

Advancing Regional Economic Success

Utilizing existing business strengths in industry, healthcare, and an entrepreneurial spirit, Canton seeks to expand its economic footprint. Diverse and innovative business growth will support jobs, attract investment, and create tourism opportunities.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase business licenses
- Increase commercial permits
- Increase SPLOST revenues
- Increase jobs
- Increase HQ operations
- Increase media production permits
- Increase requests for Development Review Team
- Increase ribbon cuttings
- Reduce unemployment
- Increase requests for loan assistance
- Reduce commercial vacancies
- Increase minority owned businesses
- Increase and promote entrepreneurship
- Advance technology and innovation

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Local Business Community
- Northside Hospital-Cherokee
- Canton DDA
- Canton Main Street
- Cherokee Office of Econ. Dev.
- Cherokee Co. Chamber
- Local Industries
- Commercial Developers
- Georgia Dept of Econ. Dev.
- Georgia Tourism
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- GDOT

How We Will Get There

- Partner with Cherokee Office of Economic Development to increase light industrial land availability
- Establish a Canton Business Concierge position
- Partner with Cherokee Co. Chamber of Commerce to provide free membership and ribbon cutting for new Canton businesses
- Increase efficiencies in media production projects by restructuring existing staff to streamline film services
- Assist existing industries in growth strategies through incentives
- Develop a small business development program/task force
- Market the Development Review Team process
- Utilize the Housing Study to attract mixed use development
- Develop incentives to redevelop or occupy underutilized properties
- Recognize small business success through community marketing
- Partner with others to host employment events
- Simplify the business licensing process
- Work with community and Legislature on a liquor package referendum
- Work with large development to meet neighborhood commercial needs
- Attract tourism related projects
- Increase hotel inventory and attract a resort-level hotel
- Increase transportation options to limit congestion and increase connectivity
- Create a tourism position within the City
- Develop working groups to support entrepreneurship and business sectors
- Assure the health industry grows with population growth in the area

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Highway ULI-TAP Project
- Marietta Road Community Initiative/Sunnyside Area Plan
- New City Website
- Knox Bridge Highway Corporate Park (COED)
- Highway 20 Widening Eastward
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
- Masterplan Amendments at Riverstone
- Northside Hospital Expansion
- New Cherokee High School Land Purchase
- Georgia Tourism Product Development Study

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Canton 2040 Plan
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study/Cherokee Co. Housing Study
- Hickory Log Creek Reservoir Management Plan
- Small Business Development Guide

Celebrating the Diversity of Our Community

The diverse cultures and communities within Canton are vibrant and engaging. Economic, cultural, and social diversity is encouraged throughout the City.

Measurable Goals:

- Improve communication pathways
- Increase diversity in elected positions and boards
- Growth in minority-owned businesses
- Add recreational programming inclusive of cultures
- Reduction in code violations as zoning codes change to meet cultural norms
- Increase participation in public meetings and events
- Increase in length of time utility accounts held by traditionally transitory non-English speaking customers
- Increase downloads of translated documents
- Increase participation in Citizens' Police Academy by diverse citizens
- Passage of ordinances and policies to promote diversity and inclusion
- Development participation in diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Increase use of incentives
- Completion of capital projects
- Greater Census participation in 2030

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- Minority-Owned Businesses
- Faith-based Organization
- Social Service Providers
- Developers
- Recreation Program Managers
- Media
- Utility Providers
- Translation Services
- Education Sector
- Healthcare Providers
- Local Non-Profits

How We Will Get There

- Creation of Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- Creation of CanTeen, a youth leadership program
- Meeting and working with faith-based organizations
- Hosting informational events with residents in communities
- Assist minority-owned businesses in gaining market reach within the region
- Hosting cultural celebrations and recognizing major holidays
- Providing access to documents in multiple languages
- Utilizing media to reach diverse populations
- Developing a strategy to attract diverse employment candidates
- Improving recreational offerings to better match cultural heritage of residents
- Exploring partnerships to improve community growth
- Celebrating culture through arts, food, and music
- Develop connectivity to parks
- Improve communication infrastructure, including the dissemination of information through minority businesses and non-profits
- Utilize overlays to accommodate specific zoning/code needs
- Assist diverse populations in promoting entrepreneurship
- Enact a Non-Discrimination Ordinance
- Actively promote diversity and inclusion through community marketing
- Creation of a newcomer packet and distribution plan
- Celebrate Diversity months
- Creation of a Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator position within the City
- Promote healthcare and social services assistance in low-to-moderate income areas, specifically non-English speaking communities
- Review and create policies to promote social justice

