

2024
YEAR IN REVIEW

Z C F Z A C





LETTER FROM OUR MAYOR

2024 was another productive year for the City of Canton, its residents, and businesses. In addition to the continued progress on fulfilling the priorities established by citizens in our Roadmap for Success, we also celebrated the 190th anniversary of our great City. It is hard to believe we will acknowledge our Bicentennial in just nine years, and we have a lot to look forward to in 2025 and over the next decade. As we continue to move Canton forward, I am pleased to report the recent citizen survey indicated 74% of respondents felt overwhelmingly positive about the direction of our City.

As I mentioned in my 2024 State of the City, last year focused on building out, completing, and focusing many of our ongoing initiatives. While we started fewer new projects, we continued to hone and refine our strategic plan with additional data and expanded public input. Two major accomplishments in these efforts included the completion and adoption of a citywide Transportation Master Plan and a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These documents will guide our investment for many years, ensuring that new infrastructure projects will deliver the results that are valued by our residents.

In addition, last year's accomplishments include the hiring of our new Chief of Police, Marty Ferrell; the expansion, renovation, and reopening of Harmon Park; groundbreaking of the Canton Housing Authority's first new residences in over 50 years at Tanner Place; new upgrades to the sound, lighting, and art deco façade

of the historic Canton Theatre; our largest Multicultural Festival ever; and the continued expanding and popular events, such as First Friday, the Canton Farmers Market, the River Rock concert series, the largest 4th of July fireworks display in our City's history; and so many others.

In the year ahead, we will experience exciting and tangible progress on keynote projects in our citizens' roadmap; including our new South Canton park and state-of-the-art Dog Park; continued work on the West Main Street pedestrian corridor connecting the Mill on Etowah and downtown; the completion of design and further development of the new pedestrian bridge across the Etowah River from the new trail extension from Heritage to Boling Parks; and the completion of the largest infrastructure project in our 190-year history—the expanded Water Pollution Control Plant that will meet our sewer needs for decades to come.

As you read through this Year in Review, you will learn many other ways your Mayor and Council, City staff, boards and commissions, and others have worked tirelessly and responsibly to enhance the quality of life and create new opportunities for everyone who is fortunate enough to live, work, play, and serve in Canton. I remain extremely proud of the work we are doing and the future potential of our City as, together, we continue to create and enjoy the Coolest Small Town in America.

MAYOR BILL GRANT

▲ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

TRAVIS JOHNSON
Ward 1

BRYAN ROACH
Ward 2

DWAYNE WATERMAN
Ward 3

BILL GRANT
Mayor of Canton

SANDY MCGREW
Ward 1

SHAWN TOLAN
Ward 2 and Mayor Pro Tem

FARRIS YAWN
Ward 3

“

Harmon Park is 100 years old and is located in our Sunnyside community, which is a gem of our City. This project highlights our initiative for this community and is the perfect example of when we plan our work and work our plan.”

— MAYOR BILL GRANT



HARMON PARK COMPLETION

AT 161 HARMON CIRCLE IN CANTON

The renovated Harmon Park, located near the Etowah River, now features a basketball court, mini-pitch soccer field, and improved baseball fields and facilities.

In July 2022, the Canton City Council awarded a contract to a local company for improvements to Harmon Park, paid for through Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax and impact fees.

The \$4.6 million project included construction of a multi-use concrete trail, sidewalk improvements, additional parking, stadium-style seating, replacing fencing on the existing baseball field, and construction of a prefabricated picnic pavilion.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)—as part of the GA 100 Initiative—along with Atlanta United Foundation (AUF) approved a \$75,000 grant, awarded to the Cherokee Youth Foundation with the City of Canton as a partner. The foundation obtained the grant to purchase and install the synthetic turf mini-pitch soccer field at the park.

Through a Community Development Block Grant, the City was able to update field lighting, replace all rotten/damaged wood, add new roofs on buildings and dugouts, and add stadium seating along with a new viewing deck. Curbing and mulch were installed around the playground area, and new garbage cans, benches, and picnic tables were placed throughout the park.

◀ RIBBON KICKING

100
YEAR-OLD

public park located in Canton’s Sunnyside community.

500
PEOPLE

attended the first look of the new and updated facilities.

\$4.6M
RENOVATION

included a multi-use trail, sidewalk improvements, parking, stadium seating, fencing, and a picnic pavilion.

\$75K
LISC & AUF
GRANT

was awarded to the Cherokee Youth Foundation to install a mini-pitch soccer field.

