



CITY OF
CANTON

YEAR IN REVIEW



DWAYNE WATERMAN, *Ward 3*
and Mayor Pro-Tem



TRAVIS JOHNSON, *Ward 1*



SANDY MCGREW, *Ward 1*



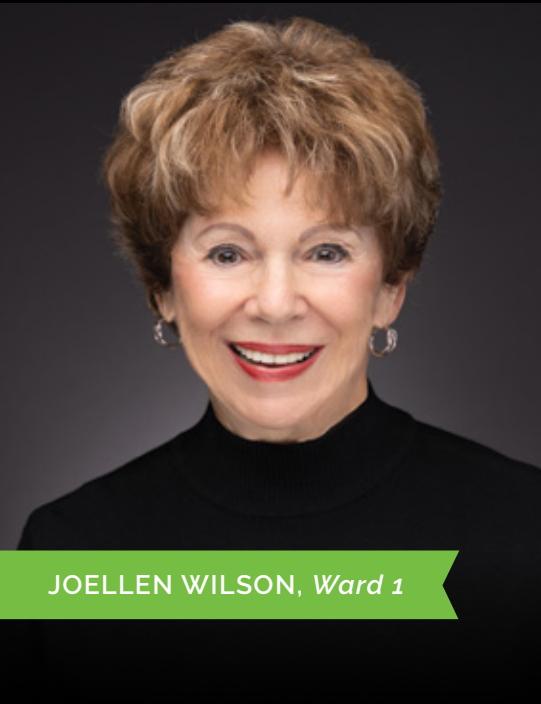
SHAWN TOLAN, *Ward 2*



BRYAN ROACH, *Ward 2*



FARRIS YAWN, *Ward 3*



JOELLEN WILSON, *Ward 1*



BROOKE SCHMIDT, *Ward 3*

2024 CITY COUNCIL

2023 MEMBERS IN GREEN



Letter from our **MAYOR**

Welcome to our City of Canton Year in Review. As you will see, 2023 was another productive year with many notable accomplishments. As I came to the end of my first term as Mayor and now embark on my second, I am so very proud of what we have accomplished by planning our work and working our plan.

Our City Council, staff, boards, commissions, businesses, partners, and most of all, our residents, have rallied together around the shared vision and priorities espoused in our Roadmap for Success, and the results speak for themselves. That is why the data in our 2023 Look Book is so meaningful. The numbers and facts provide accountability for how we are fulfilling the priorities established by our citizens in their roadmap.

The true measure of our progress, however, goes far beyond numbers. Our collective achievements are best measured in personal experience and quality of life. Some are more obvious than others, such as our new parks and expanded trails, ever-expanding culinary scene, ongoing events and concerts, vibrant new public art, a parking deck with EV charging stations in Downtown, and so much more. Others are equally impactful but more difficult to romance, including our expanded state-of-the-art Water Pollution Control Plant, a year-long residential abeyance on new development, a citywide Transportation Master Plan, and a comprehensive update to our City Charter, to name a few.

I hope you will read and share this report with pride, but more importantly, I encourage everyone to explore Canton and all it has to offer. There is still much to learn and discover about the Coolest Small Town in America, and our experience has just begun.

Have a great year, Canton!

MAYOR BILL GRANT



HARMON PARK

OPENING SPRING 2024

**\$4.3M
PROJECT
RENOVATION**

Throughout 2023, renovations were conducted and will be complete as of January 2024. The Grand Opening is scheduled for spring 2024.

\$75K

Grant approved by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)—as part of the GA 100 Initiative—along with Atlanta United Foundation (AUF) to purchase and install a synthetic turf mini-pitch soccer field at the park.

Upon award of the grant and project commencement, the City decided to further improve the park. Atkins Engineering completed the field work and survey as part of next phase of upgrades, and Tri-Scapes was awarded the bid to complete the construction of the mini-pitch soccer field, as well as a new pavilion, resurfaced basketball court, new batting cages, baseball field upgrades, connecting sidewalks, a continuous park drive, and additional parking.



