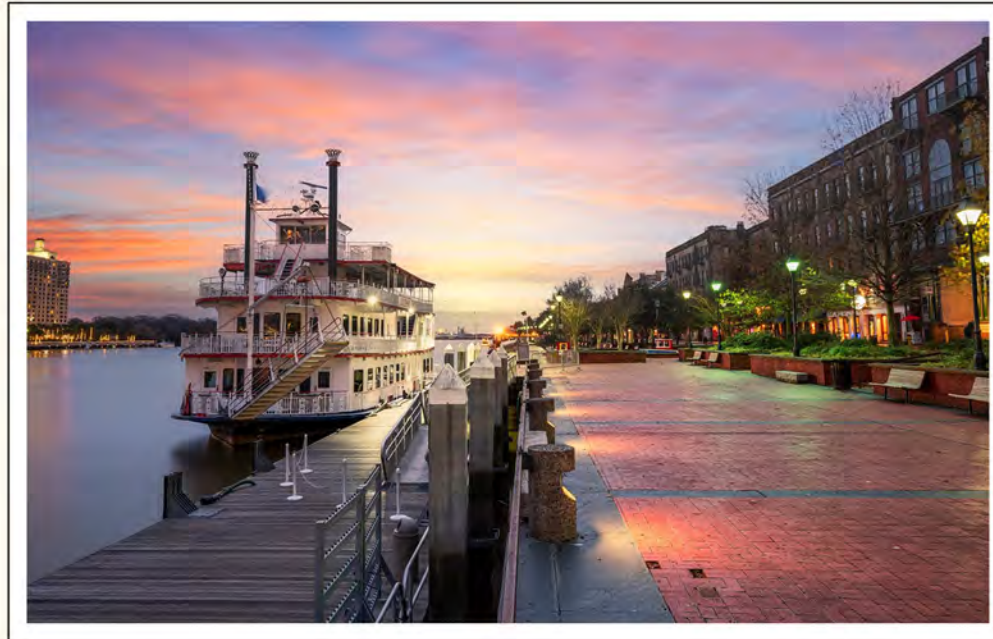


Savannah's Waterfront Community Improvement District

VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



Adopted 2025



Sottile & Sottile, Urban Design

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INTRODUCTION

SWCID Background

Purpose and Vision

Boundary Map



Community Improvement District



Savannah's Historic Waterfront

WHAT IS A CID?

Authorized by the Georgia Constitution, a Community Improvement District (CID) is the state's most powerful public-private partnership today. It operates as a mechanism in which property owners in a defined geographic area elect to pay an additional assessment on their real property. The revenue goes directly back into the district to supplement existing municipal services within its boundaries.

HOW IS A CID FORMED?

First, state enabling legislation is required. It takes the agreement of 51% of the commercial property owners representing at least 75% of the taxable value of the commercial property located within the proposed boundaries. The county tax commissioner then must certify that these requirements are met, after which the local governing body passes a resolution and creates a cooperation agreement under which the CID will operate. The agreement does not limit the authority of the municipality to provide services or facilities within the district.

WHAT COULD THE REVENUE FROM A CID ACCOMPLISH?

The types of projects and programs taken on by CIDs vary with the unique characteristics of each commercial area. In general, their work falls under one or more of these broad categories: mobility, beautification, or public safety. Mobility projects may include roadway and transit improvements; beautification may encompass landscaping and placemaking; and public safety measures may include security patrols and safety cameras.

Savannah's Waterfront Community Improvement District



Map showing the boundaries of the SWCID.

BACKGROUND

Savannah's Waterfront Community Improvement District (SWCID) is a Community Improvement District created in 2023 when waterfront commercial property owners agreed to pay an additional annual assessment based upon the value of their properties to fund certain programs and projects above and beyond the basic level of city-provided services.

Savannah's Waterfront commercial property owners will make a voluntary contribution in 2024 (currently 2 mills, or 2/1000ths of 1% of assessed value) through their property taxes.

Initial approval is for a six-year term. Property owners within the district will vote to extend the CID for another term after six years.