WPSL
SEASON 2

39
PLAYERS

from the following states and countries:

- | | |
|---------|----------------|
| GA - 26 | AL - 1 |
| IN - 2 | TX - 1 |
| VT - 1 | N. Ireland - 1 |
| SC - 2 | England - 3 |
| PA - 2 | |



2025 SEASON. Canton's Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL) team—Georgia Impact—is growing their talented roster with two players from England. The players are from Manchester City and Manchester United—two of the largest professional soccer clubs in the world!

Credit: Ivan Felipe Photography, LLC

26
GOALS

in 8 regular season games. Overall record was 4 wins, 2 losses and 2 ties.

2,126
HOMETOWN
FANS

recorded for the highest ever attendance in WPSL history. The previous record was 1,847.



RIVER ROCK WITH BRYCE LEATHERWOOD. Over 3,000 attendees joined for this two-day weekend concert and festival, featuring headliner Bryce Leatherwood, winner of Season 22 of The Voice.

SOUTH CANTON PARK. This park is designed to include an amphitheater, large multi-level playground, walking path, dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs, and art installations.



PARKS AND REC
MASTER PLAN

Work on the plan began in October 2023 when the City hired Brandstetter Carroll Inc to create the plan. The plan was developed with guidance from a steering committee and input from City leaders and community members.

The City has 292 acres of parkland. This includes four neighborhood parks, three community parks and three special use parks: Brown Park, Burge Park, Boling Park, Cannon Park, Canton Paw Park, Etowah River Park, Harmon Park, Heritage Park, Hickory Log Creek Reservoir, and McCanless Park.

A FEW SUGGESTED GOALS AND PROJECTS:

- Expand and enhance trails that link parks, schools, and commercial zones, like Lake Canton and Etowah River Trail.
- Renovate and upgrade North Canton Gym into a community recreation center, while preserving part of the site (the former elementary school building) for future use.
- Acquire land and develop new community parks and sports fields to accommodate population growth—including multipurpose fields with artificial turf.
- Create new neighborhood and pocket parks in key investment areas and underserved neighborhoods.
- Improve access to the Etowah River with canoe/kayak launches and fishing opportunities.
- Add a splash pad.



“

We have seen many changes in the area and this is one of the best. Recently, shoppers and residents of the area have come forward to make comments that they feel very flattered to be taken into account and that they love the mural.”

— FELI RAMIREZ
Owner of Ramirez Supermarket

SUNNYSIDE MURAL

Artist Graham Carraway, with the assistance of fellow artist Gus Reynolds, was selected to transform the 60’ by 12.5’ wall into a vibrant representation of Sunnyside. The mural was inspired the flora of the region—the delicate pink blooming azaleas surround the word “Sunnyside,” which takes center stage and is rendered in gold and yellow. Anchoring the composition, a magpie with wings outstretched, symbolizes the boundless potential of the community.



◀ SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE



WEST MAIN ARTS FEST

This fine arts festival in Downtown Canton featured over 40 local artists and artisans, a lineup of street performers and musicians, and the tastiest local food vendors, all gathered to celebrate the arts in Canton.

CANTON THEATRE

SOUND & LIGHTING UPDATE

All new modern LED lighting—including a new light board—plus a new sound board upgrades the Canton Theatre to modern standards, ensuring all our events look and sound great!

FOX FAÇADE GRANT*

The City is using the funds to repaint the exterior and trim of the Canton Theatre, repair the box office and poster boxes, add decorative molding to the digital marquee boards, and retrofit the “Canton Theatre” signage to LED.

* See page 12 for more about Canton’s Partnership with The Fox and Fox Gives.



The Canton Optimist Club sponsored the 37th Annual Christmas Parade and Merry Market

37 YEARS

as a Canton Holiday Tradition

40+ FLOATS

at the Christmas Parade

150 VENDORS

at the Merry Market

BUSINESS VIDEO SPOTLIGHTS

The City of Canton and the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED) have initiated a partnership that showcases the stories of the personalities behind the businesses that make Canton special. By sharing the personal journeys of those who've graduated from one of COED's development programs, viewers of the "Behind the Business" series can witness and hear first-hand what it's like to be a small business owner in Canton and the behind-the-scenes operations of how they're run. This series aims to spotlight at least one business per quarter.



Donation of **\$6.9K** for Shop with a Cop.



CHEROKEE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cherokee County
1831
GEORGIA



TECHNOLOGY RIDGE PARKWAY

During the ribbon cutting ceremony, Canton Mayor Bill Grant said that the roadway "epitomizes our roadmap tenets of advancing regional economic success in the area, improving our infrastructure, and leading with excellence."