Specific Projects Underway

- New Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- Public Safety Citizens Advisory Board
- New City Website
- Marietta Road Community Initiative/Sunnyside Campaign
- Public WiFi in parks program
- Atlanta United Mini-Pitch Project at Harmon Park
- CDBG Grant Upgrades at Harmon Park
- Canton Police Department Hispanic Citizenship Workshop
- Official Canton Documents in Translation
- Recruiting Incentives for Bilingual Employees
- Police Department Public Outreach Events

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Canton 2040 Plan
- City of Canton Housing Study
- Minutes of Diversity & Inclusion Task Force

Connecting Citizens to Parks and Recreation

A healthy community provides access to nature. Residents should be connected with local parks through trails, sidewalks, and additional transportation options. Recreational opportunities should be available to and inclusive for all.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase trail length
- Increase parks acreage
- Increase City-owned property along Etowah River
- Sidewalk connectivity for all neighborhoods to a Citywide parks and trail network
- Increase recreation offerings
- Increase reservations of field spaces and facilities
- Increase participation in sports programs
- Increase enrollment in local gyms and recreation program providers
- Increase attendance at public events

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Northside Hospital-Cherokee
- YMCA
- Boys & Girls Club
- Cherokee Co. Senior Services
- Cherokee Co. Parks & Rec
- Private recreation groups
- Developers
- Media
- Utility Providers
- Cherokee Co. School District
- Private Property Owners
- Canton Main Street
- Homeowner Associations
- Private Event Organizers
- Upper Etowah River Alliance
- Army Corps of Engineers
- GDOT
- Cherokee County
- Scouts

How We Will Get There

- Purchase of property necessary to provide recreational opportunities for our growing community
- Development of a dog park
- Continuation of the Etowah Trail System along both sides of the river
- Increase opportunities for recreational access to Etowah River
- Increase opportunities for recreational access to Hickory Log Creek Reservoir, including boat uses
- Increase recreational opportunities connecting all neighborhoods
- Creation of a master sidewalk plan to connect all neighborhoods
- Increase multi-use pathways throughout the City
- Develop a free wellness program of classes for City residents
- Creation of community gardens and orchards for resident use
- Develop a biking program including facilities
- Develop outdoor fitness opportunities for residents
- Increase programming for all ages of Canton residents
- Mark all trails and pathways for easy navigation and emergency location
- Encourage recreation opportunities for all communities
- Utilize green development practices in all park projects
- Connect to neighboring trail systems
- Publish maps and create digital maps of various trail/walking paths throughout the City
- Explore pedestrian improvements and connectivity along State Route 140 with Cherokee County and Georgia Department of Transportation
- Increase playground equipment, including options for adults and all ability needs

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Highway ULI-TAP Project
- New Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- Public Safety Citizens Advisory Board
- New City Website
- Etowah River Trail Eastward from ERP Oval under Interstate 575
- Etowah River Trail Westward connecting Heritage to Boling Park
- Harmon Park CDBG Upgrades
- Harmon Park Atlanta United Mini-Pitch Project
- National Fitness Center Outdoor Gym

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Canton 2040 Plan
- City of Canton Housing Study
- Hickory Log Creek Reservoir Management Plan
- Atkins Etowah River Trail Masterplan
- Etowah River Greenway Plan

Creating Great Neighborhoods

Safe, attractive, connected, and inviting neighborhoods are the foundation of Canton's hometown appeal. All residents deserve quality housing that reflects our community character through thoughtful design and responsible development practices.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase in owner-occupied single-family structures
- Reduce code compliance cases on residential property
- Reduce property crimes
- Increase housing authority units
- Increase downtown residential units
- Increase variety of housing through varied price-points, design, and construction
- Increase estate lots (2+ acres)