Connecting Citizens to PARKS & RECREATION



**\$2.2M
ARPA GRANT**

from The Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp to assist with the development of the future South Canton Park



HOSTED BY PARKS + REC

ETOWAH RIVER PARK

7K

ATTENDEES

2

DAYS

3

HEADLINERS

Including 90s country music stars Sammy Kershaw (above), Aaron Tippin, and Collin Raye + craft, food, and beverage vendors



HERITAGE PARK RENOVATION



PLAYGROUND

Added two large play structures featuring swings, a hill slide, turf play surface, and an ADA accessible sidewalk



RESTROOMS

New restrooms were added to accommodate visitors to the park

COMING 2024

- Began development of the Parks and Rec Master Plan—expected to be adopted in summer 2024
- Restrooms to be added Boling and Etowah River Parks
- South Canton Park design concepts will be presented
- Trail connection between Heritage and Boling Parks to be incorporated with a new Etowah River Bridge



1

2

Canton's Creative ECONOMY

2023 MURALS

- 1 "It's a Vibe" Mural at the Downtown Parking Deck, by Lauren Stumberg
- 2 "Unite" Mural at the Boling Park Basketball Court, a collaboration between Cherokee High School student Emily Hamilton, non-profit Art in the Paint, and the expertise of talented local artist Rob Walker-Bunda

PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

The newly completed and approved Public Art Master Plan includes the following core values as guidelines for implementing public art projects:

- CELEBRATE CANTON** – Tell stories that are unique to the history, natural setting, and/or the culture of Canton.
- SUPPORT ARTISTS** – Present a wide variety of meaningful public art from artists with varied experience levels, inclusive of all people and backgrounds.
- BUILD COMMUNITY** – Build awareness and enthusiasm for the City by connecting residents to one another through investment in public art.



ROB WALKER-BUNDA

Graphic Designer who has worked on branding for many local businesses including Bizarre Coffee, The Holler, Canton Cultural Arts Commission, and most recently, P.O.P.S.



COURTNEY MYERS CERVANTES

SCAD illustration and animation alumni who is also a very talented oil painter with over 454k Instagram followers @courtney_art



SHANNA COULTER

Former high school art teacher, recently opened Local Color Studio in the newly renovated Jones Building with rentable studio space, studio day passes, and classes

Creating in Canton

2%
ORDINANCE

approved by Council to fund Public Art through Capital Projects



COMING 2024

- Expanded calendar of events at the Historic Canton Theatre
- Canton Theatre lighting and sound technology upgrades to be completed
- Mural in the Sunnyside community to be installed by a commissioned artist

ROTARY CLUB

Women leaders from across Cherokee County joined together for Rotary Club of Canton's Women in Leadership event at the Historic Canton Theatre.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

GOOD MORNING CHEROKEE – The City of Canton was the honored host of the First Cherokee Chamber of Commerce breakfast of the year.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS – In October, the City of Canton presented the Chamber's Women in Business Seminar & Luncheon at The Mill on Etowah. In conjunction with National Business Women's Week, women in business from all around Cherokee County were invited to learn from and be inspired by the event's exceptional speakers.



Connecting with the COMMUNITY



GRAND OPENING

of the Charlie Ferguson Community Center (above) in North Canton was attended by community members, County, and City officials



POLICE DEPARTMENT EVENTS

MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL – Led by Canton PD, the third annual Multicultural Festival kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month. More than a dozen countries were represented through food, music, and dance!

KICKBALL WITH A COP – Held by Canton PD in partnership with St. Paul AME Church-Canton, the day was spent in fellowship, grilling tasty hot dogs, and playing several friendly games of kickball.