Cherokee County, the City of Canton, the Cherokee Office of Economic Development (COED), and the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce celebrated the ribbon-cutting for Phase 1 of Technology Ridge Parkway on June 4, 2024. The first segment of the parkway, stretching a little over half a mile from Bluffs Parkway to the Fate Conn Road and Heard Road intersection, opened to traffic in March. This five-phase project will ultimately connect The Bluffs in Canton to the Cherokee County Regional Airport. Groundbreaking for the first phase took place in October 2022.

“

Technology Ridge demonstrates the positive impact and possibilities of partnership when the City and county work together.”

— MAYOR BILL GRANT

FOX GIVES

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FOX THEATRE

Since 2019, the Canton Theatre has been a Georgia Presenter—a statewide booking consortium, founded and managed by the Fox Theatre, which encourages collaboration among arts presenters in the state and the region. Through the Georgia Presenters organization, the Canton Theatre received a grant to co-present with the Fox Theatre for the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers, a program of South Arts and National Endowment for the Arts. In January 2025, the Canton Theatre also participated in the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation’s Historic Theaters Expedition, which is co-presented by the Fox.



WOMEN IN BUSINESS

In celebration of National Business Women’s Week, the Chamber hosted the 2024 Women in Business Seminar and Luncheon on October 17. They learned about confidence, enclotted cognition, cracking your communication code, and the strength that comes from women in community with one another.

EMERGE!

Presented by the City of Canton, these informative sessions are held throughout the year about issues and topics important to local businesses.



CHEROKEE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
connecting • creating • cultivating



“

I don't do things to be recognized, but it is a blessing when people recognize and appreciate the things you do, so thank you all for coming out and being a part of this celebration.”

— PAT TANNER
Former City Councilmember

TANNER PLACE

The new neighborhood, named after former Canton City Councilmember Pat Tanner, marks the City’s first new public housing development in nearly 50 years. The groundbreaking took place on August 7, 2024, with construction expected to be completed in 2025. Funded through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the project will also utilize HUD-funded project-based vouchers to assist with resident rents.



CANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

\$24M
PROJECTED

in development for the new Tanner Place community.

39
DEMOLISHED

units will be replaced with the new public housing.

31
TRANSFER

units from Jefferson Circle will be moved to Tanner Place.

70
ADDITIONAL

units will be added to Shipp Street in Canton.



NORTH CANTON SCHOOL DEMOLITION

During the summer of 2024, the main school building was demolished, yet the gymnasium—built in the 1930s—will remain on the property and undergo renovations in 2025. In December 2024, the Canton City Council unanimously voted to award an \$18,850 contract to Keck and Wood to design two site plans for potential renovations to repurpose the property.

POSSIBLE USES INCLUDE:

- Recreation, including a playground and mini-pitch soccer field
- Housing development
- Greenspace
- Connecting trail system



“

As demonstrated in the recent citizen survey, Canton prides itself on our preservation efforts and our residents value the small town and historic character of our community.”

— MAYOR BILL GRANT

HISTORIC DISTRICT EXPANSION

Canton Mayor Bill Grant said that the expansion of the Historic District advances two of the City’s Roadmap Tenets: ‘Creating Great Neighborhoods’ and ‘Enhancing Historic Downtown Canton.’ Specifically, Grant said, “The neighborhood is a nationally recognized and registered historic district. Our historical society supports expansion and preservation of the district.”

ADOPTION OF RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

Guidelines for homes within the Historic District will be established by the Historic Preservation Commission. The changes mainly expand the district eastward, and include properties along East Main Street, just past Golf Course Road. The district also expands northward along Brown Street, near the L and N Railroad.

HISTORY CHEROKEE VISITORS CENTER OPEN HOURS

Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Includes gift shop, restrooms, and info desk

STUMPTOWN NEW HISTORIC MARKER ▶

Stumptown is a historically black community in Downtown Canton. The new historic marker celebrates the vibrant and diverse history of the area. Additional historic markers will be identified and installed in 2025.



▼ **CITY HALL ROOF.** The 25-year-old roof was replaced with a cool roof (below) that reflects sunlight, reduces energy costs, extends roof life, and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.