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Homeowner Associations
- Canton Housing Authority
- Cherokee Co. Senior Services
- Residential Developers
- Landlords
- Property Managers
- Realtors
- Utility Providers
- Cherokee County

How We Will Get There

- Improve development codes to reflect recommendations by the Thomas P. Miller Housing Study and other sources for enhancing thoughtful development
- Rezone properties as necessary in accordance with the Housing Study
- Review opportunities to create overlay zones to encourage positive housing development practices
- Require all residential developers to read the Canton Roadmap and complete a project self-assessment prior to application
- Establish clearly identified standards for right of ways in residential developments
- Create an opportunity for residents to voluntarily register home security camera video software with Canton Police to reduce crime
- Promote education of code compliance processes to reduce blight
- Highlight code compliance and City services through new resident welcome packets disseminated at City Hall and through real estate partners
- Promote the nature of and need for workforce housing options
- Connect all neighborhoods to a Citywide sidewalk system
- Establish incentives to increase diverse housing stock within projects
- Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in Development Review Process
- Encourage greenspace development with all new residential projects
- Review all City-owned properties for possible residential development
- Develop and incentivize solar standards for residential development
- Develop and implement a micro-cottage home program and other novel housing initiatives

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Highway ULI-TAP Project
- Marietta Road Community Initiative/Sunnyside Area Plan
- New Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- New City Website
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study
- Masterplan Reviews for Riverstone
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
- Water System Booster Pump Projects (Amos Road and Laurel Canyon)
- Canton Housing Authority Asset Review

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Canton 2040 Plan
- City of Canton Housing Study
- Noell Consulting Canton Residential Rental Analysis
- Central City Plan
- Historic Preservation Commission Guidelines

Enhancing Historic Downtown Canton

Preservation, entrepreneurship, arts and culture, and community-centric activities are cornerstones of economic development within Downtown Canton. Benefiting the entire City, downtown redevelopment creates jobs, attracts investment, increases property values, and generates tourism.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase downtown residential unit count
- Increase business licenses
- Increase jobs
- Reduce vacancies
- Increase sidewalk connectivity
- Increase hours of commercial activity
- Increase loan applications
- Increase HPC applications
- Increase façade grants
- Reduce code violations
- Increase event activities
- Increase arts offerings
- Increase murals
- Increase greenspace
- Increase media production permits
- Increase annual investment
- Expand downtown footprint

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Canton Main Street
- Canton DDA
- Downtown Merchants
- Property Owners
- Developers
- Banks
- Georgia DCA
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- Georgia Council for Arts
- Fox Theatre Institute
- CCHS
- Cherokee Co. Arts
- Cherokee Co. Chamber

How We Will Get There

- Improve development codes to reflect recommendations by the Thomas P. Miller Housing Study and other sources for enhancing thoughtful development
- Rezone properties as necessary in accordance with the Housing Study
- Develop a tax allocation district to prioritize areas for redevelopment
- Improve downtown parking
- Strengthen downtown boards and commissions
- Develop small business workshops
- Market incentive programs including the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund and façade grants
- Increase communication between downtown business community
- Review all City parcels for possible redevelopment projects
- Incentivize residential growth according to the Housing Study
- Establish marketing plan for downtown Canton
- Creation of an arts fund for public art projects
- Increase collaboration between local organizations to boost tourism
- Simplify the business licensing process
- Partner with Cherokee Co. Chamber of Commerce to provide free membership and a ribbon cutting for all new downtown Canton businesses
- Increase efficiencies in media production projects by restructuring existing staff to streamline film services
- Improve downtown wayfinding signage
- Build downtown public restrooms
- Increase access to electric vehicle charging stations
- Remove overhead utilities
- Increase sidewalk capacity for outdoor dining and pedestrian flow
- Build connectivity between the historic downtown loop and The Mill on Etowah and Sunnyside
- Evaluate traffic solutions for downtown, including East Main and North Street traffic flows
- Create better connectivity between existing downtown and The Mill on Etowah and Etowah River Trail System
- Consider ordinances related to specific ground-floor uses within downtown

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Road Community Initiative/Sunnyside Area Plan
- Railroad Street Mural Project
- New Diversity & Inclusion Task Force
- New City Website
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
- Public Parks WiFi Program
- Georgia Tourism Product Development Study

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill LCI
- Canton 2040 Plan
- City of Canton Housing Study
- Central City Plan
- Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Guidelines

Improving Infrastructure for Future Demands

Citizens, businesses, and visitors need access to the Canton infrastructural network to succeed in their goals. Transportation, power supply, gas availability, water and sewer, and digital connectivity are part of building a great network for success.

