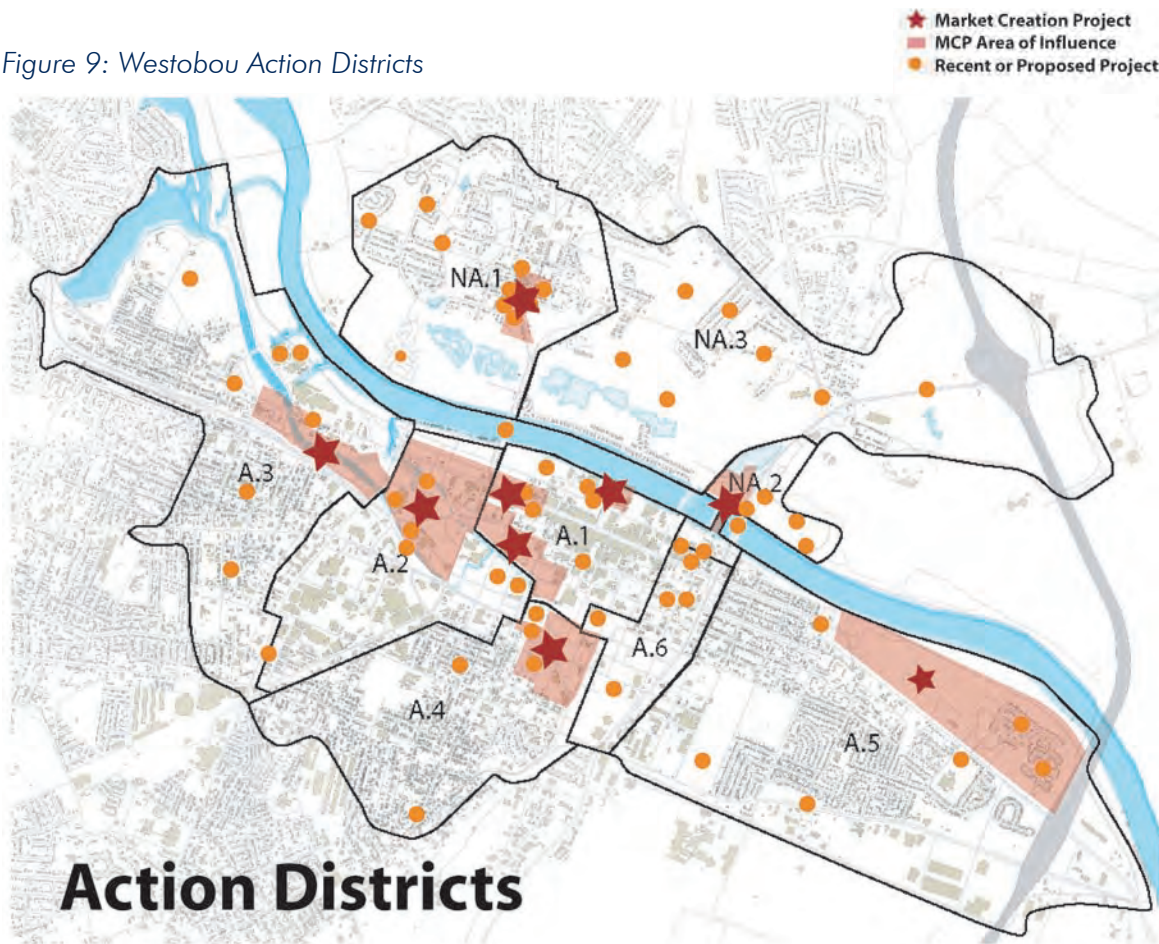
7. Reinforce the **core themes**.

The Master Plan has identified and described several new opportunities for 'market creation' within the Urban Area at a conceptual level only. For both planning and implementation, each would require a coordinated and integrated final 'Area Action Plan.' A more thorough program description, financial analysis and implementation strategy have been done for each of these nine projects, and that work is included in a separate document, Part 3: Appendices.



## A Tour of Westobou

Figure 9: Westobou Action Districts



Sections 4 and 5 divide the Westobou Urban Area into specific action districts in both Augusta and North Augusta, which have a recognizable character today upon which to build the future. Assets, issues, initiatives, projects and potential champions are identified within each, which when combined together, will go far in achieving the overarching goals and objectives of this plan.

It is understood that this is a long-term plan and that projects of the size and scope described below typically take decades to fully realize. However, the time is right for each to begin the process and the next five years are critical. Each will move at a different pace, according to community priority, funding opportunities and, above all, the energy and dedication of individuals who will champion each one.

Each project is worthy and even early actions can have astounding impact on the way the area thinks about itself and the new directions set for this very special place.



# **4. Westobou**

## **The North Augusta Districts**

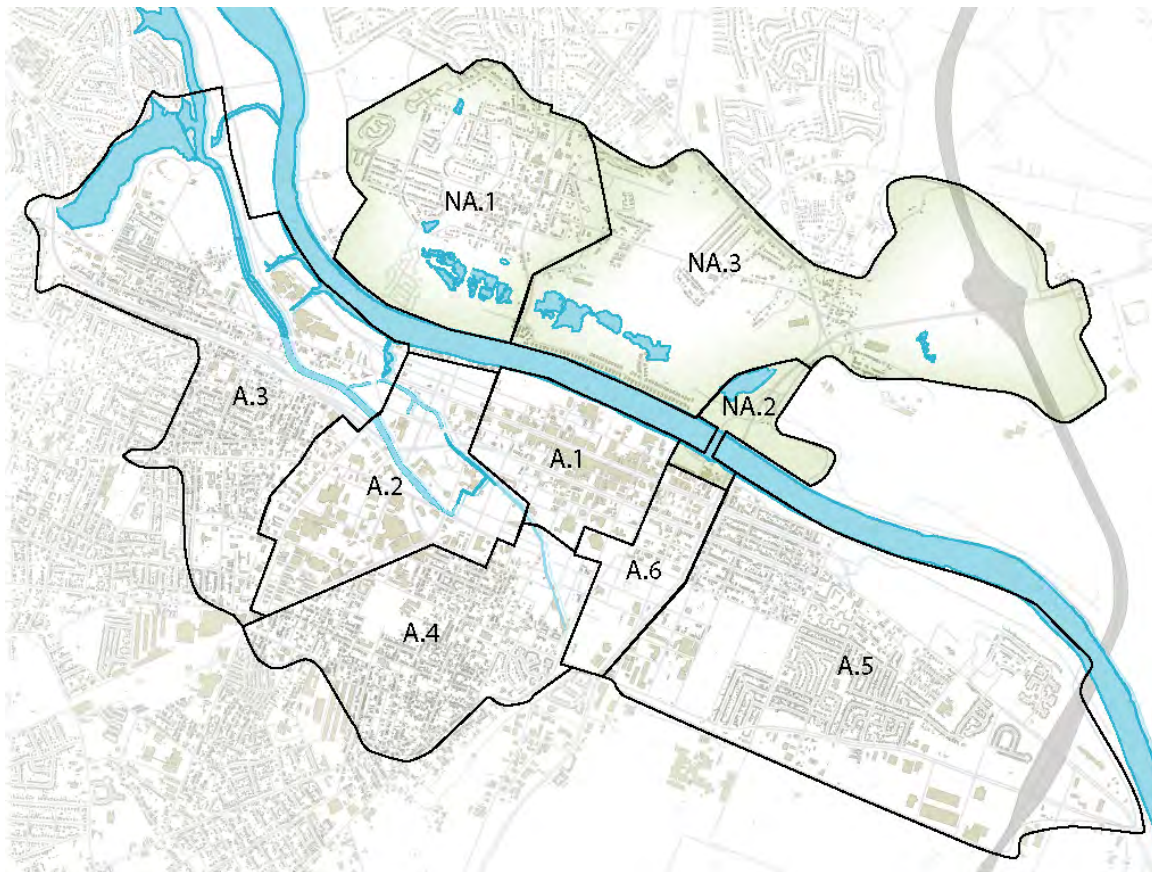






# In North Augusta

Figure 10: North Augusta Action Districts



The Master Plan divides Westobou's urban area in North Augusta into three distinct districts:

**District NA.1- Historic North Augusta**

**District NA.2- River Crossing/ Hamburg**

**District NA.3- East Buena Vista/ I-520 Gateway**

While these North Augusta districts have much in common with one another, each has its own character, assets, opportunities and issues, which considered together to form the building blocks of this Plan. Each district and, where applicable, its respective Market Creation Project are discussed and illustrated in the following section.

## 4.1 District NA.1- Historic North Augusta



**T**his district is the successful result of redevelopment in the late 1800s on the South Carolina side of the river, which moved the town center from the Hamburg area to the top of the bluff, safe from river flooding. This area includes the traditional town “main street” along Georgia Avenue, surrounded by largely single-family neighborhoods. The extensive riverfront lowlands at the foot of the bluff have been opened to redevelopment within the past fifteen years and an exciting ‘New Urbanist’ community is just completing its first phase of development.

Hammond’s Ferry is a particularly important example of what might happen throughout the Westobou Urban Area, as it is a good example of a significant, recent movement in urban planning and design. The term “New Urbanism” harks back to traditional neighborhood design of past centuries, where the approach was to have compact communities with street grids, alleyways, small lots, significant community open space and low to mid-rise buildings set close to the street, with agreed upon design guidelines and regulations. A ‘New Urbanist’ approach is recommended in many of the Westobou districts and neighborhoods.

### Issues for the Next Two Decades

Georgia Avenue is a heavily traveled state highway linking this community to the region and particularly to the jobs and services of Augusta and the medical area just across the river. True to the history of roadway improvement projects, which gave priority to traffic volumes and speed, this beautiful axial “main street” must be careful to not evolve into an arterial corridor, potentially separating the two sides from one another. With the new Municipal Center providing a potential cornerstone, North Augusta can realize a pedestrian-friendly, “town center” environment here.

The historic neighborhoods also need attention. The public infrastructure is aging and streets, sidewalks, curbs and public spaces should be given appropriate consideration in upgrading them to modern standards. Public open space development has been a big priority in the city and much has been accomplished. However, significant opportunities have not been fully developed, particularly along the river and up into the ravines, as shown on the original Boeckh plat.

Riverview Park is one of the city’s major attractions but the entry via East Buena Vista Avenue is awkward and needs to be redesigned.







*Looking northwest over the Historic North Augusta District along Georgia Avenue.*



## Assets to Build Upon

The significant physical assets of this district on which the Master Plan can build include its original “planned community” design, the visual strength of the Georgia Avenue axis with Lookaway Hall at the top of the hill and the new Municipal Center at the crest of the Bluff, the enlightened open-space and Greenway policies of city officials, the location of the ravines and the new access ways to the riverfront for all the city to enjoy. Also, the 13th Street Bridge offers the opportunity to develop better bicycle and pedestrian connections to Augusta.

Figure 11: Historic North Augusta District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives





*Hammond's Ferry, a 'New Urbanist' development along the river*



*A view looking up Georgia Avenue to Lookaway Hall*

## Key Projects and Initiatives

The plan has identified a number of projects and initiatives, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district. These are worthy of support, and are made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 11: North Augusta District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed include:

### The New Municipal Center (NA.I-A)

This new facility currently completing construction, will house city offices, meeting rooms, and an Arts and Heritage Center for public events.

### Jackson Square (NA.I-B)

A newly completed commercial building at the corner of West Buena Vista Avenue and Georgia Avenue follows good urban design practice with regard to its siting, which reinforces the traditional urban "street wall."

### North Augusta 2000 Initiative (NA.I-C)

A group of North Augusta citizens are assisting in land assembly and implementation of key projects around the Municipal Center.

### The Hotel on the Bluff (NA.I-D)

A landmark hotel atop the bluff has been proposed adjacent to the new Municipal Center.

### Hammond's Ferry (NA.I-E)

The first phase is nearly complete. The development includes single-family neighborhoods, a new town center with approximately 70,000 square feet of new commercial space, structured parking, a riverfront boating/community facility, work/live artists lofts, an ecology center within structured wetlands and an organic farm.

### The Ravine Parks (NA.I-F)

The original 1891 Boeckh Master Plan recommended converting the steep ravines running up from the bluff into neighborhood parks and protected natural drainage ways.

### Buena Vista Riverview Park Entry (NA.I-G)

As mentioned above, West Buena Vista Avenue swerves disjointedly through a residential complex as it enters Riverview Park. This important entry to Riverview Park should be improved.

### Neighborhood Infill Housing (NA.I-H)

This initiative has begun with several new multi-family infill projects being developed within the traditional neighborhoods, particularly along West Avenue and East Buena Vista Avenue.



#### 4.1 District NA.1 Historic North Augusta



*A trail winding through Riverview Park*

##### **Georgia Avenue Design Guidelines, (NA.I-I)**

The North Augusta Design Guidelines from the 13th Street Bridge to Spring Grove Avenue should be updated and strengthened within the Georgia Avenue Corridor Overlay Standards.

##### **The 13th Street Bike Bridge, (NA.I-J)**

A new multi-purpose bike/pedestrian bridge has been proposed from Hammond's Ferry and the Greeneway across the river and connecting to the Augusta canal bike trail at Augusta's River Walk. An alternative recommendation has been to investigate the installment of bike lanes on the existing 13th Street Bridge.

##### **Old North Augusta infrastructure Improvements, (NA.I-K)**

While a city-wide issue, in Old North Augusta in particular, curbs, gutters and storm water and sewer systems are aging or becoming obsolete and in need of upgrade, similar to that which were recently completed on Woodlawn and Lake Avenues.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

*Engraving of Historic 1891 Boeckh Plat Plan*





In addition to the key projects and initiatives described already, the Plan proposes one new potential Market Creation project in this district that should be supported and pursued in the coming years:

### **North Augusta Town Center (NA.I-MCP1)**

The project is described in greater detail on pages 50-51, as well as in the Appendices Section 1.



*The 13th Street Bridge connecting Augusta to North Augusta*

## **Potential Champion Groups**

The city and North Augusta 2000, a non-profit, citizen-led group, have been active participants and promoters of new projects. Private development and owner interests are there, though yet to be identified, who can champion the final implementation of new private development. For now, however, the city and North Augusta 2000 offer the best hope for moving this initiative along through the early stages of the implementation process for both public infrastructure improvement and subsequent private build-out.



# Market Creation Project 1: North Augusta Town Center



Figure 12: North Augusta Town Center Illustrative Site Plan

## NORTH AUGUSTA TOWN CENTER

- A ) Upgrade**  
Georgia Avenue  
Design Guidelines
- B ) Renovate Historic**  
Parks
- C ) New Commercial**  
District
- D ) New Civic Plaza**



## Illustrative Program

The Town Center area runs from Georgia Avenue to mid-block beyond West Avenue and from Bluff Avenue to West Buena Vista Avenue. This project, estimated at approximately \$50-60 million, would include:

- 80-100 room hotel
- 50,000-60,000 square feet of new retail
- 100,000-120,000 square feet of upper story commercial and/or residential space

The scale of this public/private partnership is such that it would likely require a 5 to 10 year time frame to complete.

Of the estimated \$50-60 million, roughly \$5-10 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 1: North Augusta Town Center.



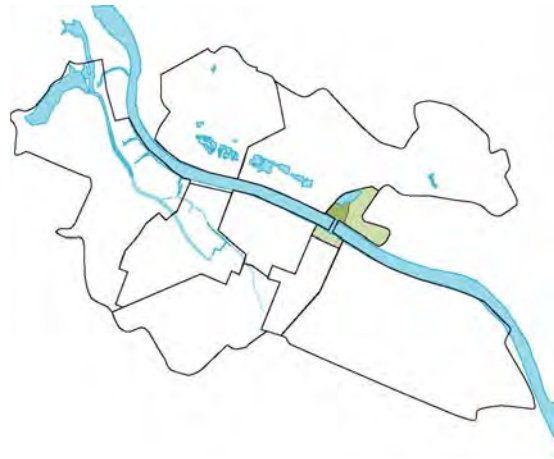
## The Big Idea

*The realization of the new Municipal Center at the foot of Georgia Avenue, where it curves eastward to align with the bridge into Augusta, forms a near-perfect visual southern gateway to historic Georgia Avenue and the downtown commercial area. Within this area, atop the Savannah River Bluff, a highly identifiable, much needed, new Town Center can be created, by extending the public open-space fronting the new Municipal Center northward to create a new public common around which development can occur.*





## 4.2 District NA.2- River Crossing/Hamburg



**T**his district lies along the Savannah River between an active railway corridor to the west and north and along the Gordon Highway Bridge to the east. It is the site of the original Hamburg settlement of this side of the river. Frequent flooding forced the eventual abandonment of the town. It is only within the past twenty years that the river has been sufficiently controlled so that the area can be safely redeveloped. An abandoned viaduct to the 5th Street Bridge, a gateway into Augusta, bisects the area. This bridge is made redundant by the Gordon Highway/US 1 corridor. A major sewer line cuts through the area, roughly parallel to the river.

The river watershed formed between the bridges, and along the bridges themselves, are activated by the Augusta Marina and park just across the river. The river is shallow at this spot on the North Augusta side, with broken piers from the former landing lying just below the water. Abandoned stone railroad bridge piers also stretch across the river at this point.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

This is the best location along this stretch of urban riverfront for the two cities to reach across and work together in a joint development of the banks and its river span to realize an exciting recreation, retail and entertainment destinations.

Control and management of the water levels in this dam-controlled basin is critical to this area's growth and development. The management of river boating and water use will be very critical and very visible. Eventually, limits will likely be needed for monitoring boat types and traffic volumes.

Train noises should also be addressed and mitigated here, as well as in downtown Augusta.





Looking northeast over the River Crossing/Hamburg District along the Gordon Highway.



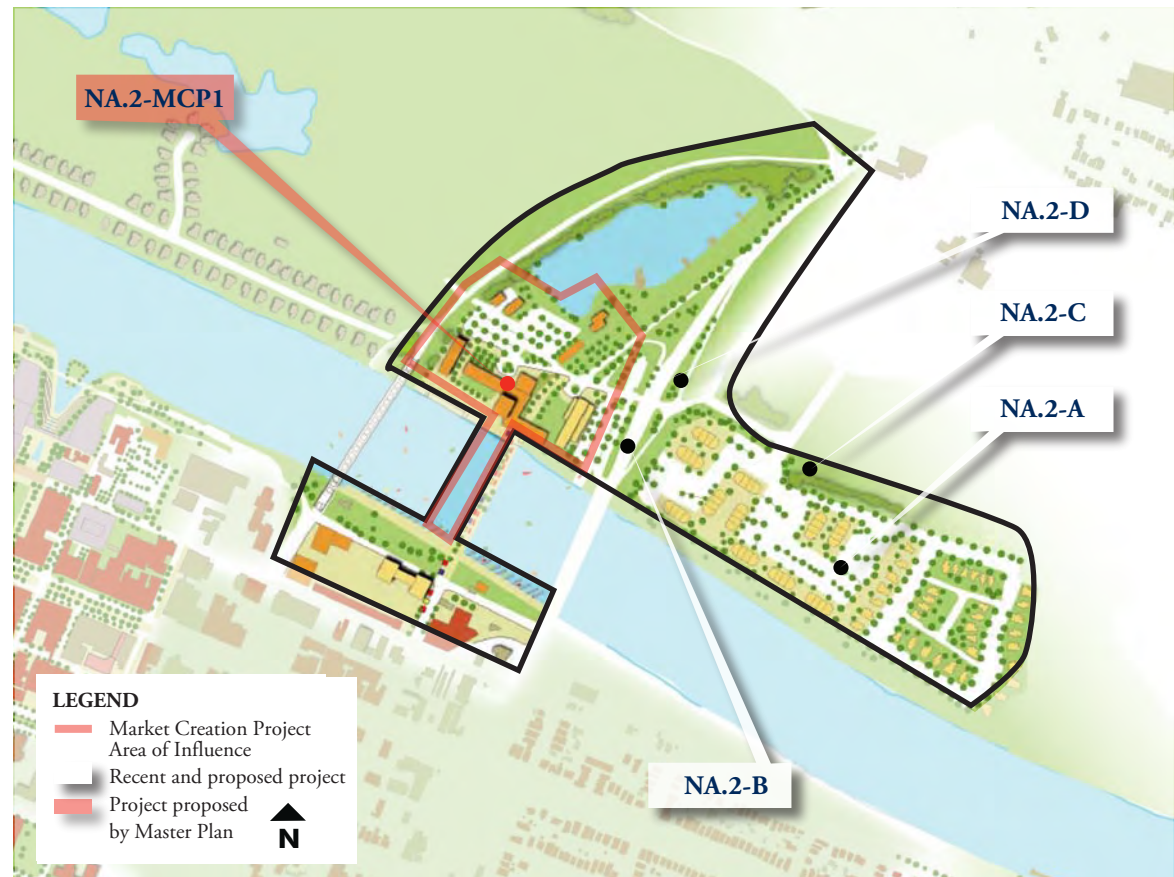
## Assets to Build Upon

The most important asset of this area is, of course, the Savannah River, plus its frontage, bridges and bridge piers.