PURPOSE

The SWCID is leading the effort to expedite public safety, beautification and economic improvement strategies for the benefit of businesses, employees and visitors.

Our future is limited by the current level of resources. We need cleaner, more attractive, and more inviting public spaces to welcome customers and clients. The CID will allow us to find solutions to problems by banding together to solve long-standing challenges to the waterfront's success.

Staff:

Julie Musselman, Savannah's Waterfront CID, Executive Director

Michael Leithead, Leithead Consulting, Founder

Tad Leithead, Leithead Consulting, CFO

Contact:

Savannah's Waterfront Community Improvement District

PO Box 2173 | Savannah, Georgia 31402

912-234-0295 | julie@savannahwaterfront.com

BOARD

The SWCID is governed by a seven-person board of directors with five members elected by commercial property owners, and two members appointed by the City of Savannah. The SWCID shares its Executive Director with Savannah's Waterfront to provide day-to-day management and operations for SWCID funded programs and projects.

Board of Directors:

Richard Kessler, The Kessler Enterprise, Chairman

Ansley Williams, Live Oak Restaurant Group, Vice Chairman

Jennifer Strickland, River Street Sweets, Treasurer

Todd Costin, Hyatt Regency Savannah, Secretary

Jay Melder, City Manager, City of Savannah

Cynthia Knight, Code Compliance Director, City of Savannah

Whip Triplett, North Point Hospitality Group

1

FACT FINDING

Field Survey and Methodology

Improvement Themes

Landscaping, Hardscape & Sidewalks

Lighting and Security

Signage, Interpretation & Wayfinding

Cleanliness and Refuse

Facade Improvements





The entire group was equipped with background materials to aid in the fact-finding survey.



The group began the field survey together, then divided into smaller teams to focus on specific improvement themes.



Participants surveyed the entire SWCID area.



Teams took photos and detailed survey notes to document existing conditions.



EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEY

Fact Finding

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Smaller teams enabled greater coverage of the area and the ability to focus on details.



Physically surveying the entirety of the SWCID boundaries together was an invaluable experience for the board.



Over 500 photos were taken by the entire survey team.



Careful notes were made to be able to share with the entire group.



EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEY

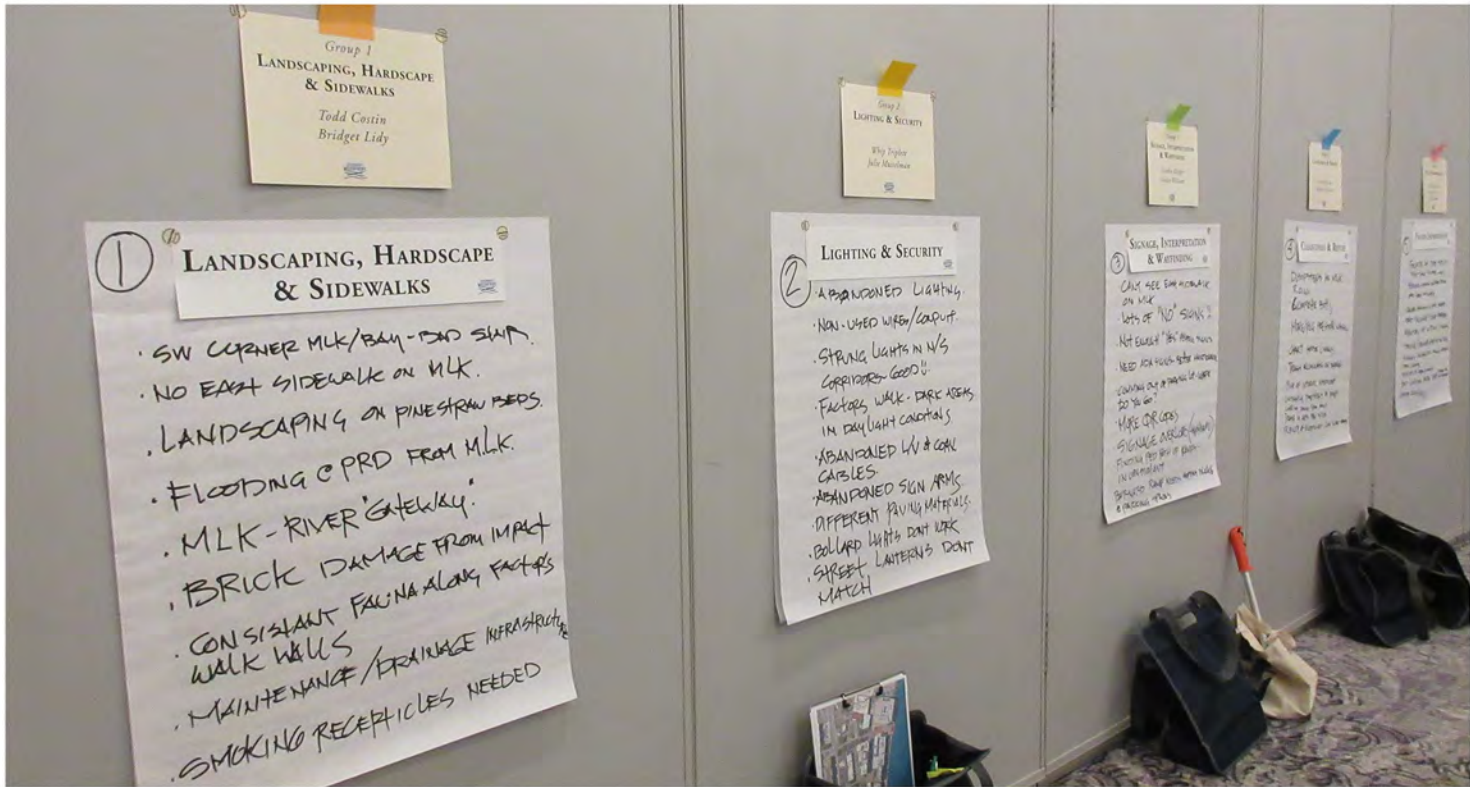
Fact Finding



Following the survey, each team presented their findings and observations to the entire group.



Area specific notes were recorded onto a large-format map.



Each team's observations were recorded for analysis.



Equipped with a first-hand knowledge of the existing conditions, the SWCID can prepare for visioning.