PLUS – Read with a Cop, Coffee with a Cop, and Shop with a Cop

AND MORE

- Partnered with MUST Ministries, the City collected 100 winter coat donations (above)
- 25 Veterans from Canton were represented in the "Banners for the Brave" program. Banners were hung in Downtown for the weeks prior to Veterans Day
- Code Ordinance educational session with Hispanic Church UPCI-Canton in partnership with Pastor Eduardo Brando

We CANTON EVENTS



Georgia Downtown Development

CONFERENCE

400 LEADERS

in Downtown Development from across the State were hosted in Canton for this annual conference



THINK PINK

100+ PARTICIPANTS

walked in solidarity with survivors for the third annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk



FIRST FRIDAYS

5K ATTENDEES

on average welcomed at each of the six First Friday events, May thru October



WINTER ACTIVITIES

7 EVENTS

delighted families for the holiday season including Visits with Santa, "Christmas in Canton," the annual Tree Lighting, and wagon rides



TASTE OF CANTON

27 VENDORS

served 3,500 foodies at the first Taste of Canton at The Mill on Etowah



CELEBRATIONS

3 PARADES

traveled through Downtown Canton for Independence Day, Veterans Day, and Christmas



FARMERS MARKET

14 MARKETS

welcomed an average of 60 vendors and 750 shoppers each Saturday, June thru September





**3,000
SQ FT BUILDING**

this state-of-the-art facility is triple the size of the current plant administration building

**550
SQ FT LAB**

laboratory, plus central SCADA system, office space, conference and training rooms, storage, and a break room

- **DECEMBER 2023** - New administration building completed and building dedicated with a plaque by City Council
- **EARLY 2024** - Phase I of the Water Pollution Control Plant expansion is expected to be completed



COMING 2024

- Downtown Master Plan to be adopted
- Riverstone Pedestrian Crossing to be completed
- Demonstration solar arrays to be installed at Heritage and Etowah River Parks

**\$2.2M
ARPA GRANT**

from The Office of Governor Brian P. Kemp for pedestrian bridge/sidewalk improvements at Canton Creek in the Sunnyside community



Improving City INFRASTRUCTURE



TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

- Adopted in January 2023
- \$110M in projects suggested
- Installed traffic signal at Hickory Log Drive and Reservoir Drive



SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

- New roof installed at City Hall
- New HVAC system designed for Public Safety Building and City Hall
- Energy Audit completed for City facilities



DOWNTOWN PARKING DECK

- Five electric vehicle charging stations with ten chargers
- Solar array offset City Hall electricity costs by 36 MWh (Mega Watt Hours), August thru December

4.9% RATE INCREASE

NEW STEP PAY PLAN

The City adopted a new Step Pay Plan for sworn employees that includes traditional schedules for step and grade increases. Combined with the annual anniversary incentive, the average sworn employee will see a rate increase of at least 4.9% during FY2024.

2023 RETIREMENTS

- CHIEF MERRIFIELD - 8 years of service
- LINDA PETTY - 11 years of service
- DAVE HATABIAN - 13 years of service
- DAVID HANCOCK - 16 years of service
- MARK GAVALA - 19 years of service
- WANDA FLOYD - 26 years of service



LEADERSHIP: Retirements and Honors

CHARTER + MC UPDATES

Comprehensive update to the City Charter and Municipal Code adopted by City Council



EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Each month, staff members are nominated by their peers for Employee of the Month, and the recipient of the honor receives recognition, an award, and gift.

- TODD GREGORY - January 2023
- RUSSELL MARTIN - February 2023
- CRAIG CATALDO - March 2023
- CARLOS HENAO - April 2023
- CLINT JEANS - May 2023
- ADAM YURKOVSKY - June 2023
- AUDREY MUSIL - July 2023
- FELICIA WRIGHT - August 2023
- BRANDON POOLE - September 2023
- LUIS SALAS - October 2023
- KELLY PENDLEY - November 2023
- CC MEYER - December 2023

CITY OF CIVILITY

The City of Canton was designated as a City of Civility by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA).