In historic Hamburg, assets include the former viaduct, the pond, the undeveloped riverfront and the potential bike/foot bridge connections between the cities. Other building blocks here include new and proposed private development on either side, as well as the existing golf course.

In Augusta, the on-going riverfront redevelopment area, including the Marina, its park, the River Walk, and the area's easy walk into the heart of downtown Augusta are assets to build upon.

Figure 13: River Crossing/Hamburg District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives





## Key Projects and Initiatives

The Plan has identified several projects, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district, which are worthy of support and are made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 12: River Crossing/Hamburg District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed include:

### Kingery Landing (NA.2-A)

A new residential community proposed for the area is located just downstream of the Gordon Highway.

### Gordon Highway Access Improvements (NA.2-B)

New ramps from the Gordon Highway down into the Hamburg area would provide full access to and from the area via US 1.

### Greenway Extension (NA.2-C)

A proposed extension of the North Augusta Greenway through this area could connect to I-520 and potentially, to Horse Creek.

### River Road Connection (NA.2-D)

This roadway connection under the railroad trestle to the River Club development and golf course, could connect all parts of the North Augusta waterfront, from Hammond's Ferry to Kingery Landing and to the residential community to the west.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

The Master Plan has identified one new potential Market Creation Project:

### Westobou Crossing (NA.2-MCP1)

This project should be supported and pursued in the coming years. This project, while mostly in North Augusta, literally spills across the river on a converted bridge into Augusta. This project calls for the comprehensive redevelopment of this bi-state venue and is described in greater detail on pages 56-57, as well as in the Appendices Section 2.

## Potential Champion Groups

As with the North Augusta Town Center, no specific private sector developer has been identified to date. However, the governments of both cities have targeted this as a high priority area and are actively taking the first steps toward realization. Possible private developers with adjacent proposed development (i.e. Kingery Landing in North Augusta and the Pension site in Augusta) may well assume an important role in the realization of this project. The owner of the former Coca-Cola bottling plant will also have a direct interest in the development of this area.



# Market Creation Project 2:

## Westobou Crossing

Figure 14: Westobou Crossing Illustrative Site Plan

### MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

- A )** Docks and Water-front Plaza
- B )** Canoe Launch
- C )** Retail and Condominiums
- D )** Day Parking

### 5TH STREET BRIDGE CONVERSION

- E )** Multi-purpose path
- F )** Events area
- G )** Specialty Retail/Dining/Entertainment



### Illustrative Program

This site includes large properties on both sides of the river and the reuse of the Fifth Street Bridge into year-round, public, outdoor market space. In North Augusta, exclusive of the proposed Kingery Landing, the illustrative program includes:

- 200 residential units of apartment/condos
- a fishing center complex
- 20,000 square feet of retail space
- waterfront improvements along the river and around the pond

In Augusta, the program, exclusive of a Pension Fund project, includes:

- reuse of the Coca-Cola plant
- conversion of the bridge to a multi-purpose venue

The total cost of this project is in the range of \$90-100 million and would be completed in phases over a 10-20 year span.

Of the estimated \$90-100 million, roughly \$20-25 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 2: Westobou Crossing.



## The Big Idea

By tying the North Augusta and Augusta communities together with new development that literally spans the river, a destination attraction for both cities could be created. The highlight of the development would be a pedestrian/bike bridge, spanning the river and wide enough to host on-going activities and events. In North Augusta, the long abandoned site of historic Hamburg would be remade into an inviting, recreationally-themed waterfront community of high density, mixed-uses including housing, restaurants, retail, boat dock and fishing venue in the brick pond. The Augusta anchor includes the existing marina and River Walk, as well as proposed new development on the Pension site and in the adjoining former Coca-Cola bottling plant to the east.



## 4.3 District NA.3- East Buena Vista/I-520 Gateway



**T**his district comprises the central section of North Augusta's Urban Area, from the river, northward to East Martintown Road, between Hamburg and the US 1 corridor on the east and the Georgia Avenue corridor to the west. A golf course and riverfront community have sprung up in the lowland below the bluff. A large percentage of the land on and above the bluff is in private hands and remains undeveloped.

### Issues for the Next Two Decades

This district is very strategically located, and thoughtful development of the area atop the bluff can have a major impact on the city. Proposed roadway upgrades of East Buena Vista Avenue should establish it as an attractive new development corridor within this area. Within this area there are several, sub-standard neighborhoods in need of revitalization.

With the completion of the final I-520 segment, from US 1 to I-20, development pressure will increase, especially along the US 1 corridor, which will become a major gateway into both North Augusta and Augusta. New development guidelines should be drafted to insure aesthetic, as well as safety and service attributes of this area.





Looking northeast over the East Buena Vista/I-520 Gateway District north of the River Golf Club.



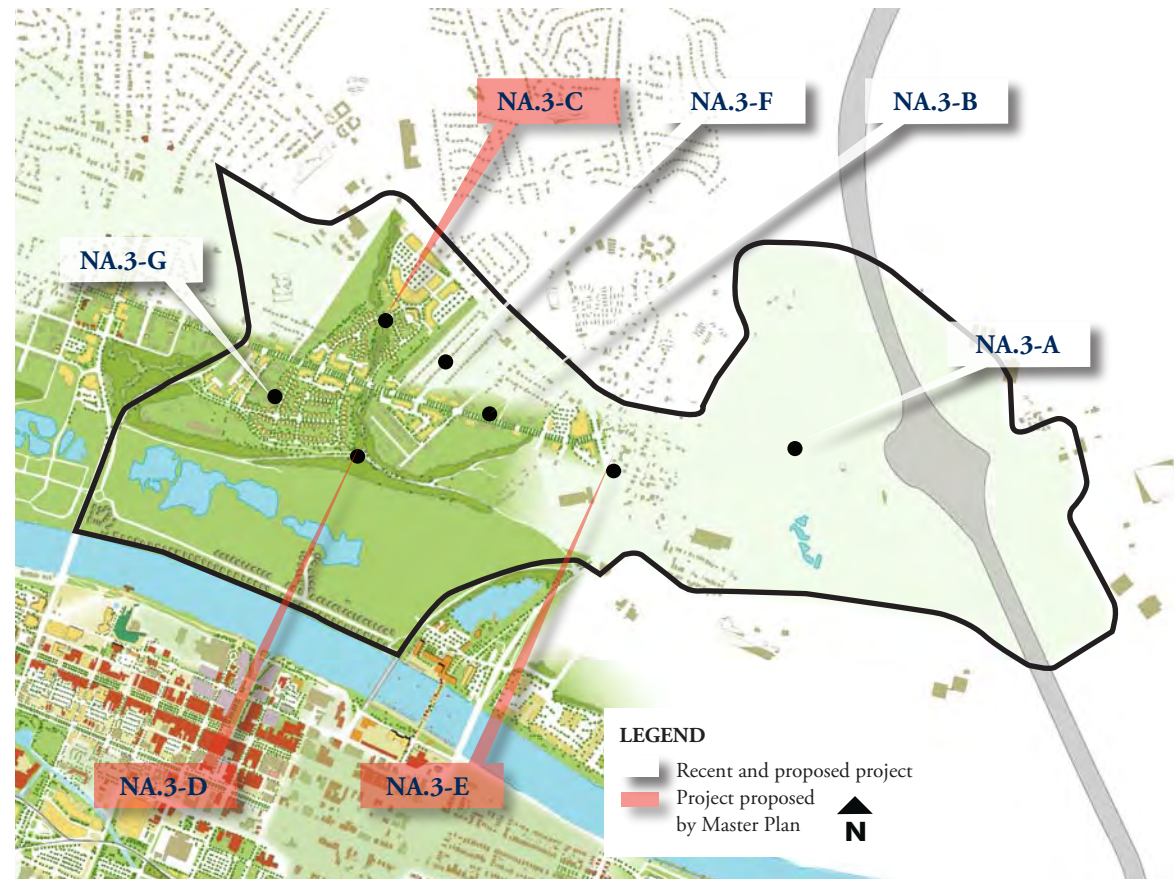
## Assets to Build Upon

The significant physical assets of this district on which the Master Plan can build include its large swaths of rolling, forested undeveloped land atop the bluff. The proximity to the golf course and riverfront community and the possibility of long views from the top of the bluff over the river and into downtown Augusta add to its potential. The North Augusta Greenway runs into this area and offers the potential to connect the area in several directions. East Buena Vista Avenue can become an important 'image-making' roadway into the Town Center.

The extensive frontage along East Martintown Road provides opportunity for a large scale retail center to be sited in this area, which with proper planning and design will contribute to the development of the entire district.

With the completion of the I-520 extension to I-20, the I-520/US 1 interchange, at the eastern end of this district, is going to become a major gateway into both Augusta and North Augusta. The adjacent areas will be ripe for auto-oriented development and must be properly planned and controlled.

Figure 15: Buena Vista/I-520 Gateway District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives





## Key Projects and Initiatives

A number of projects and initiatives have been identified, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district, which are worthy of support, and are made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 15: Buena Vista/I-520 Gateway District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed, include:

### US 1/East Martintown Road Intersection Improvements (NA.3-A)

In concert with the proposed long-range highway project, funded largely by South Carolina Department of Transportation (SC-DOT), the district should develop an urban design plan for this area to guide future growth around this confusing intersection.

### East Buena Vista Avenue Improvements (NA.3-B)

Also in combination with an already identified roadway improvement project, which also is funded largely by South Carolina Department of Transportation (SC-DOT), the area should develop an urban design plan and make zoning revisions to convert this area into a higher density multi-family development, with neighborhood retail, along this corridor.

### Mealing Property Development (NA.3-C)

This project would be a new mixed-income, mixed-use 'New Urbanist' community running from East Martintown Road to the north and the bluff to the south. The development would include a significant retail component oriented to Martintown Road and a large mixed community of single-family, town house and garden apartments to the south, incorporating Buena Vista Avenue.

### Schultz's Overlook- a Public Park atop the Bluff (NA.3-D)

The city should regard the bluff in the same way it does the Savannah River waterfront and establish a setback that allows a reasonable view by maintaining the crest of the bluff as parkland. The North Augusta Greenway would run through this park, which would incorporate the bluff itself, allowing connections to the existing Greenway system and also for expansion into Hamburg and through the Mealing property.

### US 1 Corridor Development Guidelines (NA.3-E)

Both the interchange and roadway improvements are nearly complete, including attractive new landscaping. With completion of this important gateway for both North Augusta and Augusta, urban design and zoning

revisions should be made to insure that the edges of this corridor are developed in attractive and efficient fashion, presenting both convenient, auto-related services and an attractive entry to both downtowns.

### Atomic Road Neighborhood Improvements (NA.3-F)

Roadway improvements are also scheduled for this neighborhood. Street tree planting, new sidewalks and curbs should be included in this upgrade. A housing rehabilitation program should be developed and applied to this neighborhood.

### Other Neighborhood Redevelopment (NA.3-G)

There are a number of small residential clusters in the East Buena Vista Avenue area, which have a high percentage of vacant, deteriorated or obsolete housing stock. Working with the private sector and community leaders, a city program for redevelopment should be created which allows current residents to stay in the area, while renovation or new replacement housing is developed. Existing structures need to be brought up to code, and, at a minimum, street improvements assuring a safer neighborhood should be undertaken.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.



*The scene today looking across the river toward downtown Augusta*



## Potential Champion Groups

For now, with regard to existing neighborhoods, the City of North Augusta should continue its neighborhood improvement initiatives. It should also reach out to the community leadership, particularly ‘faith- based’ entities, to develop an acceptable approach to broader redevelopment of this area. Once the roadway improvements are started, private developers will see the high potential of this area, and redevelopment will happen. It is the city’s role to assure that this development works to the benefit of both the neighborhood and the city.





## Market Creation and East Buena Vista Village...

While no specific Market Creation Project has been specifically identified for this district, clearly the undeveloped Mealing property and adjacent parcels represent a unique opportunity to bring about major change in this area. The area extends from East Martintown Road on the north to the foot of the bluff to the south and straddles East Buena Vista Boulevard.

Because of the high potential of this area, current zoning should be reviewed and modified as necessary well before individual development proposals are brought before the city. Urban design guidelines for future development should be drawn up that take full advantage of the property from the city point of view. As with Hammond's Ferry, this development would follow 'New Urbanist' planning and design principles.

This Plan sets forth, in Figure 16: East Buena Vista Village Illustrative Site Plan, an initial set of recommendations for the future development of this area. These recommendations organize the area into several subareas, each with its own uses, character and offering to the market. From north to south, these are as follows:

### EAST BUENA VISTA BLUFF VILLAGE

- A )** Large retail shopping development on East Martintown Road
- B )** 'New Urbanist' village
- C )** Single-family neighborhood development
- D )** East Buena Vista Parkway with higher density residential development
- E )** Single-family neighborhood development south of East Buena Vista Avenue
- F )** Schultz's Overlook with connections to the Greenway and Hamburg

Figure 16: East Buena Vista Village Illustrative Site Plan



### **East Martintown Road**

Along this busy commercial corridor, a life-style shopping center is proposed for the upper quarter of the site with retail space surrounding a central parking area. A major feature of this area is development of a new “Main Street” from East Martintown Road to a ‘village center’ with retail on the ground floor and office and residential uses on the upper levels.

### **The ‘East Buena Vista Ravine’ Neighborhood**

From the ‘village center’ to East Buena Vista Avenue, a ‘Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)’ of single-family and small apartments buildings is proposed over this rolling terrain.

### **East Buena Vista Parkway**

With the reconstruction of East Buena Vista into a no-trucks parkway, with sidewalks, a well shaded tree canopy and landscaped center median, the stage is set for development of moderate density housing (3 to 5 story apartment buildings) with a modest amount of neighborhood retail.

### **‘The East Buena Vista Bluff’ Neighborhood**

This is a neighborhood of largely single-family homes running the length at the top the bluff. In addition to that development shown, there is a significant city-owned parcel, at the corner of East Buena Vista and Riverside Boulevard, which could be made available for the right development. There are a number of other parcels to the west that also might be assembled.

### **Schultz’s Overlook Park**

This parkland, which occupies the crest of the bluff to its toe below, realizes an early dream of Henry Schultz, Hamburg’s founder, to create an overlook park in this area. Additionally, this park provides the access corridor for making the Greenway connection to Westobou Crossing, across the viaduct and the 5th Street Bridge into Augusta, or eastward, eventually to Horse Creek.

The North Augusta Greenway expansion uses the Overlook Park to establish connections that criss-cross this area to serve several areas on top of the bluff. The plan would use the natural ravines running up from the river as open, naturalized parkland with walking/running/bike trails potentially extending into neighborhoods across East Martintown Road.

## **Conceptual Program**

The size and scale of this development is yet to be determined, however, the concept study suggests the following:

- 100,000-150,000 square feet of retail at East Martintown Road Shopping Center
- 80-120 residential units at “Village Center” and “The Ravine”
- 200-300 residential units on East Buena Vista Avenue
- Residential units with 10,000-15,000 thousand square feet of retail
- 200-300 residential units of single-family houses and garden apartment buildings at “East Buena Vista Bluff”

In conclusion, coordinated development of proposed public roadway improvements, the Greenway expansion and private development would change the character and the quality of North Augusta very dramatically.









# 5. Westobou

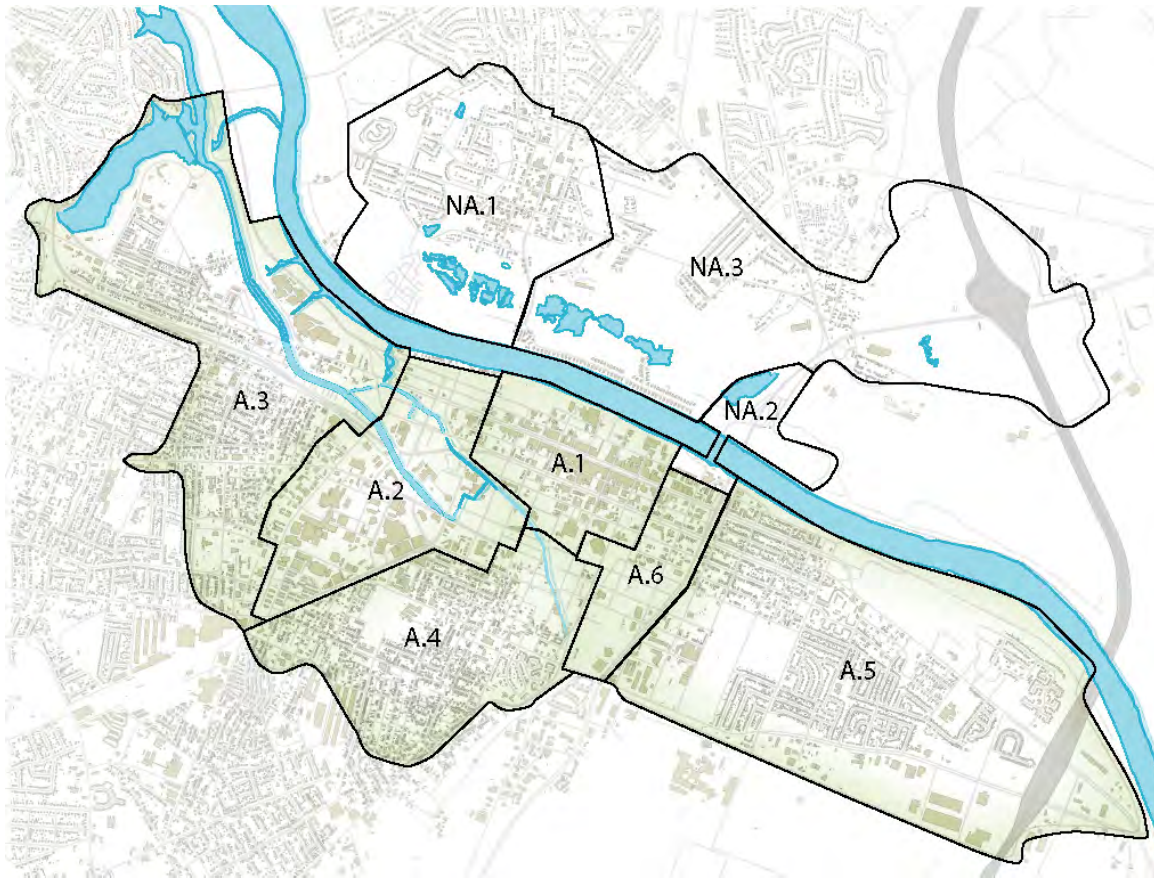
## The Augusta Districts





# In Augusta

Figure 17: Augusta Action Districts



The Urban Area in Augusta is divided into six districts:

**District A.1- The Augusta Downtown Core**

**District A.2- The Medical District**

**District A.3- Harrisburg**

**District A.4- Laney Walker/Bethlehem**

**District A.5- Old Town/East of East Boundary**

**District A.6- East End Higher Education/ Civic District**

While these districts have much in common with one another, each has its own character, assets, opportunities and issues, which considered together form the building blocks of this Plan. Each district and, in certain instances, its respective Market Creation Project(s) are discussed and illustrated in the following section.