METHODOLOGY

Fact Finding

IMPROVEMENT THEMES

Landscaping, Hardscape & Sidewalks

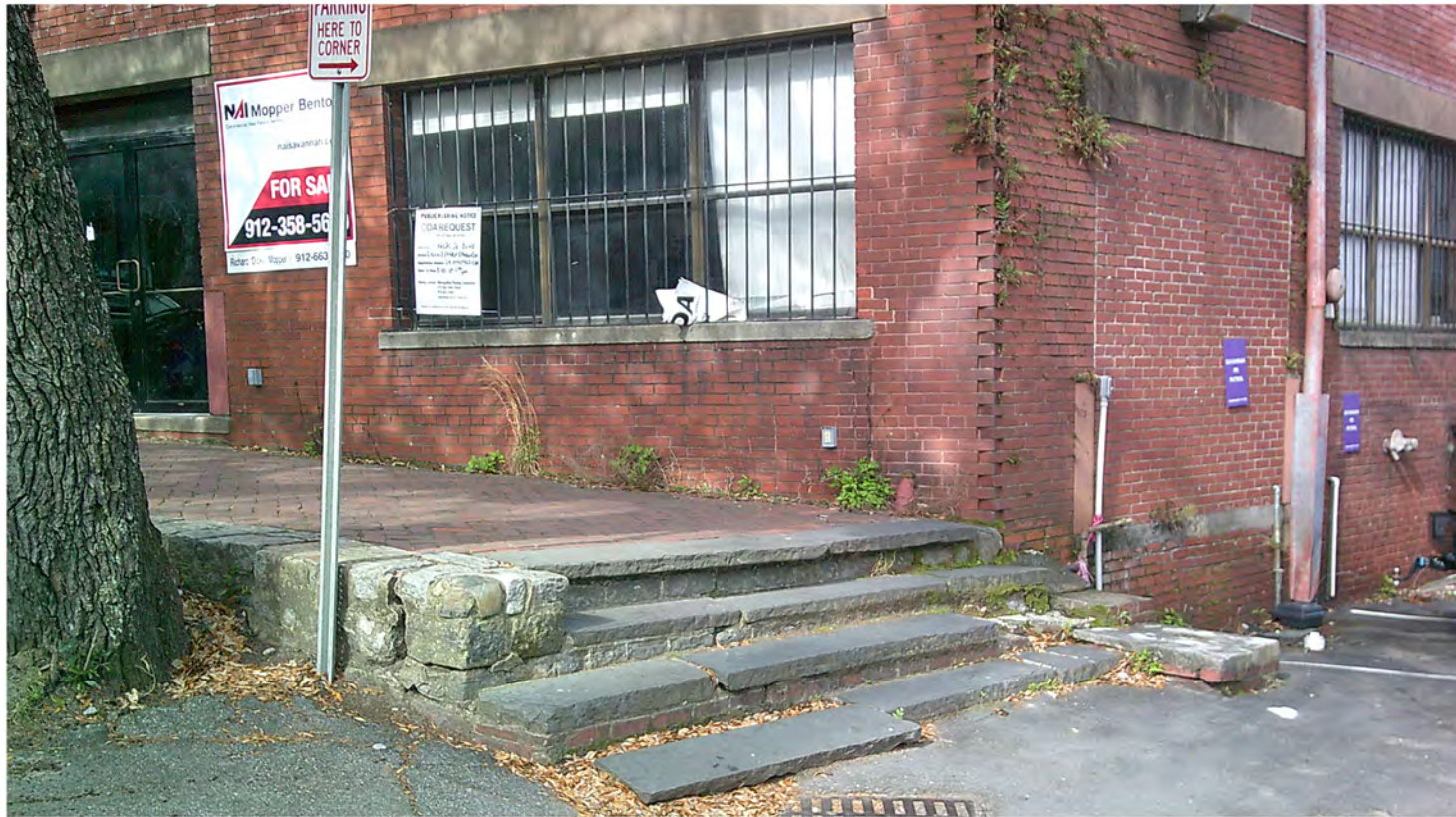
Lighting and Security

Signage, Interpretation & Wayfinding

Cleanliness and Refuse

Facade Improvements





Stair on the southwest corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Bay Street is in bad repair.



View east along Factors Walk showing vegetation growing from the masonry walls. These areas also lack smoking receptacles.



The alley at the Jefferson Street passage is a good example.



Bench styles vary across the survey area, and many are in poor condition.

LANDSCAPING, HARDSCAPE & SIDEWALKS

Existing Conditions Survey



Granite curbs on the north side of River Street are a tripping hazard, and often do not allow pedestrian access from the south side of the street.



Parking area presents an opportunity for improvements in materials and allowing for flexible programming.



Landscaping is frequently interrupted by unsightly utility boxes.



Live Oak trees in Rousakis Plaza appear unhealthy. Group discussed possibilities for alternative stage orientation.

LANDSCAPING, HARDSCAPE & SIDEWALKS

Existing Conditions Survey

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Sidewalk ends without warning, leaving pedestrians walking in the street between traffic and a parking lot wall.



Discontinuity in the materials of the riverwalk and a distinct break in the line of movement along the river.



Closed stair from Emmett Park restricts pedestrian access between levels.