HISTORIC FAÇADE GRANTS AWARDED

BY CANTON MAIN STREET

**175
NEW BUSINESS
LICENSES**

issued in 2023 including
The Holler (above), Local Color
Studio, and Crumbl Cookie

As a matching grant program, the Downtown Façade Grant helps to encourage and fund the restoration, improvement, and/or creation of historic architectural features to facades of commercial buildings within the Canton Main Street boundaries. The 2023 recipients were:

THE PACE BUILDING

is a beautiful, fully renovated office and retail building owned by Stan and Tammy Perkins.

C'EST LA VIE

is a modern French cuisine restaurant, bar, and lounge chef-owned and operated by Vincent and Laetitia Fernandez (below).



Canton BUSINESS is booming



TEEN JOB FAIR

The 2nd annual Teen Job Fair at City Hall in April welcomed dozens of teens looking for jobs and participating businesses wanting to hire.

JONES MERCANTILE BUILDING

Visitors to the Jones Building will find an elegant mash up of The Great Gatsby meets 1930s train station.

THRIVE CANTON - As the largest tenant in the newly renovated Jones Building, Thrive Canton occupies 19,000 square feet on both the top floor and at street level. 45 private offices for lease along with several meeting and event rooms available for four to 150 people.

PALERMO'S ORIGINAL PASTA & SANDWICHES (P.O.P.S) - Owners and operators Andy and Amber Palermo are excited to bring this New York-inspired Italian American café and market to Downtown Canton, on the first floor of the Jones Building.



3 NEW HOTELS

- Holiday Inn Express & Suites
- TownePlace Suites by Marriott
- Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott



2023 TOURISM LAUNCH

Canton's tourism initiative Explore Canton launched the City onto the map for tourists, visitors, and the local community, alike.

- 🌐 ExploreCantonGA.com
- 📷 @explorecantonga
- 📘 @explorecantonga



MURPHS SURF

Initiated first river canoe, kayak, and tubing floats down the Etowah River, and setup shop at The Mill on Etowah



↶ Canton is #SMALLTOWNCOOL



CANTON CELEBRATES



39TH RIVERFEST

Hosted by the Service League of Cherokee County, Canton's beloved annual arts and crafts show—Riverfest—was held late September at Etowah River Park.

\$1M+ REVENUE

Hotel Motel Tax collections topped \$1M for the first time in FY2023, at \$1,040,404+.

GA IMPACT WPSL

Canton is home to an impressive Women's Professional Soccer League (WPSL) team with players from across the country. Games are played at Cherokee High School and average 450+ crowds! The second season starts spring 2024.

CANTON



**30TH
ANNIVERSARY**

as a Tree City



**7,432+
YARD DEBRIS BAGS**

collected by Public Works



**36K+
POPULATION**

in the City of Canton



**128
EMPLOYEES**

work for the City of Canton



**22K+
CALLS**

run by the
Police Department



**\$12,500
HOUSING GRANT**

for first time homebuyers
down payment program
approved by Council



**\$4.4M
IN ARPA GRANTS**

Canton was 1 of 3 municipal
governments in GA to receive
multiple maximum grant awards



**\$82.3M
CITY BUDGET**

for FY2024 Operations
and Capital Projects:
Oct. 1, 2023-Sept. 30, 2024



**5.4
MILLS**

second lowest millage
rate of any municipality
in Cherokee County



**80+
CERTIFICATES**

of Occupancy (CO's) issued for
commercial businesses in the City



**29K+
FOLLOWERS**

on the City's
social media platforms



**2%
ALLOCATION**

from Capital Project budgets
to fund Public Art



**910
OPEN RECORDS**

requests completed
by the City



**3,602
CASES**

closed by
the Municipal Court



DISCOVER MORE

110 Academy St, Canton, GA 30114 | 770.704.1500 | CANTONGA.GOV | 