## 5.1 District A.1- Downtown Core



**T**his district remains the defining heart of the region's Urban Area and includes the city blocks bounded by 6th and 13th Street, the riverfront and the Third Level Canal. This area includes the original shopping core for the entire region and, while having lost most of that business in the expansion of the suburbs, is still a center for restaurants, specialty shopping, bars and live entertainment. The downtown core remains a vital office district and a major center of employment for the region, as well as an emerging urban residential district. All of these are uses that the Plan actively supports.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

This district is the traditional business, cultural and entertainment center for the entire five county region. While traditional retail has become decentralized throughout these five surrounding counties, the downtown core must retain and grow its position both as an employment center and as the region's cultural and entertainment center if it is to thrive.

The historic fabric of the original downtown is tattered and needs to be rewoven into a vibrant urban area. There is a great deal of vacant land and there are many underutilized buildings in the downtown.

The conditions exist for creating a large mixed-income residential presence in this district, which is vital to insure sustainable economic health, good services and public safety in the downtown.

Transportation movement within this district is critical to its overall success. The Broad Street spine in this area is over a mile long. Easy movement along Broad Street and throughout the district, particularly to the medical area, is a necessity. Comfortable pedestrian ways and alternative means of public transportation must be developed. Railroad conflicts and impacts must be mitigated.





*Looking north over the Downtown Core District and the Savannah River.*



## 5.1 District A.1 Downtown Core

Equally important, stronger links from the downtown core must be made both through further development of gateway corridors, public transportation and bicycle links to the reaches of the five county region. This is especially important for the population centers south of the downtown, including easy access to and from Fort Gordon.



*One of Broad Street's lush medians*

### Assets to Build Upon

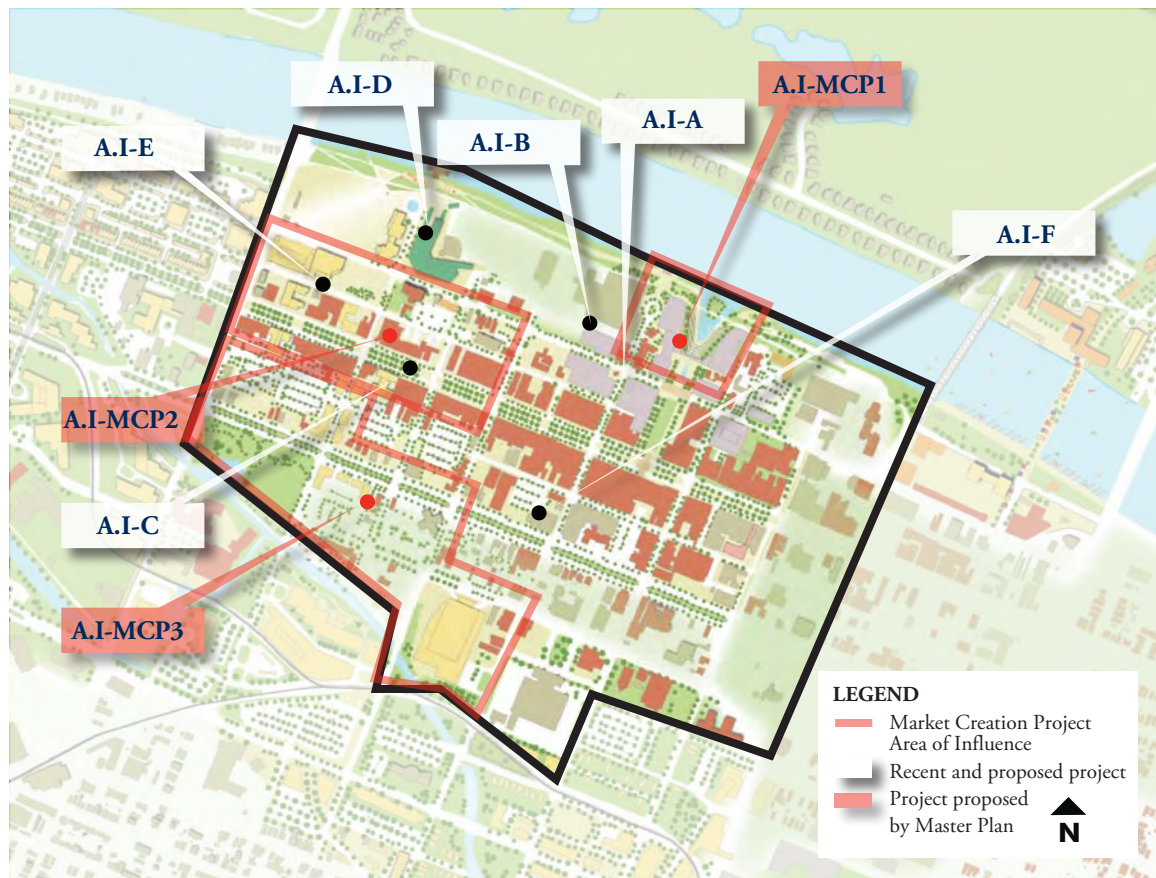
The significant physical assets of this district on which the Master Plan can build include its centrality and easy accessibility and, in fact, its adjacency to both the Savannah River and the historic Third Level Canal.

Its history is rich, as is its urban fabric, which includes Broad Street (truly “*broad*” at 165 feet from side to side), a well established classical urban street grid, an abundance of historic buildings, including the Broad Street facades, several historic churches, among them the Springfield Baptist Church, St. Paul’s Church and First Presbyterian, the boyhood church of Woodrow Wilson and many other historic structures.

The Augusta Downtown Core lies proximate to the medical campus, home to several hospitals and the Medical College of Georgia, composing the largest employment sector in the region. The downtown is central to a number of active and highly regarded arts programs and events.



Figure 18: Downtown Core District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key Projects and Initiatives

The plan has identified a number of projects and initiatives, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district, which are worthy of support, and are made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 18: Downtown Core District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed include:

### The TEE Center (A.I-A)

A trade, exhibit, and event center will be located at Reynolds and 9th Streets.

### Proposed mid-rise hotel complex (A.I-B)

A proposed hotel complex is currently in the planning and permitting stages on Reynolds and 9th Street, adjacent the Augusta Common.

### The White's Building Reuse (A.I-C)

The conversion of the former J.B. White's Department Store to a new ground level retail mini-mall and residential condominiums on the upper floors will contribute to the urban scene along Broad Street.

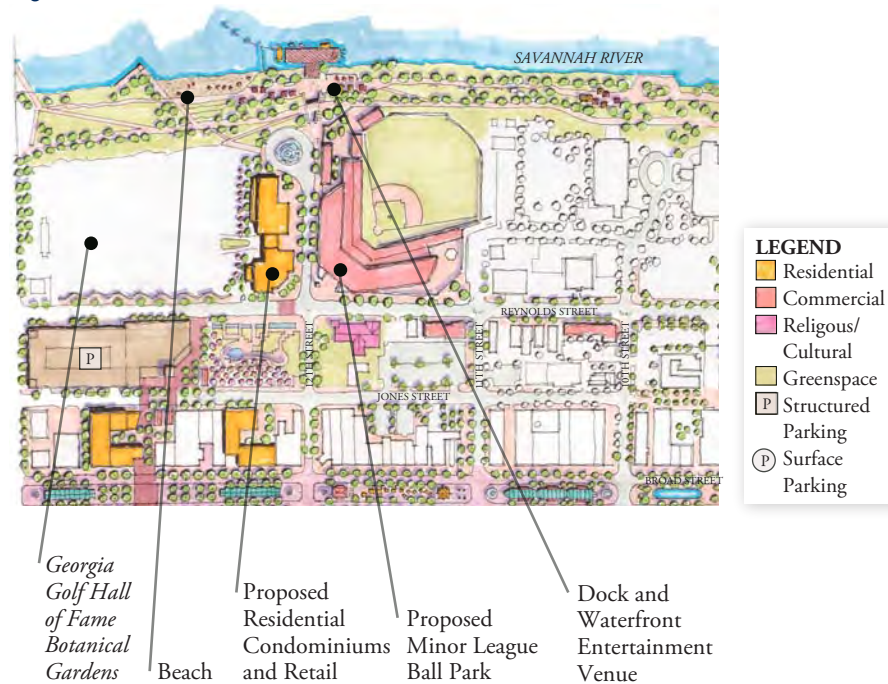
### Proposed Minor League Ball-Park Development (A.I-D)

Private parties have proposed a mixed-use “mini-Camden Yards” style development on a state-owned site near the river, originally set aside for the Augusta Golf Hall of Fame. The Master Plan endorses the ball park concept, if it is done, so that its realization reinforces development along Broad Street in this area and further linkages along the riverfront.

Other conditions recommended include:

1. New uses for the current ballpark near Lake Olmstead must be found that enhance the adjacent neighborhood.
2. Reuse analysis of the present ballpark site should be included in the suggested future open space network plan as a follow-up to this Master Plan.
3. The new ball park needs to be a year-round, multi-use facility, capable of handling a variety of uses to be determined jointly with the city.
4. The ballpark facility provides retail space along approximately 60% of the Reynolds and 12th Street frontage.
5. The development incorporates the Golf Hall of Fame concept and provides direct links to the existing Golf Hall of Fame Botanical Gardens.

Figure 19: Riverside Ball Park Illustrative Site Plan



6. The plan would incorporate streetscape improvements along 12th Street from Broad Street to the levee, with the area between Reynolds Street and the levee to become a pedestrian-oriented corridor.
7. The plan includes a permanent cut in the levee with direct access to the River Walk, which would be extended westward to 13th Street.
8. Development of a new riverfront park with docks, river swim/beach area, picnic grove and vendor setup areas, and would include required utilities for seasonal snacking, dining and entertainment.
9. A central parking facility would be developed in the area bounded by Reynolds Street, Jones Street, 12th Street and 13th Street, with ground level retail (ideally grocery) linked with a pedestrian plaza and street crossings.

### **On-going and proposed conversions (A.I-E)**

Conversion of historic, former commercial buildings to new uses, with residential in the upper floors is recommended.

### **Ongoing rehabilitation of historic homes (A.I-F)**

Particularly along Greene and Telfair Streets, and in Old Towne, rehabilitation of historic homes is recommended.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

While each of the projects described above can create or reinforce the development of new markets within the district, the Plan has identified a number of additional “Market Creation Projects”:

#### **The Westobou Arts Center (A.I-MCP1)**

#### **Marbury Village (A.I-MCP2)**

#### **Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood (A.I-MCP3)**

Each are illustrated to show the potential of a collaborative approach to redevelopment in the Urban Area. These are described in greater detail on pages 76-81, as well as in the Appendices Sections 3, 4 and 5.

## **Potential Champion Groups**

If the recommendations for this Augusta Downtown Core district are to be realized, it will be because individuals and organizations become actively involved in the implementation of those parts in which they have a genuine interest. This downtown district has many potential champions in both the public and private sectors.

Public entities include the mayor, Augusta Commissioners, city departments, the state legislative delegation, the Downtown Development Authority and the newly formed Business Improvement District (BID). All can play a major role. Where the downtown district intersects with the historic Augusta Canal, the Augusta Canal Authority can be a major proponent and partner.

Potential private sector champions include Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., the Downtown Augusta Alliance, downtown property owners and tenants, the ball park complex promoters, individual entrepreneurs and developers who see opportunity here. The Augusta Symphony and the larger arts community are examples of potential special interest champions for the arts complex.





# Market Creation Project 3:

## Westobou Arts Center



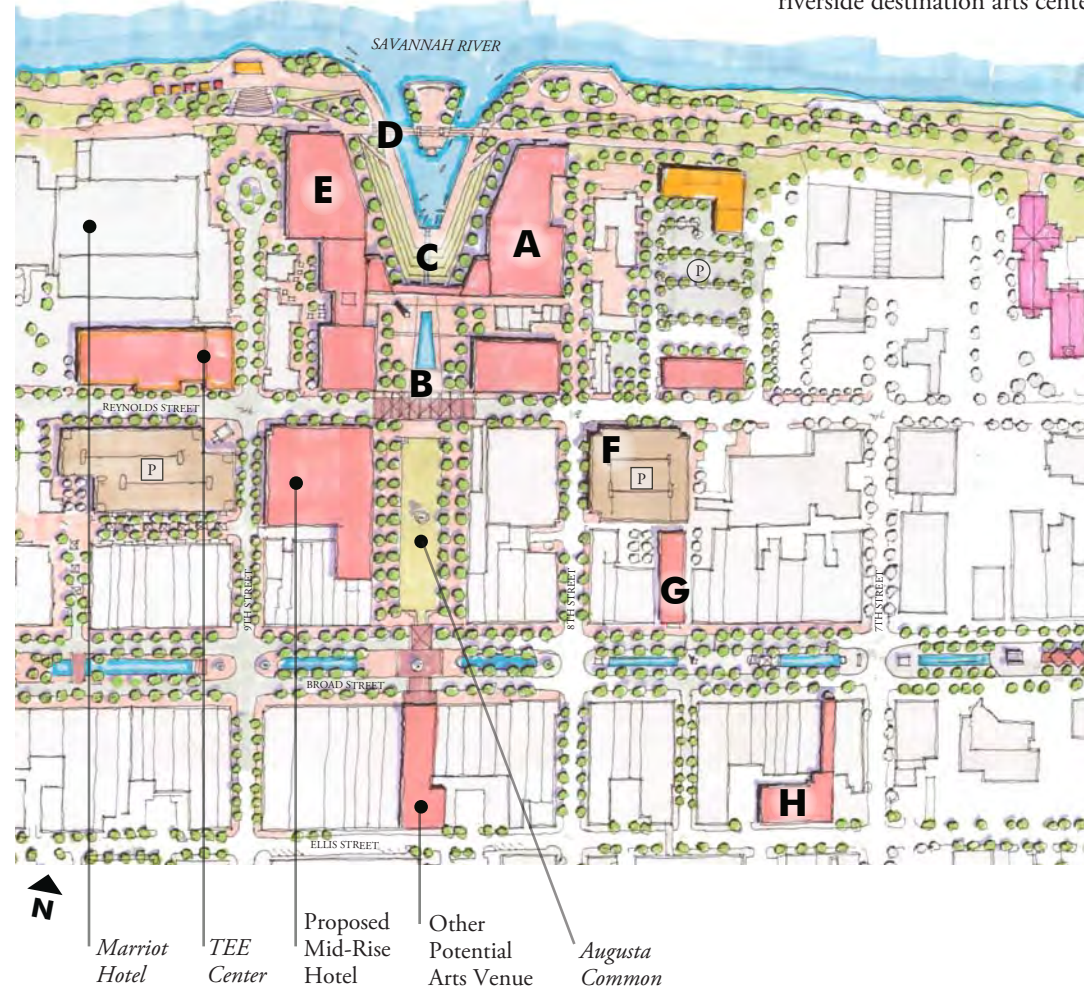
### Illustrative Program

This project involves redevelopment of vacant land between Reynolds Street and the Levee into a new, riverside destination arts center.

Figure 20: Westobou Arts Center Illustrative Site Plan

### WESTOBU PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

- A )** New Morris Museum
- B )** New Civic Plaza/  
Arts forecourt
- C )** River basin/  
Waterfront  
amphitheater
- D )** River Walk  
flyover
- E )** New Riverside  
Symphony Hall/  
Performance  
Complex
- F )** Proposed  
Parking Garage
- G )** Restored  
Imperial Theater
- H )** Restored  
Miller Theater



- LEGEND**
- Residential
  - Commercial
  - Religious/  
Cultural
  - Greenspace
  - P Structured  
Parking
  - P Surface  
Parking



The project includes:

- a new, 40,000 square foot Morris Museum
- a new 2000 plus seat Symphony Hall
- auxiliary space for both facilities
- an open space network of a boat basin/amphitheater, an interactive sculpture/ fountain plaza, paths, small courts and a levee-level upper walkway.

Along Broad Street, the program includes restoration of the Imperial, Miller and potentially the Modjeska Theaters.

The Broad Street restorations and the riverside open-space plazas, paths and courts would be completed within a 5-10 year time frame. The Morris Museum and Symphony Hall would be completed within 10-15 years. The cost of this multi-phase project would total approximately \$100 million.

Of the estimated \$90-100 million, roughly \$30-40 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 3: Westobou Arts Center.

## The Big Idea

*Augusta is well known as a regional center for the performing arts, from classical to contemporary performances. It also is home to the Morris Museum, which houses the finest collection of Southern Art anywhere, as well as a number of other special interest entities. The setting on the Savannah River, surrounded by history and adjacent the Augusta Convention Center, the new Trade, Exhibit and Event Center and the Augusta Common offers a unique opportunity to provide a state-of-the-art regional and national destination in the heart of Westobou.*



# Market Creation Project 4:

## Marbury Village



### Illustrative Program

This project redefines this three block portion of Broad Street into a pedestrian-oriented public open space with restaurants, bars, cafes, shops and activities developed within a new center median linking the two sides of the street.

Figure 21: Marbury Village Illustrative Site Plan

### MARBURY VILLAGE

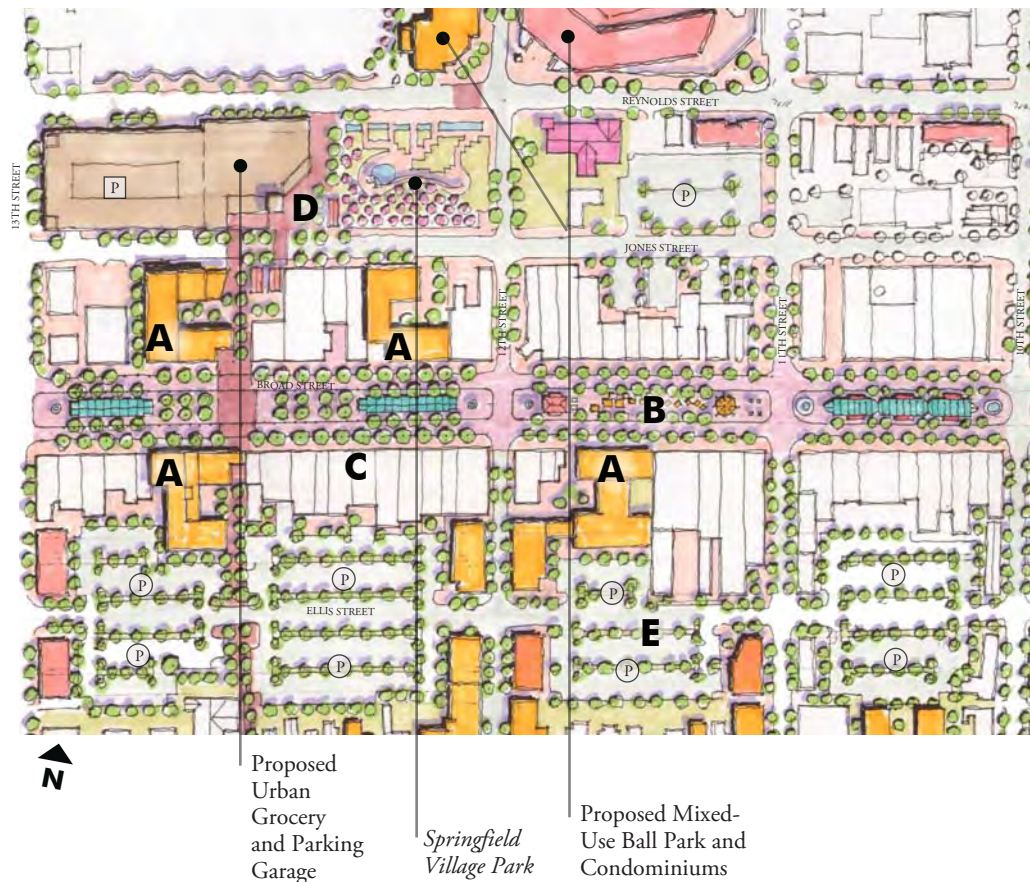
**A )** New mixed-use residential on non-conforming sites

**B )** Vibrant urban street plaza on Broad Street

**C )** Revitalization of existing buildings and businesses

**D )** Mid-block pedestrian connections to ball park and Augusta Canal Park

**E )** Ellis Street public parking and service area



LEGEND	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Residential
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightcoral; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Commercial
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpink; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Religious/ Cultural
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Greenspace
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid black; position:relative;"><div style="position:absolute; top:-5px; left:5px;">P</div></span>	Structured Parking
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px solid black; border-radius:50%; position:relative;"><div style="position:absolute; top:-5px; left:5px;">P</div></span>	Surface Parking





Along Broad Street, new condominium development, up to 400 units on 4 non-contributing sites would be developed on a phased basis, with additional new units developed along the side streets as the market permits. Within the first five years, the following program appears realistic:

- 100 residential units
- 10,000 square feet of retail
- continued historic building conversion and reuse
- Broad Street improvements
- Ellis Street parking and mid-block pathways

Subsequent phases, years 5-20, include additional 3-6 story residential development, a new public parking garage, with ground-level, grocery retail.