Measurable Goals:

- Improve Pavement Management Index
- Replacement of aging water and sewer lines
- Reduction in lost water
- Decrease downtime of signals
- Increase internet speeds
- Reduction in areas of limited cell service
- Reduction of unincorporated island parcels
- Increase clean water capacity
- Increase bicycle traffic
- Increase electric vehicle charging stations
- Increase solar projects

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Homeowner Associations
- Ga Dept. of Transportation
- Cherokee County
- CCWSA
- CCMWA
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Federal DOT
- Georgia Power
- Georgia EMCs
- Cable Providers
- Phone Providers
- Adjacent Municipalities

How We Will Get There

- Improve the treatment of wastewater within the City of Canton
- Work with partners to provide access to an efficiently supplied water system
- Identify opportunities for road network improvements within the City of Canton and adjacent unincorporated pockets
- Reduce unincorporated islands within the City of Canton
- Develop a City-wide transportation plan
- Identify opportunities for transit options and coordination with other entities
- Increase internet connectivity options for residents
- Work with power providers to decrease system down time
- Improve cell communication throughout the City using private partners
- Develop a map outlining service areas for varied utilities
- Work with adjacent jurisdictions on signalization timing
- Improve road paving index through annual paving projects
- Develop new standards for paving cuts for utility repairs
- Review downtown traffic patterns for efficiencies
- Host annual transportation town hall with GDOT, ARC and Cherokee County
- LAP Certification for local control of federally funded projects
- Provide options for alternative fuel vehicles in the City's fleet
- Increase bike options and use throughout the City
- Identify alternative transportation options in neighborhoods
- Increase interconnectivity between neighborhoods and parks
- Improve parking options in historic neighborhoods with limited rights-of-way
- Create automated meter reading program
- Create solar project incentive

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Highway ULI-TAP Project
- Public Parks Wi-Fi Program
- State Route 140 Engineering Plan
- Downtown Parking Deck Project
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
- Water System Booster Pump Projects (Amos Road and Laurel Canyon)
- State Route 20 Eastward Expansion

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill LCI
- Canton 2040 Plan
- Water & Wastewater Master Plan by Black & Veatch
- State Route 140 Concept Study
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study

Leading with Excellence

City Council, Staff, and Citizen Boards will foster civic participation and serve ethically, transparently, responsibly, and efficiently.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase in Citizen Participation Applications
- Increase views of City website
- Increase participation in Town Hall events
- Increase social media contacts
- Increase contacts with Homeowner Associations
- Increase automated bill pay participation
- Continue City of Ethics certification
- Increase participation in Citizens Police Academy
- Increase livestreaming opportunities for all boards and commissions
- Increase annual hours of staff training
- Increase opportunities for Council training
- Reduce staff turnover

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Homeowner Associations
- InterDev
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Professional organizations for staff groups
- Local Media
- Boards and Commissions
- Social Media Platforms
- Webhosting Platform
- Local Higher Educational Institutions
- Carl Vinson Institute of Government

How We Will Get There

- Retreat with Council and Management Staff twice annually reviewing the Roadmap, operations, and major projects
- Creation of new committees: CanTeen, Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, Public Safety Citizens Advisory Board
- Revise and implement Canton's Ethics Ordinance
- Reviewing Citizen Participation Applications assuring boards and commissions include the best and brightest Canton residents
- Establishing improved communications practices reaching larger audiences through various platforms and media
- Translating key documents to be more accessible to non-English speaking Canton residents
- Assuring that all public meetings are livestreamed and video-archived
- Utilizing analytics from JustFOIA to make the most routinely requested open records requests more readily available on the City website
- Researching other local government services and discussing innovation during staff level focus group meetings
- Providing time for all City staff to continue professional development training
- Judging all budgetary expenditures based upon the Roadmap
- Implement required exit interviews by Human Resources to learn more about staff turnover
- Develop a Citizen Academy to build ambassadors for the work of Canton
- Establish annual town hall meetings on each of the Canton Tenets
- Host meetings annually with Homeowner Association leaders
- Market efficiencies for application and utilization of paperless systems
- Recognize excellence in staff development and ethics
- Regularly review and ensure staff salaries and benefits are aligned with other like-sized municipalities
- Develop the next generation of professional leadership for our City