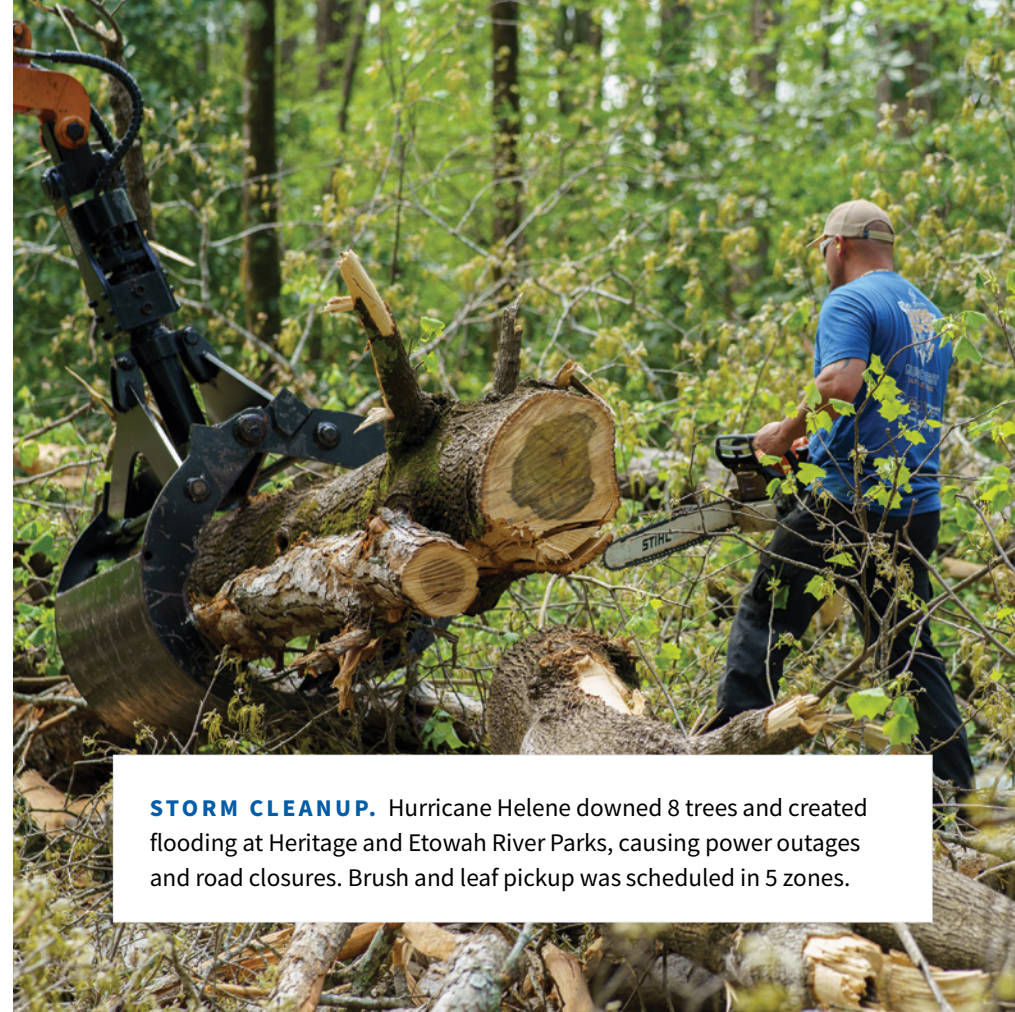
SOLAR BENCH
AT HERITAGE PARK

The solar picnic table keeps users charged and connected, while encouraging people to spend more time outdoors. By integrating solar technology into everyday environments, this table turns the playground and outdoor area into a space of comfort, connectivity, and green energy.

ADA RESTROOMS

AT ETOWAH RIVER PARK AND BOLING PARK ▶

For years, Boling Park relied on portable restrooms, so the addition of a standalone restroom facility was a welcome upgrade for visitors. Etowah River Park, needing more facilities due to its trail system and special events, also received new restroom units, along with a full remodel of the existing bathrooms. Both additions are prefabricated units, designed to be cost-effective while meeting the park's specific needs.



STORM CLEANUP. Hurricane Helene downed 8 trees and created flooding at Heritage and Etowah River Parks, causing power outages and road closures. Brush and leaf pickup was scheduled in 5 zones.



The City improved recycling options for employees in all City facilities. Recycling is now offered for aluminum, plastic, cardboard, paper, battery, and printer cartridges.

2
EVENTS

called for "Peace, Love, and Recycling" in April and October

1,300
GALLONS
of paint collected

8,000
POUNDS
of electronics collected

100+
TIRES
collected for recycling

NEW CITY STAFF
STUDY

Implemented a Compensation and Classification Study for City staff, including the region's first step-and-grade pay program for our Public Works staff.

NEW
HIRES

AUNDI LESLEY
appointment to Economic Development Manager

AMY THOMAS
hired as Human Resources Director

TOP 10 IN 10
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

KEVIN TURNER (L) and **JESSE HAMILTON (R)** were honored in The Top 10 in 10 'Young Professionals to Watch,' a Cherokee County initiative designed to cultivate and showcase exceptional young professionals.