The total cost of this development is between \$170-200 million. Of the estimated \$170-200 million, roughly \$50-60 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 4: Marbury Village.

## The Big Idea

*Marbury Village revitalizes three blocks of Broad Street (10th to 13th Street) into a unique and exciting up-scale living, working, and retail environment within Augusta's Downtown Core. Building on recent and ongoing entrepreneurial business efforts, the unusual street width and the significant historic fabric, this concept establishes a unique "Urban Village" at this strategic location in the downtown, which is distinct and readily identifiable. Self-contained, and able to establish a safe and controllable enclave for long-term economic stability, it also serves as an anchor and a catalyst for adjacent revitalization both east and west along Broad Street, as well as to the river to the north and the historic canal system to the south.*



# Market Creation Project 5:

## Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood



### Illustrative Program

This project redefines a central 8-10 block area along Greene and Telfair Streets into a residential neighborhood oriented around a large new in-town park and the Third Level Canal.

Figure 22: Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood Illustrative Site Plan

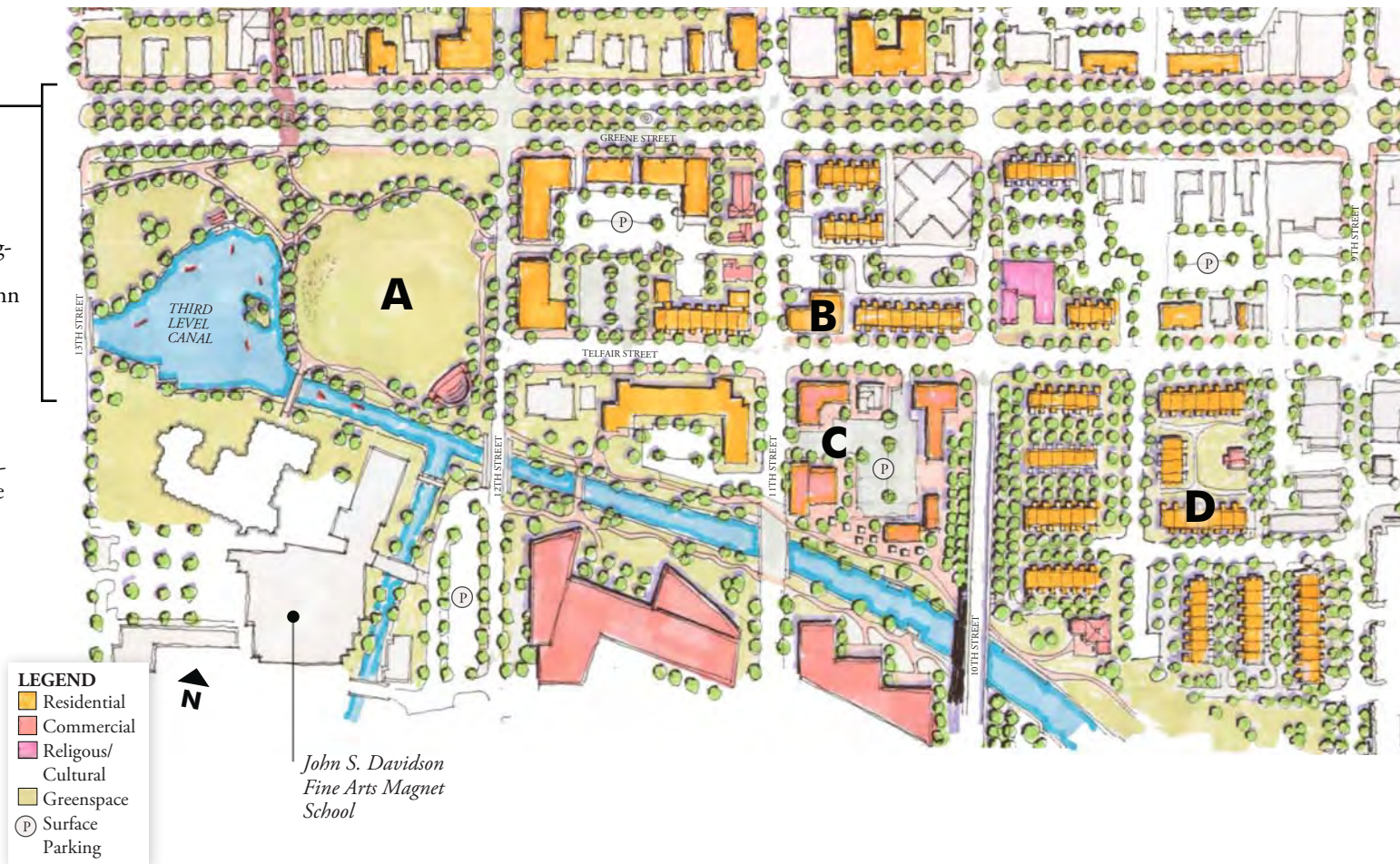
### AUGUSTA CANAL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

**A)** Large, centrally located city park alongside the Third Level Canal opposite the John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School

**B)** Extensive private mixed-use residential development along Greene Street and Telfair Street abutting the park and Third Level Canal

**C)** New neighborhood retail center

**D)** Potential alternative site for relocation of James Brown Arena





Around the new park, a major new mid-rise residential block is proposed along 12th Street and new infill single-family and multi-family blocks along Greene, with significant town house development along Telfair and the Third Level Canal. Within the next 5 to 10 years, the following program appears realistic:

- 150 residential units
- 10,000 square feet of retail
- continued historic building conversion and reuse
- the new Augusta Canal Park

Subsequent phases, years 10-20, include additional 3-6 story residential development, completion of the townhouse build-out and a neighborhood retail center along Telfair Street.

The total cost of this development is in the range of \$140-160 million. Of the estimated \$140-160 million, roughly \$10-15 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 5: Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood.

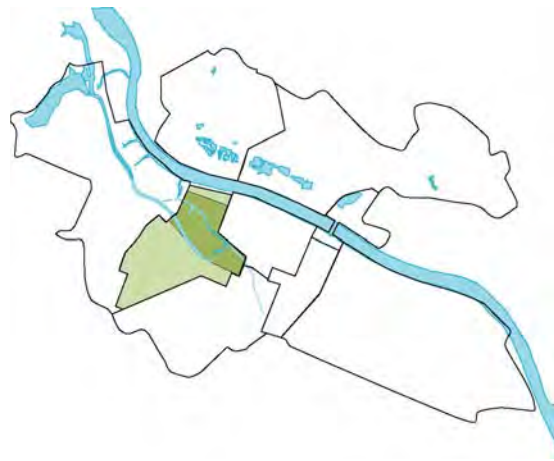
An alternate use for portions of this site along the Third Level Canal is also described in the Appendices Section 5: Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood.

## The Big Idea

*A new central park between downtown and the emerging Third Level Canal redevelopment area and the medical area could act as both a connector and a catalyst to surrounding development, while a new in-town neighborhood around this park, large enough to enjoy for recreation or outdoor events, would tie this park directly to the Third Level Canal and extend the neighborhood to the east.*



## 5.2 District A.2- Medical District



The present medical area is well established in a compact area framed by 13th Street/R.A. Dent Boulevard, 15th Street and the Calhoun Expressway. This Plan identifies a large expansion area to the north of the present medical area and the Calhoun Expressway. This boundary generally runs along Walton Way beginning at 10th Street, to 15th Street, where it turns north and continues to the foot of the levee. From there it turns east to 13th Street, south on 13th Street to the Third Level Canal, where it turns east to 10th Street and then south on 10th Street to its start point at Walton Way. The area lies between the existing medical area and downtown Augusta and, with few exceptions, consists largely of under-utilized and deteriorating properties, often home to light industrial and commercial uses inappropriate to this strategic location.

Several major gateways into the Urban Area converge in this location, including The River Watch Parkway, 13th Street/R. A. Dent Boulevard, 15th Street, Reynolds Street, Broad Street, Walton Way and Laney Walker Boulevard.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

The medical area is the single largest employer in the region. There is no other area, in terms of economic growth, that has the potential of this area to guarantee a strong and sustainable economic engine for the Urban Area and the city at large. The major question is how best to grow this sector.

It is assumed that the Medical College of Georgia has adequate land for the foreseeable future, including the former Sears building and Gilbert Manor public housing sites that lie within this district. It is therefore assumed that future growth should focus on related research and development, as well as administrative functions requiring less proximity between the academic and clinical activities.

With the Medical College of Georgia, and several important, high-quality hospitals already in this area, it is understood that the city and the local health sciences community would like to further develop this area into a center that competes on the national level. The Plan contends that, at the local level, coordinated planning and site assembly can elicit support from state and federal decision makers to assist in further development of this area into such a nationally recognized health sciences center, for both research and treatment.





*Looking northwest over the Medical District between the Savannah River and the First Level Canal.*



## 5.2 District A.2 Medical District

It is clear that without the land to build upon, not much can happen that will dramatically alter the current situation, even assuming other factors are in place. The land within this proposed district is largely underdeveloped, and the heart of the area is in relatively few hands. As properties are now divided into relatively small individual parcels, site assembly and land banking would be a key element of significant redevelopment of this area.

As the heart of Augusta's former mill district, with its still operating canal system and a number of iconic historic structures, this is a nationally significant historic setting. The most important of these, the Enterprise and the Sutherland Mills, have already undergone renovation to new uses.

While the historic buildings can be easily accommodated, existing railroad right-of-way is a significant obstacle to overcome, in terms of vehicular access, noise and vibration.

The J.C. Calhoun Expressway 'flyover' is a barrier to full development of not only this district, but also in the adjacent Downtown Core and in the Harrisburg district.



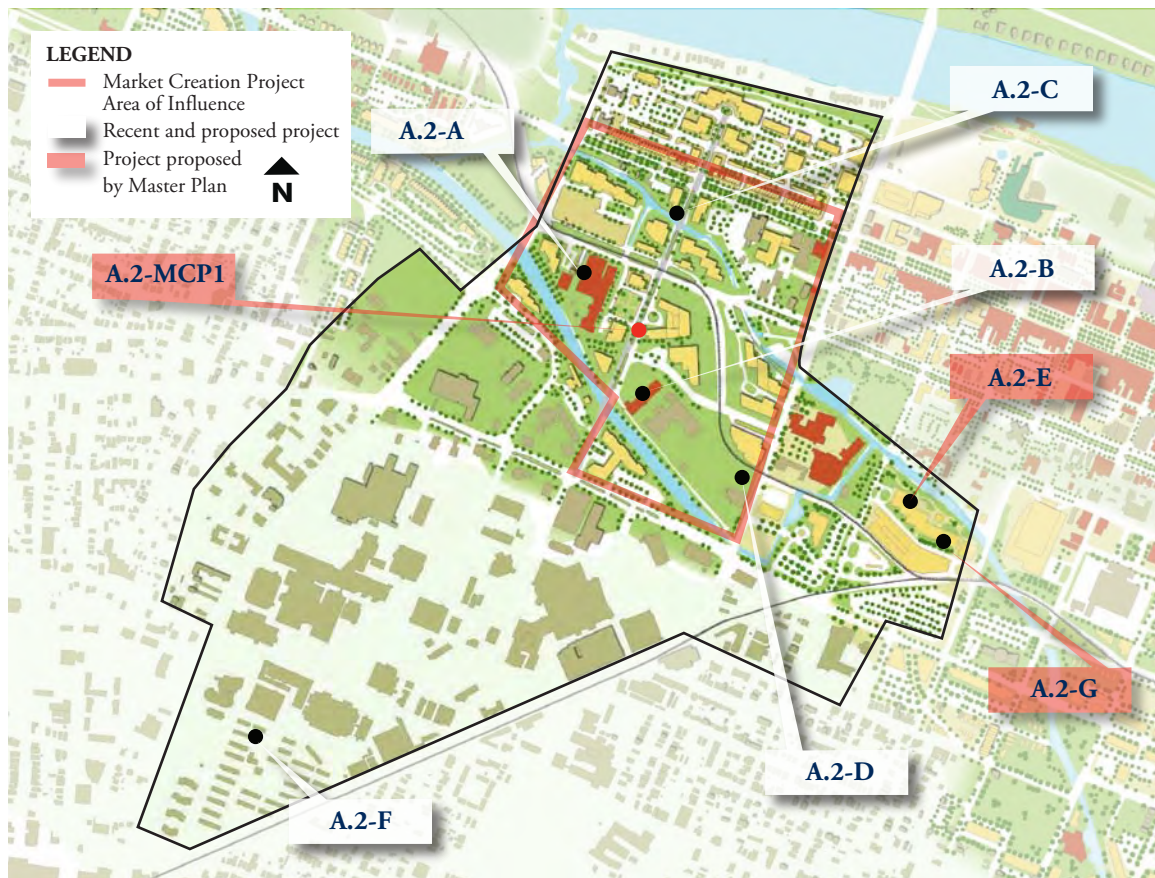
*The Third Level Canal as it meets Broad Street*

### Assets to Build Upon

The Urban Area's singular, most important economic asset is its proximity to the existing medical campus. Additionally, the canal system running through this area can become an attractive amenity to lure new health sciences development into a park setting. Broad Street and the new St. Sebastian Way are important access corridors to and from the medical area and downtown and the site is bordered by important arterials.



Figure 23: Medical District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key projects and Initiatives

The plan has identified a number of projects and initiatives, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district. Each is worthy of support, and is made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 21: Medical District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed include:

### The Enterprise Mill (A.2-A)

Though complete for several years, it is recognized as a catalytic project, which restored and converted the historic Empire-style mill into a mixed-use complex.

### The Sutherland Mill (A.2-B)

Now nearing completion, this mill is a good opportunity to attract health science entities into this area.

### The St. Sebastian Way Extension (A.2-C)

Now under construction from Walton Way to Reynolds Street, the connection of this area to the medical area and downtown will allow opportunities for future expansion to the north.

### Proposed Walton Rehabilitation Expansion (A.2-D)

Optimally, this expansion will occur on adjacent land on 13th Street, currently occupied by a non-conforming use, and along the gateway corridor into downtown.

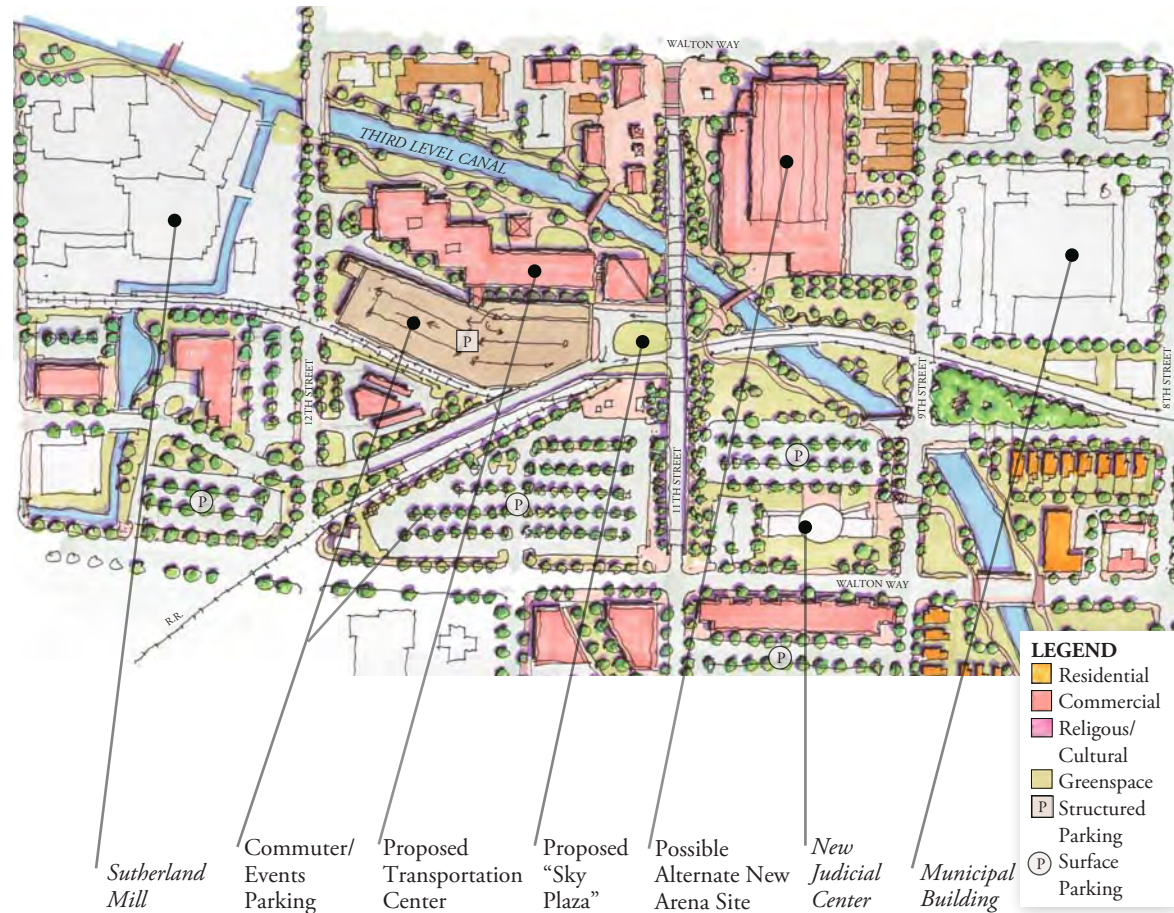
### Proposed Tenth Street Health Sciences Park (A.2-E)

This area, bounded by 10th Street, the Third Level Canal, 13th Street, and Walton Way, is the other major health sciences development opportunity in this district (See Figure 24: Tenth Street Transportation Complex). It would provide additional space for expansion for the development of Augusta into a major national center for the health sciences. A critical railroad overpass is possible in this area and it is a logical site for a central transportation terminal.

### Current Medical Facility Expansion (A.2-F)

The existing major institutions each have ongoing expansion initiatives. The Medical College of Georgia is developing the former Gilmore Manor and Fat Man sites, as well as having acquired property for potential future expansion west of 15th

Figure 24: Tenth Street Transportation Complex



Street. Meanwhile, University Hospital is building within its own campus and eastward along Walton Way.

### **Proposed Transportation Center (A.2-G)**

In support of the health sciences initiative and nearby commercial and cultural development, a central transportation facility along 10th Street between the Third Level Canal and Walton Way should be considered. This facility could include a central bus terminal, a 1000 plus car commuter/ events parking facility, and a street ramp and ‘sky plaza’ over the existing railroad track at 10th Street.

