



CITY OF CANTON

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

February 21 - 23, 2017

Facilitation provided on behalf of



COBB EMC

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CITY OF CANTON
February 21-23, 2017

The City of Canton's Mayor and Council, City Manager, and Communications & Outreach Director met on February 21-23, 2017 at the Brasstown Valley Resort in Young Harris, GA. Carrie Barnes, a Community Development Consultant from Georgia EMC, facilitated the meeting on behalf of Cobb EMC.

REVIEW OF 2016 WORK PLAN

1. **CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT/PLAN FOR THE CITY** ✓
 - a. Communications & Outreach Director hired in 2016
 - b. City Branding project is underway
 - c. New website development is underway
 - d. Completed the Annual Update
 - e. Main Street liaison and Theatre now under Communication & Outreach Department
2. **REVIEW FUTURE OF FIRE SERVICES** ✓
 - a. Fire Services were consolidated with Cherokee County in 2016
3. **BLIGHT AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENT**
 - a. Blight ordinances & staffing have been reviewed
 - b. City-wide Dumpster Day programs were very successful in 2016
 - c. **For 2017:**
 - i. **Consider talking to other local governments about blight management**
 - ii. **Consider creating a definition of "blight"**
 - iii. **Expand and promote Dumpster Day for continued success**
 - iv. **Consider creating priority zones for the City**
 - v. **Other options:**
 1. **Create a blight commission**
 2. **Ask for resources from GMA**
 3. **Create a property maintenance focused court**
 4. **Review current code enforcement ordinance and manual**
4. **BUILT VS. ZONED CITY-WIDE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW** ✓
 - a. All zoning conditions city- wide were reviewed in 2016 including large developments
 - b. Temporary moratorium on apartments was placed on February 2, 2017
5. **WATER AND WASTEWATER MASTER PLANNING** ✓
 - a. Firm has been selected and Master Plan is underway
 - b. Plan expected to be completed in September 2017
 - c. **For 2017:**
 - i. **Consider creating a Manufacturing Water Rate**

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
CITY OF CANTON
February 21-23, 2017

6. MASTER PLAN FOR TRAILS SYSTEM

- a. Connection finished between Etowah Park and Heritage Park
- b. Land added behind Governor's Walk/ Old Doss Road
- c. Parks Advisory Board created
- d. **For 2017:**
 - i. **Identify future areas of growth for potential connections/development of trails**
 - ii. **Identify potential projects for SPLOST**

7. RE-ENVISION THE BLUFFS

- a. Meetings were held with TPA
- b. Continue working with Cherokee County Office of Economic Development on major projects
- c. **For 2017:**
 - i. **Consider changing the name of the reservoir and the road**
 - ii. **Could we increase public access for recreation?**

8. PARTNER WITH NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL CHEROKEE ON FUTURE PROJECTS

- a. In 2016, worked with Northside Hospital to help with the successful completion of the new medical center
- b. **For 2017:**
 - i. **Could the old hospital site be used for affordable senior housing or community housing?**

VISION FOR CANTON'S FUTURE

- Riverwalk
- Connected neighborhoods by trails
- Downtown to live, work and play
- Arts in the downtown
- Splash pad
- Recreation
- Nightlife in downtown
- Concerts in parks
- Unique, original and authentic identity
- Attraction or museum
- Modern mill village
- Light industrial
- Activities for families
- More access points at the Etowah River
- Additional parking in Downtown

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
CITY OF CANTON
February 21-23, 2017

HOT TOPICS

DOWNTOWN CANTON

1. Jones Building

- Potential Uses for the Jones Building:
 - Cultural Arts Center
 - Museum
 - Events Center
 - Makers Space
 - Focus our efforts first on the façade
 - Lord Aeck Sargent is currently working on this
 - Gut the interior down to the original structure
 - Mixed use
 - Unique retail
 - An attraction that draws people to Canton
 - Public/Private Partnership
 - Artisan Boutiques, Art Galleries
 - Venue to highlight Canton's history
 - Rooftop restaurant or bar
 - Building has been empty for the past 8 years and has created a void in our downtown
 - Community Events Center
 - Building could house public restrooms, permanent farm stand, artist space
 - Modern Mill Village
- Strategies for development:
 - SPLOST funds could give the City the opportunity to develop this building without a developer
 - This would enable us to create our own vision
 - DDA is a tool for this development
 - Billy will set up a meeting between Mayor and Council with Lord Aeck Sargent to share ideas

2. Downtown Master Plan

- Master Plan was completed in 2016
- Our focus for 2017: What can we actively implement this plan from this year?
 - DDA is taking the lead
- Potential projects:
 - Bike Friendly striping on the roads ("Sharrows")
- Riverfront Park
 - All of the property proposed to be part of this park is privately owned land
 - Consider adding boat launches or additional access points
 - A boat launch could be added at 45-acre property
- Could Harmon Park be developed into a water park?
 - The Haygood property across the river is another good option

**STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
CITY OF CANTON
February 21-23, 2017**

- Consider creating a Riverfront Master Plan
 - Plan would map trails, identify future development, identify a possible connection to the reservoir
- Parking
 - Could an additional parking lot be created in the lot behind Studio 5

INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT

1. Recreation

- Recreation programming is currently outsourced to third party companies
 - Companies rent park space and the city receives a percentage back for upkeep of facilities and fields
 - The City has no control over rates or fees
 - Most teams are more competitive and provide fewer "learning the basics" opportunities
 - Currently offered:
 - Soccer, football, basketball, flag football, yoga, fitness boot camp, baseball
 - Consider creating some City led programs for sports
 - Need to identify which types of programs need to be added or opportunities to fill in the gaps (i.e. senior programs, adult programming)
 - Give direction to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to engage the community about Parks and Rec needs
- Sports Tournaments
 - Would like to see more tournaments hosted in Canton
- YMCA
 - Fewer than 20% of members are Canton residents
 - Could the YMCA be a community center?
 - Possibly a senior center combined with after school programming for children
- ADA Compliance
 - RFP is out for the Etowah Park playground
 - There's a need for more curb cuts and handicap parking
- Future Considerations
 - Few residents understand what kinds of benefits are offered as a Canton resident
 - Golf course, YMCA, etc.
 - Connect with The Tree Commission to plant more wildflowers to attract pollinators
 - Mayor and Council need more information about what is happening with Parks and Recreation
 - Complete an inventory of our assets

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
CITY OF CANTON
February 21-23, 2017

2. Transportation and Utilities

- Street Resurfacing
 - In the past 2 years, around 17% of all city streets have been resurfaced
 - Priority List from study will come back at the end of March 2017
 - Resurfacing these roads will begin in the late summer
 - LMIG roads could be resurfaced this spring
 - Ideally, would like to complete resurfacing for 10% of all city streets in 2017 and another 10% in 2018
 - SPLOST funds will allow us to complete the remaining streets
- Water and Wastewater
 - Master Plan is currently under development and will be complete in September
 - The project list for SPLOST will need to be finalized before the report is complete
- Utility Operations
 - Our contract with Utility Partners is up this year (October 2017)
 - Request a 1-year extension of the current contract to allow for renegotiation after the completion of the Water/Wastewater Master Plan
- Irrigation Meters
 - Consider adding requirements in the development codes to make the installation of an irrigation meter mandatory on new construction
- Future of Utilities
 - Georgia Power Company and Atlanta Gas Light have merged
 - They are transitioning to smart readers that allow them to read gas and electric meters at the same time
 - In the future, they may be able to read water meters with the same technology. Consider discussing this in the future
- Garbage Pick Up
 - Current provider receives lots of complaints (Waste Management)
 - WM hasn't been able to keep up with our population growth
 - Consider going out to bid due to unsatisfactory service
 - They require notification before June
 - Consider adding a requirement in a new contract that would have at least one WM employee at City Hall to handle customer service issues
 - Make sure that all issues are addressed when we put it out to bid
 - Consider allowing residents to contract with garbage provider of their choice
 - The City of Canton would no longer handle the billing for garbage service
- Customer Service

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

CITY OF CANTON

February 21-23, 2017

- Identify ways to streamline processes and improve customer service for billing customers

CANTON'S FUTURE

1. Economic Development

- There is currently interest from industrial prospects at The Bluffs
- Matthew is focusing on marketing available space downtown and the DDA is focusing on recruiting retail
- Expand Economic Development focus wider than downtown
 - Create more aggressive recruitment strategy
 - Increase recruitment of commercial development, retail development, corporate office space, etc.
 - Consider completing a retail analysis to help identify gaps, best types of businesses for Canton, etc.
 - Billy can join Matthew on recruiting trips
 - Currently, there is no available land for industrial development that is city-owned
 - Matthew has done a great job managing the film activity in Canton
- Consider adding ED on the SPLOST list to provide funding for future ED projects

2. Comprehensive Land Use

- The comprehensive plan update is due February 2019
- In 2016, we hired a new city planner
 - She is tasked with reviewing the old comprehensive plan and identifying how to integrate this with our existing master plans
- Consider holding a council work session to review the City's current plans
- Talk to the Atlanta Regional Commission about pursuing a Livable Communities Initiative(LCI) grant for a plan that would cover the Sunnyside/Marietta Highway area
 - Plan would focus on improving the entrance to our city

3. Marketing

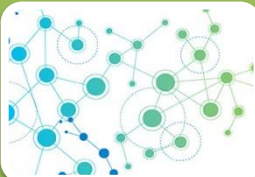
- Development of a new branding campaign is underway and will be revealed later this year

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
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PROPOSED ALLOCATION FOR 2017 SPLOST	
\$ 21 MILLION	EXPECTED SPLOST REVENUE FOR CANTON
\$ 6 million	Transportation Facilities - Paving Streets, Sidewalk Projects
\$ 7 million	General Government Buildings - Jones Building - Public Safety/Police Department - Possible Parking Facility
\$ 5 million	Recreation and Parks - Extend Trail System from Etowah River to 45 Acres - Riverwalk/Trail
\$ 3 million	Economic Development -Industrial Land Acquisition -LCI Projects

PRIORITY GOALS FOR 2017

Canton is...



A CONNECTED CITY

- Complete Master Plans
- Trail System
- Etowah River



AN ACTIVE CITY

- Increase Public Access at the Reservoir
- Continue to Pay Down Existing Debt



A VIBRANT CITY

- Continue to Beautify the City
- Identify Opportunities to Grow the City's Commercial Base
- Bring Life Back to the Jones Building

WRAP UP & ADJOURN

Facilitator Carrie Barnes closed by telling the group she enjoyed working with them on behalf of Cobb EMC and looks forward to working with them in the future. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.