BETHANY WATSON (L) was awarded 100 Most Influential Women in Georgia Engineering by ACEC Georgia. **JEFF TUCKER (R)** was promoted to Deputy Chief.



MARTY FERRELL was sworn in as Chief of Police by Mayor Bill Grant.



2024 EMPLOYEES
OF THE MONTH



JANUARY

MARIA CHANG
Administration



FEBRUARY

DAVID CASEY
Administration



MARCH

JOSEFA HART
Police Department



APRIL

RODNEY CAMPBELL
Police Department



MAY

ROBERT SEVERANCE
Police Department



JUNE

AMY LUTZ
Municipal Court



JULY

ADAM DODSON
Public Works



AUGUST

KENNY BLANTON
Public Works



SEPTEMBER

RUSSELL MARTIN
IT Department



OCTOBER

PAMELA WETZEL
Police Department



NOVEMBER

KAYLEE FLOYD
Administration



DECEMBER

JACK DUNAGAN
Public Works



NEW CHEROKEE HIGH SCHOOL

◀ BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The new building is on track to open in August 2026, exactly 70 years after the original campus opened! Education-SPLIST funds will help build a two-story parking deck, a first for a Cherokee County school.

NORTH ST PROJECT

A future mixed-use development is in the concept stage, featuring a parking deck, retail, residential spaces, a boutique hotel, and county offices.

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (TMP)

Adopted in January 2023, the TMP Mission provides a plan for safe access and enhanced connectivity to neighborhoods, recreation, businesses, and natural resources, while envisioning sustainable and actionable future transportation solutions.

88
ACRES

and 473,761 square feet of facility space

3K+
STUDENTS

could be supported in the new high school

152
CLASSROOMS

and state-of-the-art labs, specifically designed CTAE (Career Technical and Agricultural Education)

1K
SEATING

in the new school auditorium

4.5K
FANS

can be seated in the new football stadium

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL

EXPANSION AND NEW PARKING DECK

In July 2024, the Canton City Council unanimously voted to approve a request from Northside Hospital Cherokee for City contributions to construct a new traffic signal at the hospital. A second access point for entering and leaving the hospital campus will support current traffic, as well as plans for future expansion. According to City documents, the second entrance will be at Northside Cherokee Boulevard, south of the current entrance.

10-YEAR PLAN FOR FUTURE EXPANSION:

- ✓ Build a parking deck adjacent to the women's center. The deck will feature about 1,400 parking spaces.
- ✓ Move the current helipad to a different campus location to make room for the construction of a new patient tower. This tower would bring additional operating rooms and 240 more patient beds.
- ✓ Additional medical office building on the campus.

POSSIBLE 2025 PROJECTS:

- ✓ Design of Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Road Roundabout
- ✓ Realignment and Replacement of the Canton Creek Bridge
- ✓ E Main Street at North Street Roundabout

30 SHORT-TERM TMP PROJECTS

These short-term projects may be implemented within 10 years of the project's adoption. Of the 30 projects, 13 projects have been completed, are currently in design or concept phase, or have been addressed with further planning.

CANTON



886
OPEN RECORDS

requests completed
by the City



as a Chartered City



15
SEASONS

of First Friday Concerts



379
WORK ORDERS

for storm water management
processed by Public Works



500K+
ATTENDEES

at our Downtown events,
including our very first fireworks
display at our July First Friday



658
BULK ITEMS

picked-up curbside and
processed by Public Works



403
RESIDENTIAL CO's

(aka Certificates of Occupancy) for new
homes, plus our staff performed over
12k residential inspections.



8,700
YARD DEBRIS BAGS

collected by Public Works, in addition to
1,200 brush pickups and over 100 leaf
pile removals



5.4
MILLS

for nine years in a row,
even in the face of inflation and
increased project costs



\$6.5M
IN FUNDS

spent downtown in building
improvements, historic preservation,
and adaptive reuse projects



159
YEARS

of collective experience in
construction, fire, and life safety
by Building & Safety Services



143
BUSINESSES

formed in the City of Canton,
including 21 new businesses
downtown and 273 net new jobs



\$14K
ENERGY CREDIT

due to the City's new solar canopy
which powered free charging for 100s
of electric vehicles at the parking deck



1,200+
SURVEY REPLIES

from business owners and citizens
to the 2024 Canton Citizen Survey:
cantonga.gov/citizensurvey

CITY OF CANTON

DISCOVER MORE

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