If such a parking facility were built, as shown in Figure 24: Tenth Street Transportation Complex, the area along Telfair, between 9th and 10th streets, south to the canal might be considered as the urban relocation option for the James Brown Arena. The James Brown Arena would be an important public facility located in this district. The current arena structure is an aging facility and long-range plans will potentially reconstruct or relocate this facility, either within the Urban Area or at another location within Richmond County. The long-term use of this multi-block site, so close to downtown, is a major issue for the coming decade.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

While each of the projects described above can create or reinforce the development of a new health science market within the district, the Plan has identified a single massive new “Market Creation Project”:

### **St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park (A.2-MCP1)**

This project speaks directly to all three of the principal overarching goals of this Master Plan, but especially to realize the Urban Area as a major center of learning and innovation.

This project is described in greater detail on pages 88-89, as well as in the Appendices Section 6.

## **Potential Champion Groups**

To realize the full potential of this Medical District, coordinated commitments and actions are required at the highest levels of the public sector, as well as the medical and business community. A consortium should be established to define and implement this initiative. As an example, the mayor, the Mayor Pro Tem, the chair of the state legislative delegation, the MCG President and the Chair of Augusta Tomorrow, Inc. should head the list. As much of the area lies within the Augusta Canal National Heritage Corridor, that organization would play a key role, as might individual property owners in the area.





# Market Creation Project 6: St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park



Figure 25: St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park Illustrative Site Plan

## ST. SEBASTIAN HEALTH SCIENCES PARK

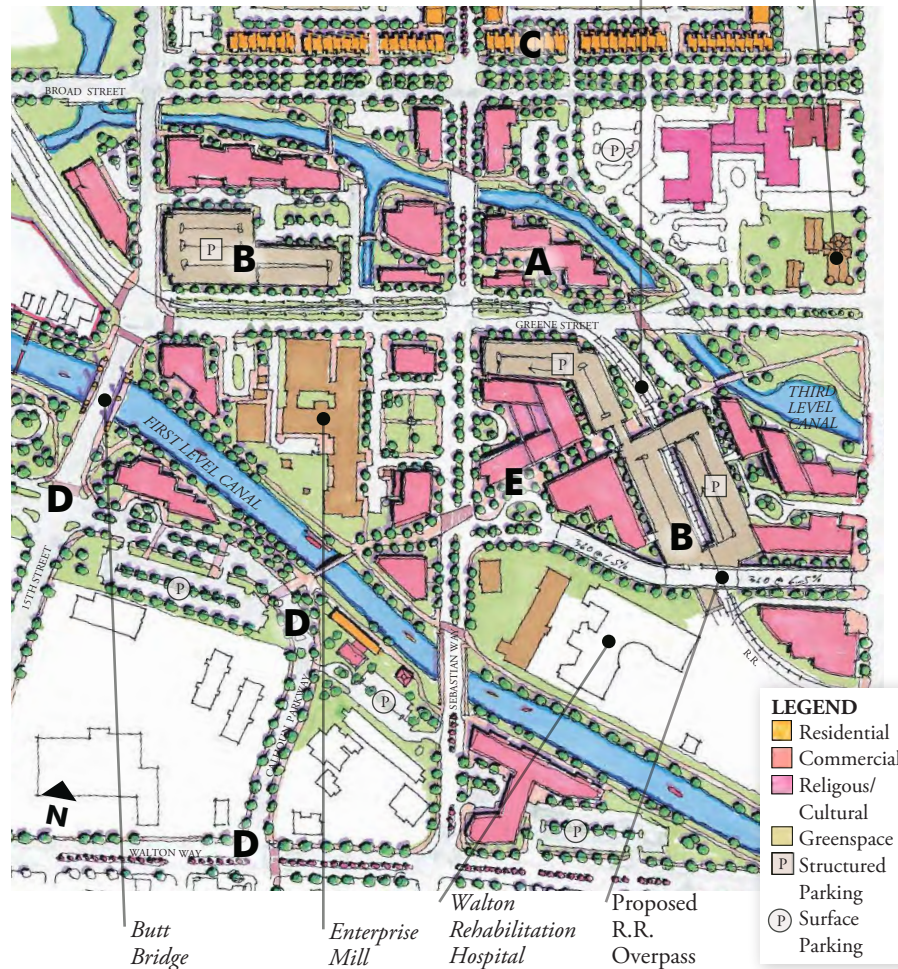
**A**) New high-tech campus between Broad Street and Walton Way

**B**) New parking decks to buffer railroad and provide emergency crossover

**C**) Twenty-first Century brick front townhouses along the north side of Broad Street

**D**) Direct connection from reconfigured J.C. Calhoun Expressway into the heart of the medical area

**E**) Greenway to downtown



## Illustrative Program

This project brings many jobs to the Westobou Urban Area and reinforces the connection of the medical area to the downtown. It assumes collaboration on the local, state and national level to develop Augusta into a leading center for the health sciences. The project area is bounded by Walton Way, Reynolds Street, 13th and 15th Streets, the first phase of which is the area north of the railroad tracks to Broad Street. This area is assumed to be developed largely for private/institutional research and development, as well as supporting administrative use for the Medical College of Georgia. A very large project, the first phase will take 10-15 years to complete. The illustrative program is as follows:

- 500,000 square feet of research, manufacturing and office development
- a 610 car parking facility, plus street improvements and surface parking
- Third Level Canal Park between 13th Street and Hawkes Gully
- Railroad activities mitigation program

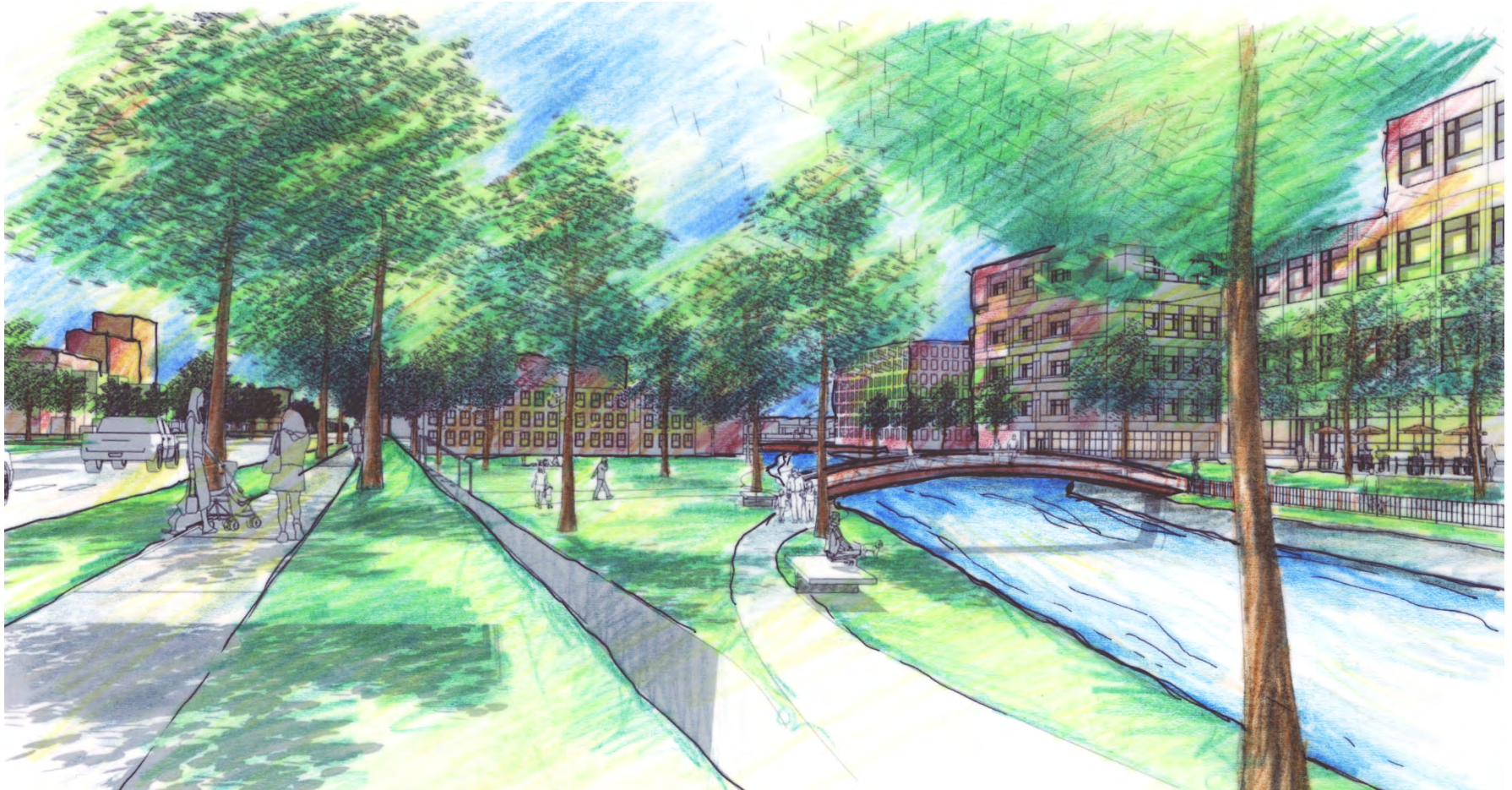
Subsequent phasing from years 10-20 includes additional build-out of research, manufacturing, commercial and even residential structures. A 1000 plus car central parking facility, with ramps allowing railroad cross-over capability for the public, is part of this extended program. The total cost of this development is between \$450-550 million. Of the estimated \$450-550 million, roughly \$60-70 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 6: St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park.



## The Big Idea

*The city, indeed the county and the region, joined with the health sciences community, could realize a cutting edge, nationally significant, mixed-use health sciences park in this area of underutilized land between the present medical area and the downtown core.*



## 5.3 District A.3- Harrisburg



**H**arrisburg, along with Laney Walker/Bethlehem and East of East boundary, is an in-town neighborhood of densely packed, modest housing surrounding Augusta's original city core. Harrisburg was a worker-housing village for the mills with a neighborhood retail center along Broad Street. The neighborhood was sliced in two in the 1960s by the J.C. Calhoun Expressway with a large part of the community separated from its original neighborhood core along Broad Street. The area includes portions of the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, which incorporates the First Level Canal, The King and Sibley mills, Chaffee Park, rows of original worker housing, churches, and, on Broad Street, the village original shopping center. This area also includes Olmstead Park and the Augusta GreenJackets baseball park.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

This is a large neighborhood of historic worker housing that has lost most of its original work base, i.e. the textile operations of the Sibley and King Mills. Attracting new working households to this area is a key objective, and an expansion of the health sciences economy could be one answer.

Within the neighborhood, physical improvements in terms of streets, sidewalks, parks, and other issues surrounding health, safety and welfare, should be expanded. Joint city/'faith-based' initiatives could focus on upgrading the housing stock. Encroachment of non-residential uses into the residential area from both 15th Street and Walton Way should be stopped. Urban design guidelines should be established and enforced along those edges.

The J.C. Calhoun Expressway cut this neighborhood in two and diverted traffic off of Broad Street, from which businesses have never recovered. Additionally, if the baseball park were to be relocated downtown, as presently proposed, the existing park must be properly reused.





*Looking over the Harrisburg District along the First Level Canal.*



The First Level Canal can become a major asset to attract new, upwardly mobile households to Harrisburg. However, the negative impacts of existing power lines and power line easements prevent development of this beautiful waterfront asset.



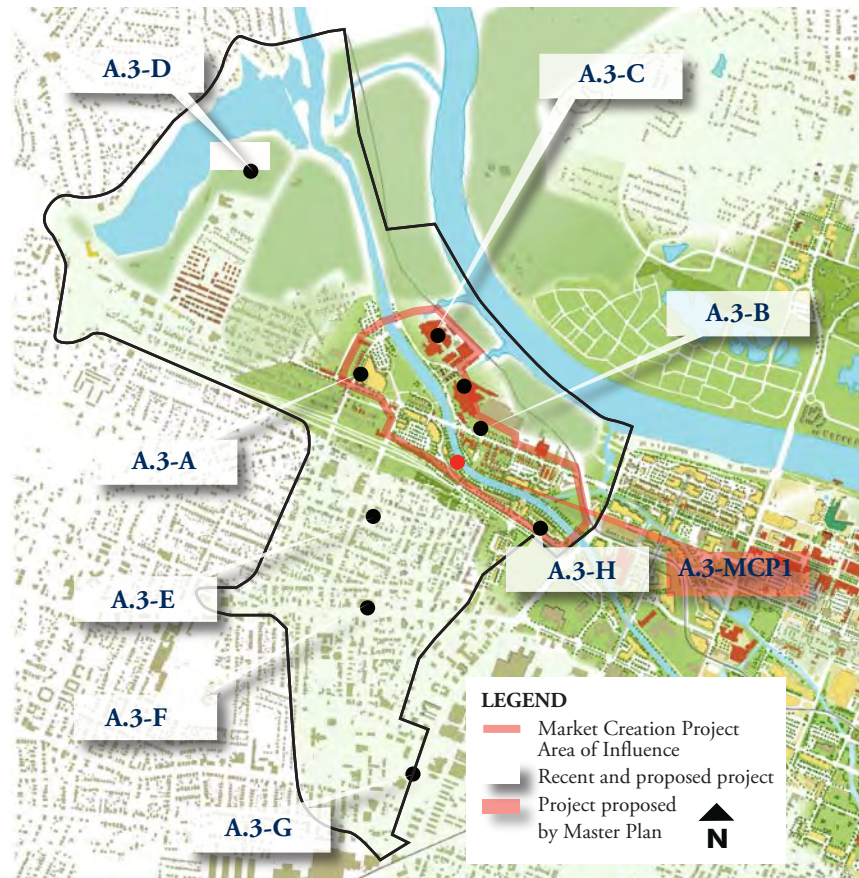
*Augusta's First Level Canal*

## Assets to Build Upon

Harrisburg occupies a strategic location at the foot of the “Hill”, adjacent the medical campus and thus can thrive as an affordable, walkable residential neighborhood for many working in the health sciences district. The First Level Canal is a very strong positive feature as it runs through the neighborhood intersecting Broad Street and along the nationally significant Sibley and King Mills. Lake Olmstead Park on the northwest corner of the neighborhood is an anchor point of the urban area’s entire open space network. Both Broad Street and Walton Way could become attractive and vital neighborhood retail corridors that serve a broader, commuting public.



Figure 26: Harrisburg District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key Projects and Initiatives

There are a number of projects, on-going and proposed, that are supported by this plan:

### The Kroc Center (A.3-A)

Now in Schematic Design, this Salvation Army/Kroc Foundation facility will provide recreational, arts and other activities to citizens of Augusta.

### Ongoing Broad Street Housing Renovation (A.3-B)

Private development interests are currently investing in the rehabilitation of a cluster of former mill houses along the Broad Street corridor, just east of the First Level Canal crossing.

### Sibley Mill Redevelopment (A.3-C)

This massive mill complex is closed and in need of redevelopment. The Augusta Canal Authority is currently working on a reuse strategy for this very important historic setting.

### Ball Park Reuse (A.3-D)

Assuming the GreenJackets move to the downtown waterfront, a major initiative should be launched to either find new tenants for the existing facility, or develop a new use for this site so near to Olmstead Park and the historic First Level Canal.



### **Area-wide Neighborhood Improvement Plan (A.3-E)**

Active citizens and the city are in the process of developing a master plan for improvement of this neighborhood, on both sides of the J.C. Calhoun Expressway.

### **Proposed Gateway Street Urban Design Guidelines (A.3-F)**

Enforceable development guidelines, including allowable uses, building, site and landscape design guidelines are recommended by the Plan along the Broad Street, 15th Street and Walton Way gateways.

### **Future Health Sciences Related Development (A.3-G)**

As this Plan recommends the redirection of future development of the health sciences sector toward the downtown, development in this area should be confined only to properties already in transition directly fronting 15th Street. The residential edges should be protected and strengthened using housing development for students and employees as a transition along Wright Avenue.

### **Proposed J.C. Calhoun Expressway Reconfiguration Review (A.3-H)**

This Plan recommends that a study be undertaken aimed at reuniting this severed neighborhood by configuring the J.C. Calhoun Expressway into a parkway running at grade from Crawford Avenue to 15th Street, with a new connecting extension, via New Bailie Street, directly into the heart of the medical area.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

While each of the projects described above can create or reinforce the revitalization of Harrisburg, the Plan has identified one new Market Creation Project:

### **Harrisburg Canal Village (A.3-MCP1)**

This project could further reposition the neighborhood as a great place to live and thus, should be supported and pursued in the coming years. This project calls for the comprehensive redevelopment of the neighborhood north of the J.C. Calhoun Expressway, and along Broad Street and the First Level Canal from 15th Street to the Ezekial Harris House. This project is described in greater detail on pages 96-97, as well as in the Appendices Section 7.



*A boat tour along the First Level Canal and the Sibley Mill*

## Potential Champion Groups

The city, through the Augusta Housing and Community Development Department, the Harrisburg Neighborhood Association, local not-for-profits, (i.e. Augusta Neighborhood Improvement Corporation (ANIC)), 'faith-based' groups, and private developers can collaborate on a range of neighborhood improvement initiatives. The medical community, and particularly the Medical College of Georgia, should limit their development activities in this area and become a steward of the neighborhood. The Salvation Army, with development of the Kroc Center, can become a catalytic force in the revitalization of Broad Street.

The Augusta Canal Authority can have a lead role in the redevelopment of this area in a way that protects the historic integrity of the canals and the historic scene.



*The Historic Ezekial Harris House*



# Market Creation Project 7:

## Harrisburg Village



### Illustrative Program

A part of Harrisburg, from Chaffee Park to 15th Street, extends along Broad Street and the First Level Canal to the edge of downtown and the Medical District.