Specific Projects Underway

- Website redevelopment
- Implementation of LAMA Development Software
- Creation of the Canton Roadmap
- Implementation of JustFOIA Open Records Software
- Review of Citizen Participation Applications

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Canton 2040 Plan
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study
- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Archived Social Media Feedback
- Existing City of Canton Ethics Ordinance
- City of Canton Personnel Policy
- City of Canton Financial Policy

Sustaining Our Natural Environment

Canton residents appreciate our natural beauty, proximity to the mountains, ample greenspaces, and the Etowah River. Projects in the City will promote interaction with nature through sustainability, stewardship of resources, and innovative design.

Measurable Goals:

- Increase access to the Etowah River
- Reduce sludge hauling at WWTP
- Eliminate consent orders for discharge limits
- Increase LEED Certified facilities
- Increase alternative fuel City fleet
- Increase electric vehicle charging stations
- Increase solar project permits
- Decrease Ridge Rd methane
- Increase recycling tonnage
- Increase acreage of preserved space/greenspace throughout City and along Etowah River
- Increase tagged species
- Increase dual easements
- Increase trail options
- Reduce paper plan submissions
- Decrease water losses
- Decrease inflow and infiltration of stormwater system to WWTP

Major Partners:

- Residents
- City Officials & Staff
- Homeowner Associations
- Advanced Disposal
- Local Industries
- Fleet service providers
- Georgia EPD
- Utility Partners
- UGA Cooperative Extension Services
- Tree Commission
- Private Developers
- Landlords
- Property Managers
- Utility Providers
- Upper Etowah River Alliance
- Scouts

How We Will Get There

- Improve development codes to reflect recommendations by the Thomas P. Miller Housing Study and other sources enhancing thoughtful development
- Rezone properties as necessary in accordance with the Housing Study
- Implement efficiencies in the wastewater process reducing sludge hauling
- Increase wastewater treatment capacity to reduce overages in discharge components during seasonal weather changes
- Establish incentives for sustainable development projects
- Require all residential developers read the Canton Roadmap and complete a project self-assessment prior to application
- Require electric vehicle charging stations in all commercial developments over 5 acres
- Promote recycling opportunities throughout the City
- Identify opportunities for City fleet alternative fuel/hybrid options
- Review City-owned facilities for energy efficiency opportunities
- Develop dual easements for all utility areas for future pathways/trails
- Review water utility processes to reduce water losses and encourage customer efficiencies
- Create community gardens and orchards for citizen use
- Create spaces for hydroponic wall gardens
- Establish a Sustainability Commission
- Tag native plant species in City parks and trails
- Increase access points for public use of the Etowah River and Hickory Log Creek Reservoir
- Partner with local utilities to establish efficiencies in providing services
- Reduce paper processes within the City of Canton
- Achieve certification for ARC Green Communities Program
- Increase pollinators on City property and along Etowah River
- Continue Tree City certification
- Install AMI Meter Reading system to monitor water loss
- Trail Connection with existing Scout trails
- Add water bottle filling stations in parks

Specific Projects Underway

- Marietta Road Community Initiative/Sunnyside Area Plan
- Etowah River Trail Eastward from ERP Oval under Interstate 575
- Etowah River Trail Westward connecting Heritage to Boling Park
- Hickory Log Creek Reservoir Management Plan Review
- New City Website
- Thomas P. Miller Housing Study
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
- Georgia Tourism Product Development Study

Materials/Supporting Documents:

- Rivermill Livable Centers Initiative
- Canton 2040 Plan
- City of Canton Housing Study
- Central City Plan
- HPC Guidelines
- Black & Veatch Water & Wastewater Masterplan