Figure 27: Harrisburg Canal Village Illustrative Site Plan

### HARRISBURG VILLAGE

**A )** New Village Commercial Center

**B )** Residential development along the First Level Canal

**C )** Recreated Historic Mill Housing Setting

**D )** Sibley and King Mills

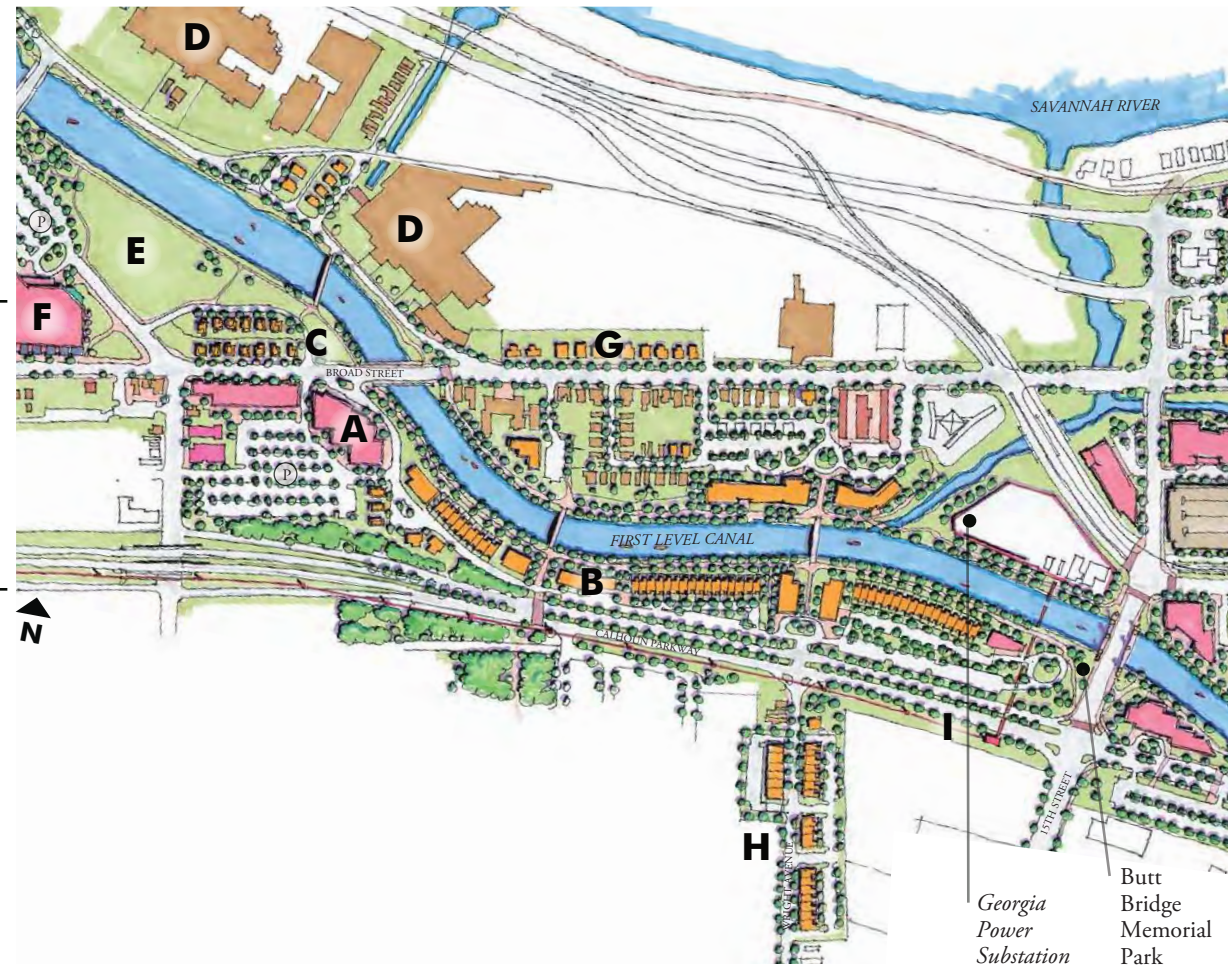
**E )** Chaffee Park revitalization

**F )** Kroc Center

**G )** Infill housing along Broad Street

**H )** Establish residential buffer along Wright Avenue to halt encroachment

**I )** Relocate/bury utility lines



#### LEGEND

- Residential
- Commercial
- Religious/Cultural
- Greenspace
- Surface Parking



This historic mill village setting, badly deteriorated today, is strategically placed for an exciting redevelopment that will benefit the neighborhood, the historic setting and the entire Urban Area. The neighborhood retail setting on Broad Street from the Ezekial Harris House to the canal would be redeveloped to serve the neighborhood and auto traffic on Broad Street. A new historic setting would be developed at the east end of the park and along Broad Street. New townhouse development would create a canal-side residential setting from Broad to the Butt Bridge.

The program assumes:

- 80,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial
- 220 townhouse and apartment units along the canal
- 72 units of historic building conversion and new houses
- reuse of the Sibley and King Mills
- Broad Street streetscape improvements
- re-establishment of the canal pathways
- relocation of major power transmission and distribution lines

Given the infrastructure barriers, this is a long range project that falls within a 10-20 year time frame. The estimated total cost is between \$90-100 million. Of the estimated \$90-100 million, roughly \$40-50 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 7: Harrisburg Canal Village.

## The Big Idea

*Harrisburg needs a new mixed-use retail center, in the spirit of the one that served this area in the early twentieth century, providing needed services while giving the neighborhood a new image and identity. The First Level Canal, as it runs from Chaffee Park eastward to the historic and iconic Butt Bridge, offers nearly a mile of high quality waterfront. An up-scale, European-styled canal village with the canal-bordered, tree-lined path and near continuous row housing would facilitate more direct access to the water with auto access and parking in the rear. This canal-side parkway would be part of the greenway network connecting to downtown. At Broad Street, the village would flow into the historic mill scene with a new neighborhood center of mixed historic and site-appropriate, new construction. This retail development would be supported by the combination of new surrounding residential and increased street traffic along the improved Broad Street corridor.*





## 5.4 District A.4- Laney Walker/ Bethlehem



**T**his district lies within the northern and eastern portions of the Laney Walker and Bethlehem neighborhoods, bounded generally by the railroad tracks to the north, running a few blocks south of Laney Walker Boulevard, westward to the medical area and R. A. Dent Boulevard and on the east to 7th Street. This is an historic mill worker neighborhood of mostly modest houses, much of it in disrepair. However, the area is undergoing rapid change, as investments are being made throughout this neighborhood by the public sector, 'faith based' organizations and private development entities.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

This district is a traditional working class neighborhood which many families and religious institutions have vacated to relocate to the outlying suburbs. House lots are very small and much of the original housing stock is obsolete by today's standards. Building deterioration and abandonment is common.

The over-riding challenge for the next twenty years is to bring about revitalization of these residential neighborhoods in such a way that modern needs and demands can be met at an affordable price, and that the quality of the built product is good, will last and be seen as a quality product 50 years from now.

The construction of the new Judicial Center at the corner of 9th Street and Walton Way will have both positive and potentially negative impacts on the area. On the one hand, it brings a high quality facility into the neighborhood, with the possibility of considerable spin-off commercial development. On the other hand, placement of a 'non-neighborhood-friendly' activity, plus its parking, between the neighborhood and the downtown core could isolate the neighborhood further.

The Third Level Canal passes through this area, and should be capitalized on as an important amenity for the area.





*Looking northwest over Laney Walker and Dyess Park.*



## Assets to Build Upon

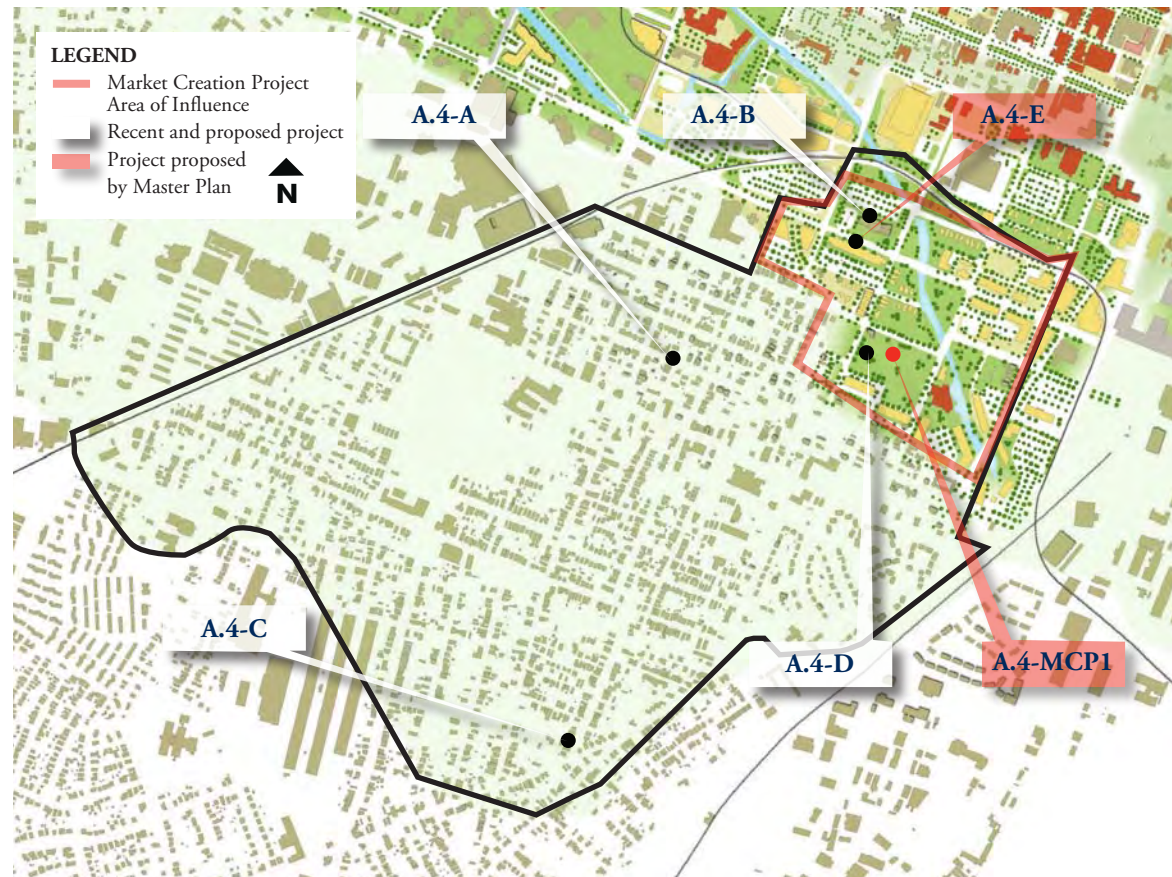
This area is within walking distance of the downtown and the job center of the region, the medical complex.

The Third Level Canal, properly developed and maintained, can be a major amenity around which both open space and private development can be organized.

Dyess Park is a well-located large park on the edge of the neighborhood and adjacent the Third Level Canal around which the neighborhood can grow. Ninth Street, Walton Way and Laney Walker Boulevard are important gateways into downtown Augusta from three directions.

The new Judicial Center, with its various support needs, can be a catalyst for revitalizing this part of Walton Way.

Figure 28: Laney Walker/Bethlehem District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key Projects and Initiatives

### Private and not-for Profit Residential Development (A.4-A)

A significant amount of new development is occurring in this area. The current focus on single-family and town house construction for both the moderate rental and ownership market.

### New Judicial Center (A.4-B)

The new Judicial Center for the county is relocating here from the existing Municipal Building on Greene Street.

### Ninth Street Gateway Improvements (A.4-C)

Streetscape improvements along the 9th Street corridor into the downtown core are needed.

### Dyess Park Revitalization (A.4-D)

The revitalization and conversion of Dyess Park to a more passive park setting is proposed by the city to encourage future development.

### Proposed Walton Way Commercial Center (A.4-E)

Opposite the Judicial Center, this project could capture court related business and support retail.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

The Master Plan has identified one potential Market Creation Project:

### Dyess Park Canal Village (A.4-MCP1)

This project should be supported and pursued in the coming years. This project calls for the comprehensive redevelopment of the neighborhood at the eastern end of the Third Level Canal and adjacent Dyess Park. This project is described in greater detail on pages 102-103, as well as in the Appendices Section 8.

## Potential Champion Groups

Augusta's Department of Housing and Community Development is poised to lead the revitalization of this district. They have developed a master plan for the area and are currently purchasing property for redevelopment. The Augusta Neighborhood Improvement Corporation (ANIC) is actively purchasing, assembling and developing whole blocks of the neighborhood. A number of 'Faith-Based' groups are actively investing in the neighborhood now. The recent neighborhood master plans can hold the key to getting these organizations to work in concert and collaboration with each other. The city's Department of Recreation and the Augusta Canal Authority would have major roles here.





# Market Creation Project 8: Dyess Park Canal Village



Figure 29: Dyess Park Canal Village Illustrative Site Plan

## DYESS CANAL PARK VILLAGE

- A )** Mixed-use commercial development attendant to the new Judicial Center
- B )** Enhanced Walton Way streetscape
- C )** Development of single-family and townhouse infill housing surrounding the park area
- D )** Renovation of park facilities into passive use
- E )** Single-family and multi-family residential development around the Third Level Canal along 7th Street



## Illustrative Program

As part of the Laney Walker neighborhood, this area centers on Walton Way, 9th Street, Dyess Park and the Third Level Canal's eastern terminus. The area can potentially grow into the Greene and Telfair residential neighborhoods and into downtown.

New retail development is proposed along Walton Way, serving both the new Judicial Center and the neighborhood. New housing is already being developed around Dyess Park. At the eastern end of the canal, private development can create a canal-side residential setting from Fenwick to 7th Street. The program assumes:

- 80,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial
- 220 residential units of townhouses and apartments along the canal
- 72 residential units of historic building conversion and new houses
- streetscape improvements
- park setting along the canal

Given the active interest in this area today, this project could easily fall within a 5-10 year time frame. The estimated total cost is approximately \$60-70 million. Of the estimated \$60-70 million, roughly \$20-25 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

A more detailed description and analysis of this Market Creation Project can be found in the separate Appendices Section 8: Dyess Park Canal Village.





## The Big Idea

*Residential development around Dyess Park and the Third Level Canal will create a high-quality affordable neighborhood of renovated and new housing at the point most proximate to the downtown core and at the eastern terminus of the historic canal system. The project would also capitalize on the presence of the new Judicial Center to create a new neighborhood commercial center.*



## 5.5 District A.5- Old Towne/East of East Boundary



**T**his area sits on the eastern end of the Urban Area and runs from the Gordon Highway eastward to I-520 and from Laney Walker Boulevard north to the Savannah River. Two arterial streets, Sand Bar Ferry Road and Laney Walker Boulevard will soon become major gateways into downtown Augusta. Historically, this district is largely residential. However, the area is impacted by conflicting public (jail), industrial and related commercial uses along these corridors. This is also true along the Gordon Highway, which presents a substantial barrier between this area and the downtown.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

Old Towne, formerly Pinch Gut, is a beautiful, historic neighborhood with a diversity of house types and styles, ranging from near-mansions and period apartment blocks to modest bungalows, with well-landscaped yards, within a lush, tree-lined street grid. This is a classic example of a high-quality, in-town neighborhood, which, if properly attended to, will attract families back into the downtown.

The East Augusta neighborhood east of East Boundary, while newer, mainly post WWII, is an attractive neighborhood of one story, suburban-styled homes in a well landscaped setting that is being eaten at by non-conforming development and neglect along its Sand Bar Ferry Road, Laney Walker Boulevard and East Boundary edges. This has resulted in investment disincentive, most notably along East Boundary.

The historic Augusta street grid ends abruptly at East Boundary, resulting in a confused layout in the area of Broad Street and Sand Bar Ferry Road, in particular. Through truck traffic into the downtown is an issue which needs to be addressed.

The large area north of Sand Bar Ferry to the river, offers the opportunity for a neighborhood-defining redevelopment into a unique recreation-oriented





Looking east over the Olde Towne/East of East Boundary District, which is bordered to the north by the Savannah River.

## 5.5 District A.5 Olde Towne/East of East Boundary

new community with both a waterfront and rural character right on the edge of Augusta's Urban Area. Laney Walker Boulevard is presently an industrial and service corridor into downtown and the medical area. A redefinition of its length between I-520 and the Gordon Highway as a designated auto-oriented commercial area properly controlled, could become an attractive relocation area for existing inappropriate uses currently occupying critical sites within the Urban Area.



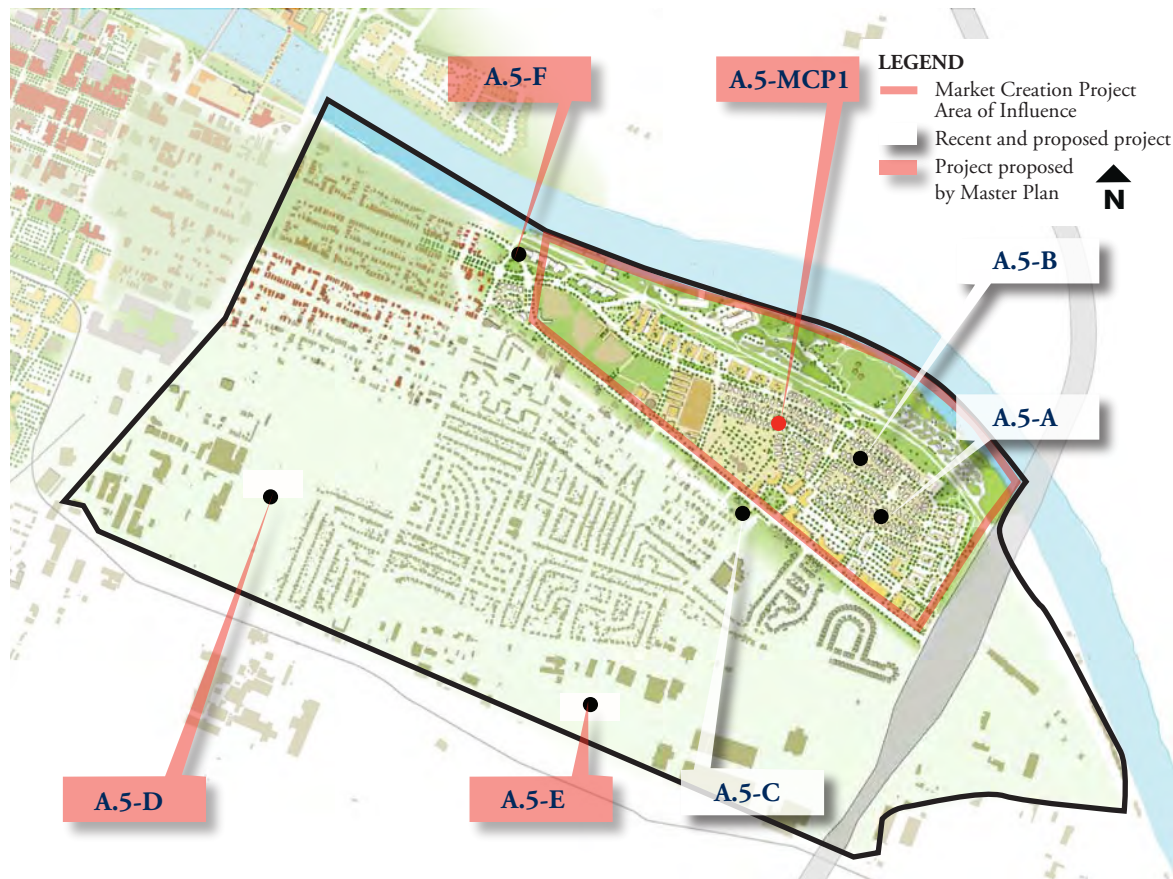
*Underutilized land north of Sand Bar Ferry Road*

### Assets to Build Upon

With its location on the east end of Augusta, this area is poised to become a major gateway corridor into the downtown. The area includes established neighborhoods, including the historic Old Towne area. To the north of Sand Bar Ferry Road, there is nearly a mile of undeveloped riverfront, the levee, and large expanses of under developed land. The regional and neighborhood recreational potential of this area is very high and is the natural and logical eastern “book-end” to the Westobou open space network, which extends westward to Lake Olmstead.



Figure 30: Olde Towne/East of East Boundary District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key Projects and Initiatives

The plan can capitalize on a number of proposed projects and ideas identified to date as the result of public outreach efforts. These include:

### Underwood Redevelopment (A.5-A)

A HOPE VI-like redevelopment of this distressed public housing project is currently proposed by the Augusta Housing Authority.

### Marion Homes Redevelopment (A.5-B)

Redevelopment of a distressed neighborhood, adjacent Underwood should be coordinated by the Augusta Department of Housing and Community Development.

### Hornsby Elementary School (A.5-C)

The new Hornsby Elementary School can become the center piece of a new Sand Bar Ferry Riverside “Village Green,” with Kentucky Avenue extending across Sand Bar Ferry Road, tying proposed new development to both the existing street and community networks.





*The Georgia-Carolina State Fair hosted by the Exchange Club*

### **Proposed Fair Grounds Reuse (A.5-D)**

The Exchange Club, the current owners, are considering sale of this property on Laney Walker Boulevard and relocating their Fair event to a more convenient venue, potentially along Sand Bar Ferry Road. This would allow redevelopment of the current site as an auto-oriented commercial zone.

While residential use has been proposed for this site in the past, given its surroundings, the Plan recommends it be made part of the proposed Laney Walker auto-oriented commercial area. This would provide relocation of non-conforming uses outside of the downtown core.

### **Proposed Laney Walker Commercial Zone (A.5-E)**

This plan has identified Laney Walker Boulevard, east of the Gordon highway as a desirable location for development of an auto-oriented commercial zone.

### **Proposed Broad Street and Sand Bar Ferry Road Traffic Improvements (A.5-F)**

The Plan recommends redesign of the Broad Street/Sand Bar Ferry intersection to improve the 'gateway' arrival from I-520 through this area.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.

The Master Plan has identified a major, new, potential Market Creation Project:

### **Sand Bar Ferry Riverside (A.5-MCP1)**

This project should be supported and pursued in the coming years. This project calls for the comprehensive redevelopment of the area north of Sand bar Ferry Road from the Gordon Highway to I-520 into a 'New Urbanist' village within a regional park setting. This concept is introduced on pages 110-111 and is examined in greater detail in the Appendices.





*The Greater Young Zion Baptist Church*

## Potential Champion Groups

This area potentially has many champions. The city would take the lead in establishing the recreational component, but partners could include the Exchange Club, who would be responsible for fair structures and events; the Golden Harvest, who would establish a commercial organic farming operation in this area; summer education program sponsors; private providers of such services as an RV/Camping facility or livery/riding stables.

The Augusta Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Community Development will no doubt take the lead in developing public/private partnerships for the several phases of residential and commercial development.

Perhaps most importantly, churches within this community can provide the leadership and outreach required to realize this plan. This could be done through a number of 'faith-based' initiatives, in which they have a direct impact on developing and implementing various parts of the plan.

# Market Creation Project 9:

## Sand Bar Ferry Riverside



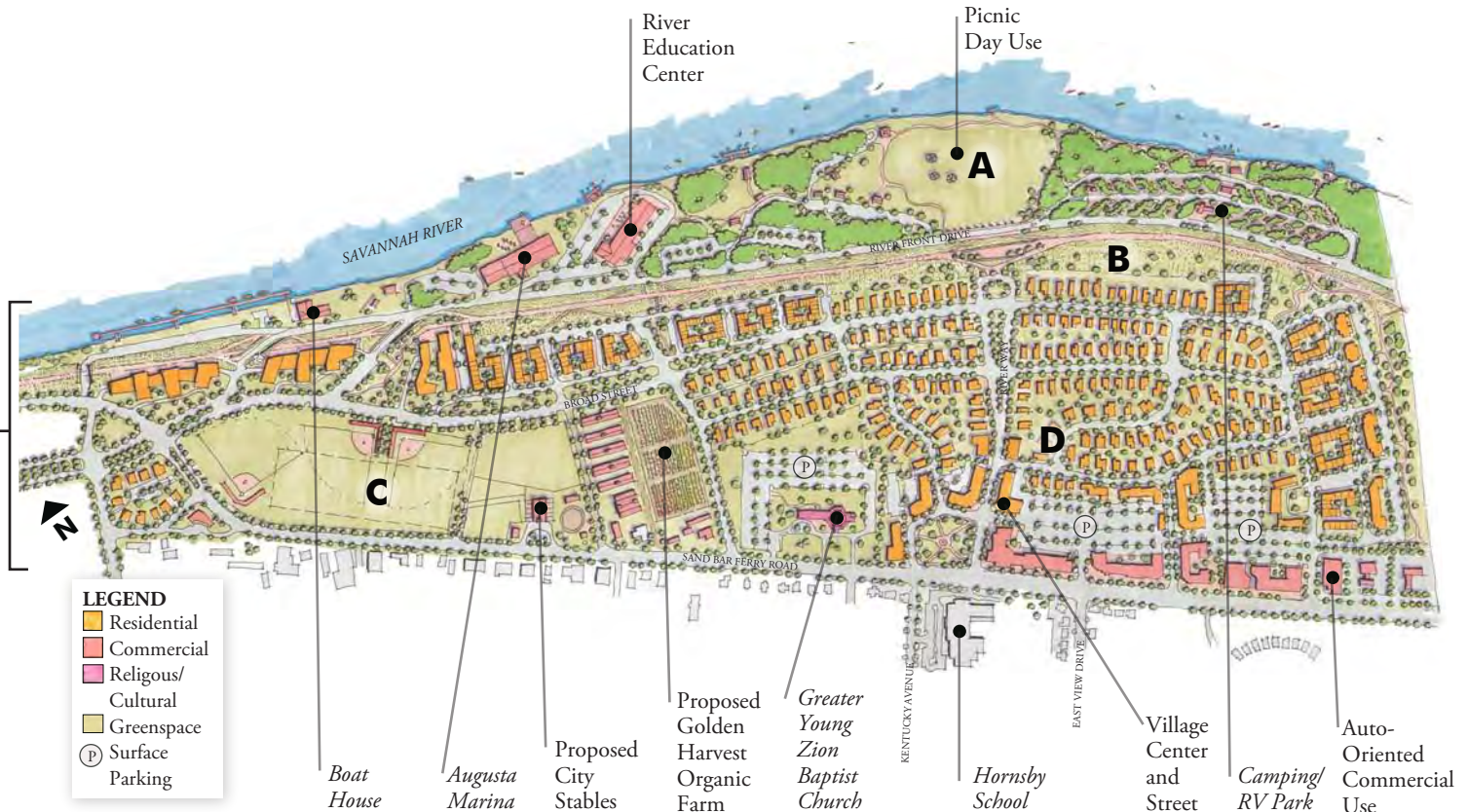
### Illustrative Program

The area between Sand Bar Ferry Road and the Savannah River can easily be made a high value setting with its extensive river frontage, the levee path to downtown and its gateway position between I-520 and Augusta's downtown core.

### SAND BAR FERRY RIVERSIDE

- A )** Regional Savannah View Park with multi-recreational and educational uses
- B )** Levee Way linear park connecting downtown with Phinizy Swamp
- C )** Multi-purposed regional Sand Bar Ferry Park for organized sports, picnics, games, fairs, and permanent "farm" operations
- D )** 'New Urbanist' Sand Bar Ferry Village including shops, single-family, townhouse, and garden apartment style housing

Figure 31: Sand Bar Ferry Riverside Illustrative Site Plan





The riverfront, levee and large expanses of underutilized open space join to make multi-purpose, recreational use and related activities the centerpiece of this plan. Those uses include a riverfront park, open activity areas for uses from traditional playing fields to the County Fair, to stables and livery services, organic farming, boat-building and other hands-on, environmental educational uses.

New retail development is proposed along the eastern end of Sand Bar Ferry Road, including an auto-oriented commercial corridor which segways into a new village center for this new neighborhood.

The heart of the concept is a new residential neighborhood, replacing both the distressed Underwood and Marion Homes complexes and extending along the extension of Broad Street into this area, back to the levee and East Boundary.

The program assumes:

- 60,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial
- 240 apartment, townhouse and single family units
- Savannah View Park park, with RV/Camping facilities and reuse of key structures as educational venues
- Sand Bar Ferry Park, with active fields and such rural amenities as the fairgrounds, stables and an organic farm
- Broad Street extension and related improvements

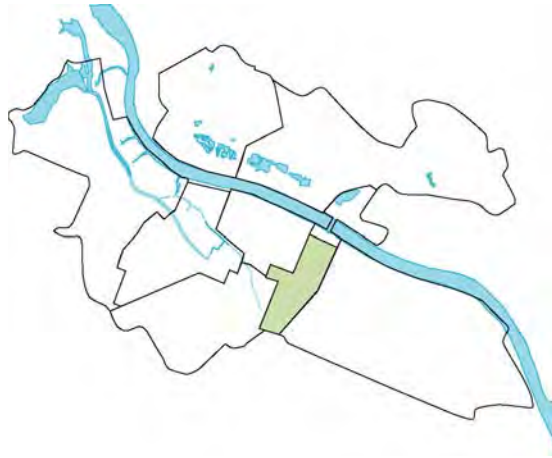
This is a large undertaking. However, given the active interest in this area today, with full support, this project could easily fall within a 5-10 year time frame. The estimated total cost is between \$130-150 million. Of the estimated \$130-150 million, roughly \$50-60 million would be for infrastructure and public purpose.

## The Big Idea

*This project would create a new, regional, multi-use open space destination at the eastern edge of the Augusta downtown core, including a 'New Urbanist' village with green, waterfront park, fields and rural amenities in this struggling neighborhood. There is nearly a mile of forgotten, underdeveloped Savannah River waterfront in this neighborhood and the area between Sand Bar Ferry Road and the levee, which is underutilized and cries out for higher and better uses.*



## 5.6 District A.6- East End Higher Education/ Civic Area



**T**his district is loosely defined as the area bounded east and west by the Gordon Highway and 6th Street, and on the north by the river and to the south by the area around the terminus of the Third Level Canal in Laney Walker, with a 'bump out' to include the arena area. While several important city facilities, including the Municipal Building, the Augusta Museum of History, several churches and other city/county offices lie within the district, the general impression is one of vacant land and open, unimproved parking lots. The commercial center along Broad Street is more distressed than other parts of Broad Street in the downtown core to the west.

### Issues for the next Two Decades

With the relocation of current court operations from the municipal building out of this area, the steady conversion of remaining historic buildings will likely stop and, indeed, the trend could begin to reverse itself. Redefining the core uses and activities in this area will be a critical issue for the entire region. Unlike Athens, Savannah, Columbia or many other many thriving cities of its size, Augusta does not have a major college or university campus in or adjacent its commercial and civic heart.

Augusta prides itself on the quality of its performing arts and its community of highly educated, high technology professionals associated with the Savannah River Site, Fort Gordon and within the medical community.

These two themes, 1) performing arts and 2) health/ environmental science technology, can become the cornerstones of building permanent higher education capacity in the downtown. Several options exist for development of such an important component including:

- expansion site for Augusta State University or Paine College
- extension of Georgia Tech
- relocation site for an existing college
- new dedicated campus or infill campus for a new and independent college or institute







Looking south over the East End Higher Education/Civic Area along the Gordon Highway.



## 5.6 District A.6 East End Higher Education/Civic Area

This area is strategically located to become a setting for such a venture and development of a comprehensive campaign to develop this initiative should be given high priority now.

As noted earlier, the James Brown Arena is an important public facility located in this district. This is an aging structure and long range plans will potentially reconstruct or relocate this facility, either within the Urban Area or at another location within Richmond County. The long-term use of this multi-block site, so close to downtown, is a major issue for the coming decade. Also, underutilized buildings, such as the 1801 Academy of Richmond County Building and the 1836 Old Medical College Building on Telfair Street offer adaptive reuse potential to support new educational missions in the twenty-first century.



*James Brown Arena*

### Assets to Build Upon

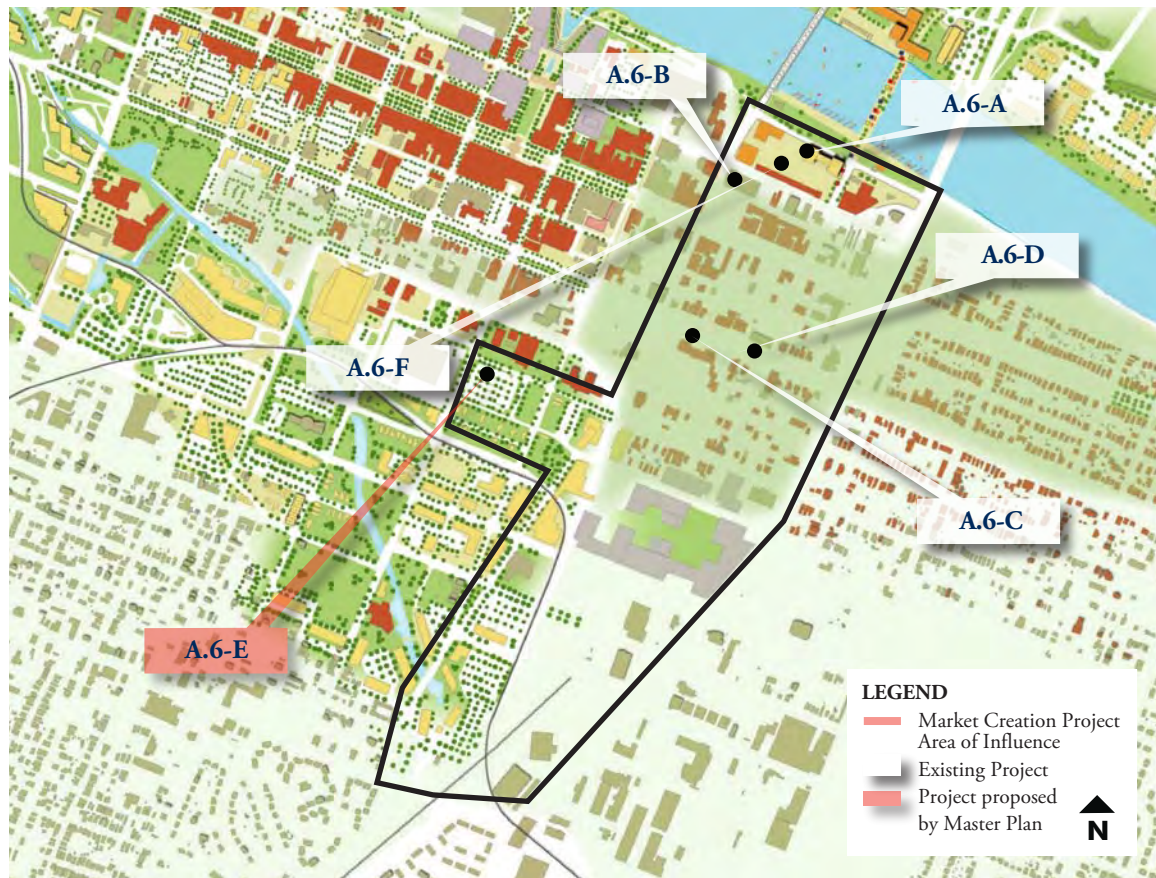
The district's location on the eastern edge of downtown is its major asset. This area is strategically located along the Gordon Highway, and Laney Walker Boulevard, giving it excellent access to the high technology centers of the Savannah River Site, Fort Gordon, the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy at Phinizy Swamp and the Medical College of Georgia. Its educational programs could further benefit by its proximity to government facilities, a burgeoning arts community and the Augusta Museum of History.

The riverfront lies at its northern edge and Broad Street connects it directly to downtown.

There is a large amount of vacant and undeveloped land in this area, as well as underutilized buildings, which could be the basis of either an infill campus centered around Telfair Street and the river, or a new dedicated site proximal to Laney Walker Boulevard. The infill campus would be integrated into existing healthy urban fabric, similar to what has been done with specialty schools such as the Savannah School of Art and Design and Boston's Emerson College of Communication. The dedicated campus could become Georgia Tech-Augusta Campus.



Figure 32: East End Higher Education/Municipal Area District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives



## Key Projects and Initiatives

The plan has identified a number of projects and initiatives, both on-going and future ventures, that reinforce the goals of the plan in this district, are worthy of support, and are made part of the Master Plan. (See Figure 32: East End Higher Education Area District Boundary with Key Projects and Initiatives). Current projects, either in construction or proposed include:

### The Pension Fund Site (A.6-A)

This long vacant site has been the subject of several mixed-use development efforts, primarily due to its waterfront location. The city may want to incorporate it into the emerging Westobou Crossing Market Creation Project. Following that, it is recommended that the city solicit a broad range of development proposals, from residential to institutional uses. All efforts should be made to preserve, restore and reuse the historic railroad warehouse along Reynolds Street.

### Augusta Museum of History Expansion (A.6-B)

The proposed expansion of the museum could further connect the museum to Broad Street and reinforce the performing arts image of Augusta through varying exhibits on the region's famous singers and dancers.



*Augusta Municipal Building*

This expansion could spearhead revitalization of this part of Broad Street as a commercial, cultural and entertainment venue for the region. While the plan supports this expansion, it must be done in collaboration with the arts center development further west, and it should celebrate and respect the railroad heritage of this area, as well as the historic fabric of the area.

### **Municipal Building Site (A.6-C)**

The current Municipal Building is surrounded by a sea of open parking. This is a valuable downtown site and a long range goal would be to urbanize this area with more construction and parkland at the site edges and corners, with associated structured parking within or near the facility.

### **Disposition and Redevelopment of Historic Structures (A.6-D)**

The on-going work of Historic Augusta, Inc. and individual private developers to preserve and reuse these buildings should be fully supported. The former Richmond Academy and the original Medical College of Georgia building are but two prime examples. In addition, the efforts of 'faith-based' initiatives, such as that being offered by First Presbyterian Church, to incentivize downtown living and investment by their congregation should be expanded into this area, as well as along Telfair and Greene Street.

### **James Brown Arena Site (A.6-E)**

If the City were to decide to close and relocate the James Brown Arena to another location, either in the Urban Area, or elsewhere in the county, this large, surplus property could link Telfair Street and Laney Walker neighborhood with mixed-income residential, or become the catalyst for development of a significant public or private college/university campus in this area.

The realization of each of these projects will have a direct and positive effect on the quality of life in the downtown.







*Open land in close proximity to Broad Street and downtown*

## Potential Champion Groups

This major initiative would ultimately be a city-driven effort, but would require significant and enthusiastic support from the reaches of the higher education industry. For a high-tech approach, the first step would be to develop a collaborative of educational program designers and decision makers from Fort Gordon, the Savannah River Site and the Medical College of Georgia.

Simultaneously, given the area's high-tech potential, the city, the state legislative delegation, as well as key business and community leaders should initiate discussion with the Georgia University System Board of Regents to develop an extension of Georgia Tech in this area.

The city should engage area churches, not only for downtown renovation, but also for potential relocation of a 'faith-based' college presence in downtown Augusta.



## **6. Other Key Recommendations**



While the bulk of this planning effort is devoted to describing the recommended programs and initiatives within the Action Districts of the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area, the Plan looks well beyond those boundaries for opportunities for the greater benefit of the entire region. It is clear that there are actions and initiatives at the broader Regional and State levels that can greatly impact the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area. Recommendations regarding specific projects and initiatives are organized by the three geopolitical levels:

- **At the State/Interstate Level**

Where major decision-making and initiative execution comes from outside the region, i.e. at the state or in some cases the national level

- **At the Regional Level**

Within the five-county region of which the Urban Area is a part

- **Within the Westobou Urban Area itself**

Within the Urban Area, the Plan identifies a number of recommended area-wide initiatives. The Plan also identifies nine Districts, three in North Augusta and six in Augusta, each with its own character, energy, issues and opportunities

## 6.1 At the State/ Interstate Level

**D**ecisions, actions and trends outside the five-county Augusta region, specifically in Georgia, South Carolina and the southeastern United States, can dramatically impact the growth and development of the Urban Area. In order to become more attractive to businesses and people from outside the region, several big initiatives appear obvious:

### **Build the North/South Interstate Connection**

The reconstruction of US 25 into the Savannah River Parkway from Savannah to I-520 is underway and scheduled for completion in 2010. The final leg of I-520 connecting to I-20 is also nearing completion. Multiple interstates currently converge on Atlanta and the need is clear for a new North/South corridor (Upper Midwest and Mid-Atlantic to Lower Georgia and Florida), such as the proposed Route 3. Developing a new interstate connection from I-520 north to I-85 and beyond would simultaneously alleviate some of the burden on Atlanta and position Augusta for extensive new development.



## Address Inter-City/Interstate Rail Service Issues

### Freight Service

Several long-haul tracks converge on Augusta today, causing considerable disruption to vehicular movement through the city. Noise and vibration are additional negative impacts on downtown business and overall development. The obvious recommendation would be to reassign the movements or to relocate these tracks to new locations, outside the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area. While desirable, this approach appears impractical within the foreseeable future. Still the impact of the current operations on the city's future is severe and the Plan recommends at least two new separated grade crossings, one in the middle of the proposed St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park, between St. Sebastian Way and 13th Street and the other in the centrally located 10th Street and Fenwick Street alignments. The Plan also recommends exploration and implementation of technology to create a 'no whistle zone' within the Urban Area, as well as track and roadbed improvements to mitigate vibration.

While much of today's rail traffic is through movement, the lines do also serve local industry. With the rising need to reduce pollution and energy consumption, this rail right-of-way, if properly managed, could potentially become an asset in attracting new industry and commerce into the region.

### Passenger Service

With regard to attracting more people to the area, the city and state should consider re-establishing Passenger Rail Service to Atlanta and Columbia from the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Area. Atlanta, in particular, is expanding rapidly. The City of Augusta explored the possibility of a high-speed connection some years ago and concluded that, with moderate adjustments, existing grades and alignments could be made to accommodate high speeds. While the technical aspects require much more study, a key issue is whether or not the state and federal governments can be convinced that the Augusta metropolitan area is a growth region that would justify commitment and investment in the long run.

### Promote Development of New and Expanded Institutions of Higher Learning

City and state agencies should actively promote, not only within Georgia and South Carolina, but also nationally, the Augusta/North Augusta Urban Core as a superior site for future public and private higher education development. A key recommendation of this Plan is to capitalize on the resources of existing Health Sciences and high technology public entities already in the area, i.e. the Medical College of Georgia, the Savannah River Site, Fort Gordon and the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy, as cornerstone elements of such development.

## Capitalize on the "Half Back Movement"

Many people, who initially retired to Florida, are moving back northward into the rolling "Fall Line" belt across the Carolinas and Georgia, where they are less bothered by hurricanes, summer heat, traffic and over development. This area also typically puts them a lot closer to friends and loved ones up north.

### Protect and Manage the Savannah River

This is the Westobou Urban Area's single most important resource. Recent drought conditions remind us that the Savannah River is a fragile and essential system which must be managed from its mountain source to the Atlantic Ocean. Future development along this entire length must be coordinated and modulated to preserve its existing assets and positive characteristics, while addressing the needs of future generations. A "River Management Plan" should be developed and implemented as soon as possible, dealing with issues of water flow, water levels, water usage, environmental protection, pollution elimination, boating and recreation, and educating the public on these issues.



## 6.2 At the Five-County Regional Level

### A Collaborative Approach is Required...

Westobou, while rich in so many ways, is unlike some other parts of the country, indeed, even other parts of this very region, where aggressive economic development is occurring seemingly spontaneously, and of its own accord. The stakeholders of this Urban Area must work in coordinated fashion over the coming years to weave the old with the new into an urban tapestry that will create its own sustainable, high quality market sector that attracts people and investment.

### Think Regionally...

The Urban Area is the focus for this plan, but this Plan also recognizes that it is only a part of a much larger community of interests. Rational planning and development of the entire five-county region is necessary to the health and benefit of all.

Nowhere is this more important than in Augusta-Richmond County, where there is significant unmanaged growth and thus, the need for a comprehensive growth management plan. Such a plan could ultimately provide better community services, decrease dependency on cars by developing stronger neighborhood/community nodes and less auto-oriented strip development and make this area an even more desirable place for families to live.

Several specific programs could also aid in strengthening the Urban Area, including:

#### Fort Gordon Collaborations

This Army facility has expanded into a very important high-technology intelligence gathering center for national security groups. In addition to many more families moving into Augusta, the level of training and education of that population will have a positive impact on the community at large.

#### Regency Mall Redevelopment

This former regional mall site has become a lingering symbol of failure in Augusta and a detriment to growth and development along the Gordon Highway, a major gateway corridor into the downtown. The city should act to cause the redevelopment of this site as quickly as possible. A detailed reuse study has been completed for this site and should be the basis for developing and carrying out a solid implementation strategy.

### Enhance Access Corridors and Gateways into the Urban Area...

Key gateways into the Urban Area are identified in Figure 33: Gateways to the Urban Area. With the completion of I-520, the Westobou Urban Area will

have at least one strong and attractive gateway for those coming from all directions. Other gateways, which generally serve more local traffic, still need attention. A brief description of key gateways follows:

#### Riverwatch Parkway

Running along the river and the First Level Canal with open views to the Sibley and King Mills, this parkway is the preferred gateway corridor to downtown from I-20. This gateway becomes unattractive as it hits Jones and Reynolds Streets. However, the new ramp to Broad and Greene Streets suggests that gateway improvements should concentrate in that area first.

#### Walton Way (including Wheeler Road)

This gateway from I-20 to the Medical District, while very attractive along its mid-section as it crosses the "Hill", is unsightly and uncomfortable at its east and west ends, i.e. along Wheeler Road, where unbridled big-box strip commercial has developed. At the bottom of the "Hill," approaching the medical area, poor signage, multiple curb-cuts, and front yard parking tarnish the image of the area.





### Gordon Highway

This north/south corridor is not only the major connection between the US Army facility at Fort Gordon and the Urban Area, but it is also a main arterial serving all the whole of Augusta. The defunct Regency Mall and many other marginal commercial uses abut this key corridor. A recent study of this area should be reviewed and expanded and an aggressive redevelopment should be initiated as soon as possible.

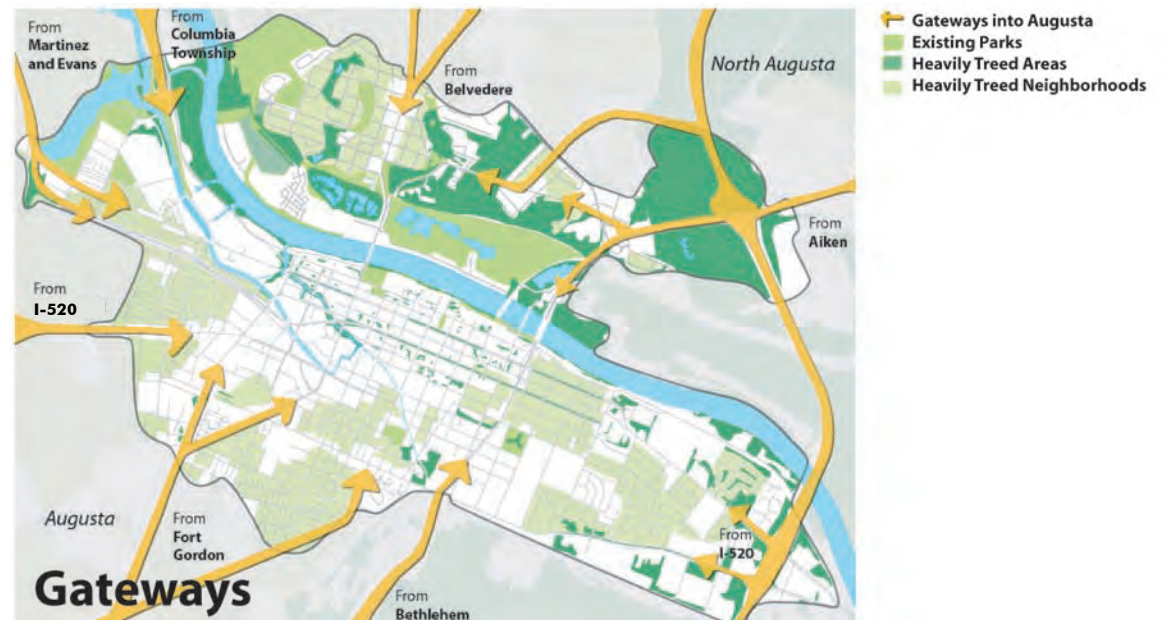
### Sand Bar Ferry Road

With the I-520 link to I-20 in North Augusta nearing completion, this will become a major entry corridor/gateway into the city from both the south and east. This corridor represents a major opportunity for the City of Augusta to develop meaningful use and design guidelines for this area, before new development appears de-facto and sets its own standards.

### Laney Walker East

Another corridor that will undergo change as the I-520 connection is completed, this area appears ripe for development as an auto-oriented commercial area. Specifically, this area could provide new, better-situated sites for existing non-conforming uses now located in the heart of the Urban Area.

Figure 33: Gateways to the Urban Area



### Brand the Region and the Urban Area as a Special Southern Place

The exotic word WESTOBOU, a Native-American word for the Savannah River, encompasses the spirit of the two communities. It is memorable and evocative and while place and activity neutral, flows well off the tongue and carries a lot of positive energy.

## 6.3 Within the Urban Area

**T**he Master Plan effort has identified a number of Urban Area-Wide program initiatives, as well as more specific individual key projects, which would help these initiatives succeed. Together, these initiatives constitute a broad framework for improvement throughout the Urban Area.

### **Integrated Green Corridors and Nodes**

As stated previously, “Public open space is the loom upon which Westobou’s Urban Design Plan is woven”. Renovation of existing parks, new parks, places and plazas, with connection via Greenways, bike routes and streetscaping are all part of this critical component (See Figure 34: Open Space Network).

### **More and better Housing Stock**

Renovation programs, infill projects, and new development will help to bolster the area’s supply and diversity of housing options.

### **Accelerated Neighborhood Stabilization and Improvement**

Zoning updates and enforcement, code compliance, improved safety, security and social services should be applied, as appropriate, to neighborhoods within the Urban Area.

This includes sensitivity to the findings and recommendations of the various aspects of the most recent comprehensive plans for the two cities, as well as individual plans for specific neighborhoods.

### **Branding of the Bi-State Urban Area**

The identity of the Urban Area as the cultural and civic center of the region should be developed in the minds of people, both local and non-local.

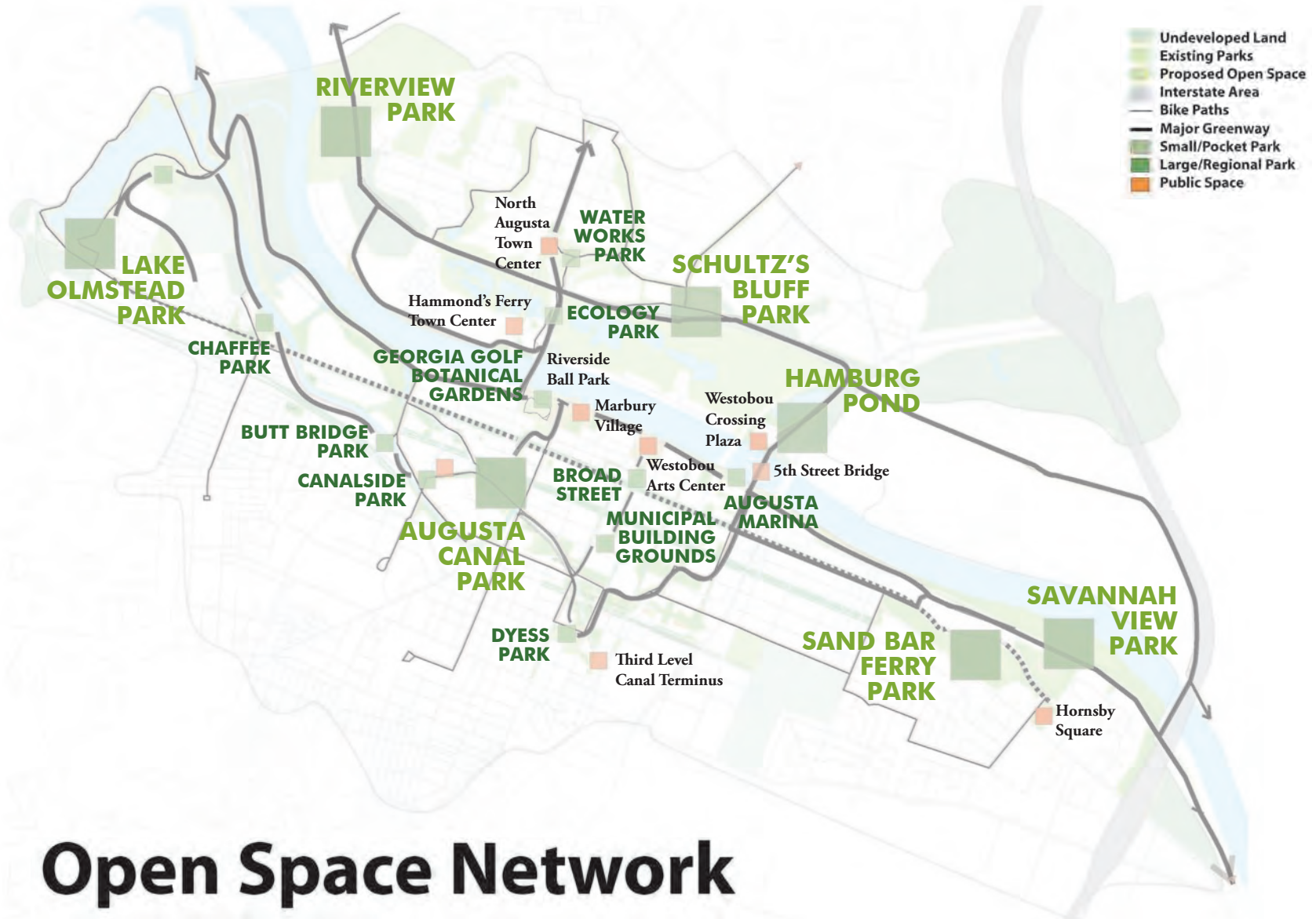
### **Cooperative Management of the Urban Area Development Process**

Both action and permitting programs such as site-assembly assistance, strengthened regulations in form-based zoning, architectural and open parcel design guidelines, as well as programs for the ‘Greening of the Urban Area,’ must be facilitated to realize the goals and projects of the Plan.



*The Augusta Common*

Figure 34: Westobou Open Space Network





### Relocation/Modification/Removal of Problematic Public Infrastructure

Sooner rather than later, electrical high-tension lines and substations, highway interchanges, the eastern end of the J.C. Calhoun Expressway, railroad right-of-way must be addressed within the Urban Area.



*Both the J.C. Calhoun Expressway and R.R. near Greene Street*

### Comprehensive Transportation Planning Review

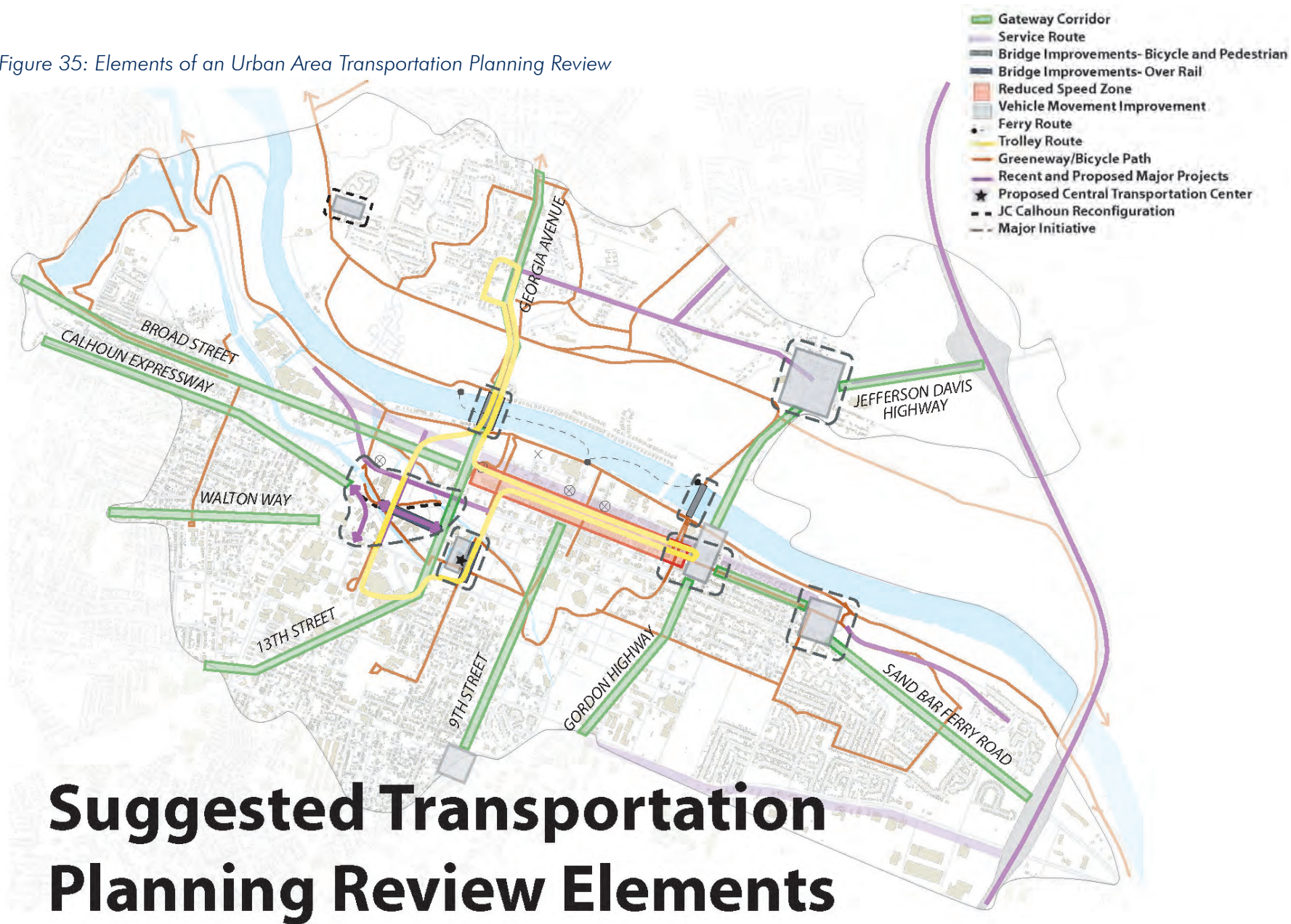
As seen within the action districts, a number of recommendations require adjustments and improvements to the existing roadway networks. Figure 35: Elements of an Urban Area Transportation Planning Review identifies a number of corridors and intersections that would be affected by implementation of the Plan.

In addition, within the Urban Area, there are concerns about the existing bus system service to and within the downtown. The Plan recommends the study of a public transportation loop through the Urban Area. Disruption by rail traffic will be all the worse if the Urban Area is successful. A serious re-examination of truck and vehicular circulation should be aimed at the downtown core, especially Reynolds Street. Finally, the need for parking will likely increase.

Taken together, there is a real need to examine the transportation system within the Urban Area. This should be done in a comprehensive fashion, looking a number of ‘what-if’ scenarios.



Figure 35: Elements of an Urban Area Transportation Planning Review



# Suggested Transportation Planning Review Elements







# **7. Conclusion**

## 7.1 Concluding Thoughts

This Plan is bold and designed to explore the full potential of the Westobou Urban Area. Each of the nine Market Creation Projects identified, for example, are interconnected to each other, as well as key on-going initiatives within the Urban Area. Each pushes the limits of what is possible, yet achievable. It is a long-range plan with opportunities for many individuals and organizations. This plan has three core objectives:

1. Develop more housing opportunities in the downtown for a wide range of incomes and household types.
2. Achieve the three over-arching environmental, social and economic themes set forth at the beginning to this effort by harnessing the area's cultural, natural and economic attributes to achieve a unique thematic mix of:
  - Linked Garden Cities...
  - A place of Learning and Innovation...
  - A Vibrant Place to Live, Work and Play
3. Reach out and include a wide array of exciting projects and initiatives across the width and

length of the Urban Area and reaching out into the region and beyond.

The Plan recognizes that the Westobou Urban Area is part of a regional whole, and that, in order for the Urban Area to be healthy, strong connections and collaborations must reach out to the far corners of the region. This is particularly true with regard to Richmond County, given its city/county government; however, attractive gateway corridors from all compass points are critical to enticing people downtown. Additionally, strong physical and programmatic links to outlying high-technology sites, such as Fort Gordon and the Savannah River Site are critical. Finally, the open space network should be extended throughout the region.

### **The Plan is Action and Project Driven...**

The components of the Plan are inter-related either by proximity, open space or program linkages. Close connections and collaborations are required between and within the public and private sectors to achieve the desired results.

The key to successful implementation is to identify individuals and organizations, the "Champions" in Augusta and North Augusta, who see benefit

in collaborating with others to realize individual projects and initiatives.

This is, indeed, a very ambitious plan that pushes the envelope of every opportunity identified to match the potential of its setting. While the Market Creation Projects identified are illustrative, they set a realistic target for this asset rich community.

This Plan should be undertaken in a deliberative and organized manner. Given the potential of the area identified in this plan and the inter-related scope of the recommendations, there is the need for a designated, full-time Development Coordinator, with adequate staff and resources for consulting and other services required to bring this plan to fruition.

Things have changed, locally, nationally and globally. It is right for this Urban Area and this region to ride that change.

### **The time is now.**

## **Master Planning Team**

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