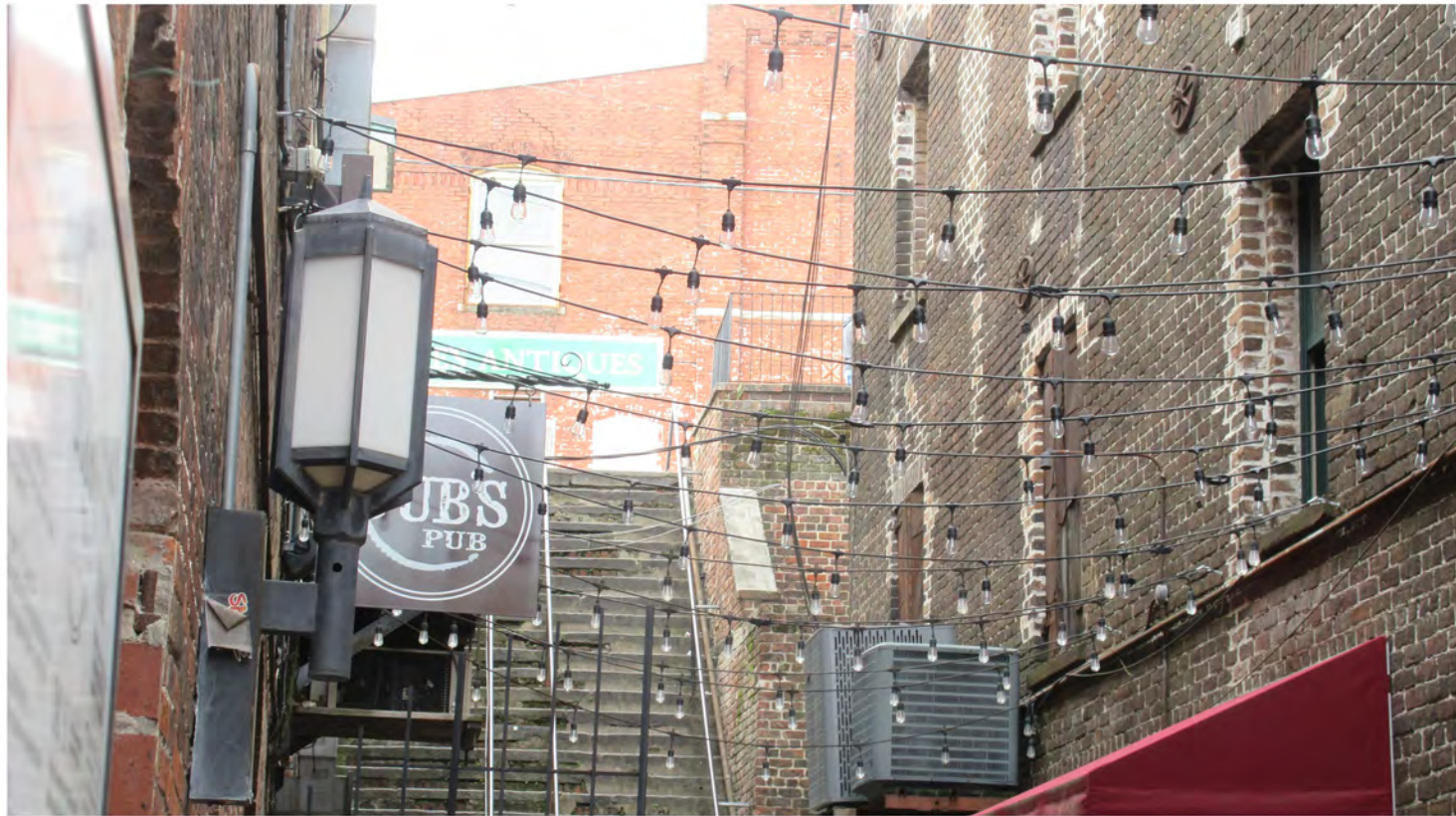
No safe pedestrian route along East Bay Street approaching East Broad Street.

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LANDSCAPING, HARDSCAPE & SIDEWALKS

Existing Conditions Survey





The group felt that string lights can be an effective and appealing lighting strategy for north-south connections.



Broken and mismatched lanterns line pedestrian walkways.



Broken footpath lights and bollard lights along the river.



Poorly lit passages on Factors Walk appear uninviting and present a security risk.

LIGHTING & SECURITY

Existing Conditions Survey



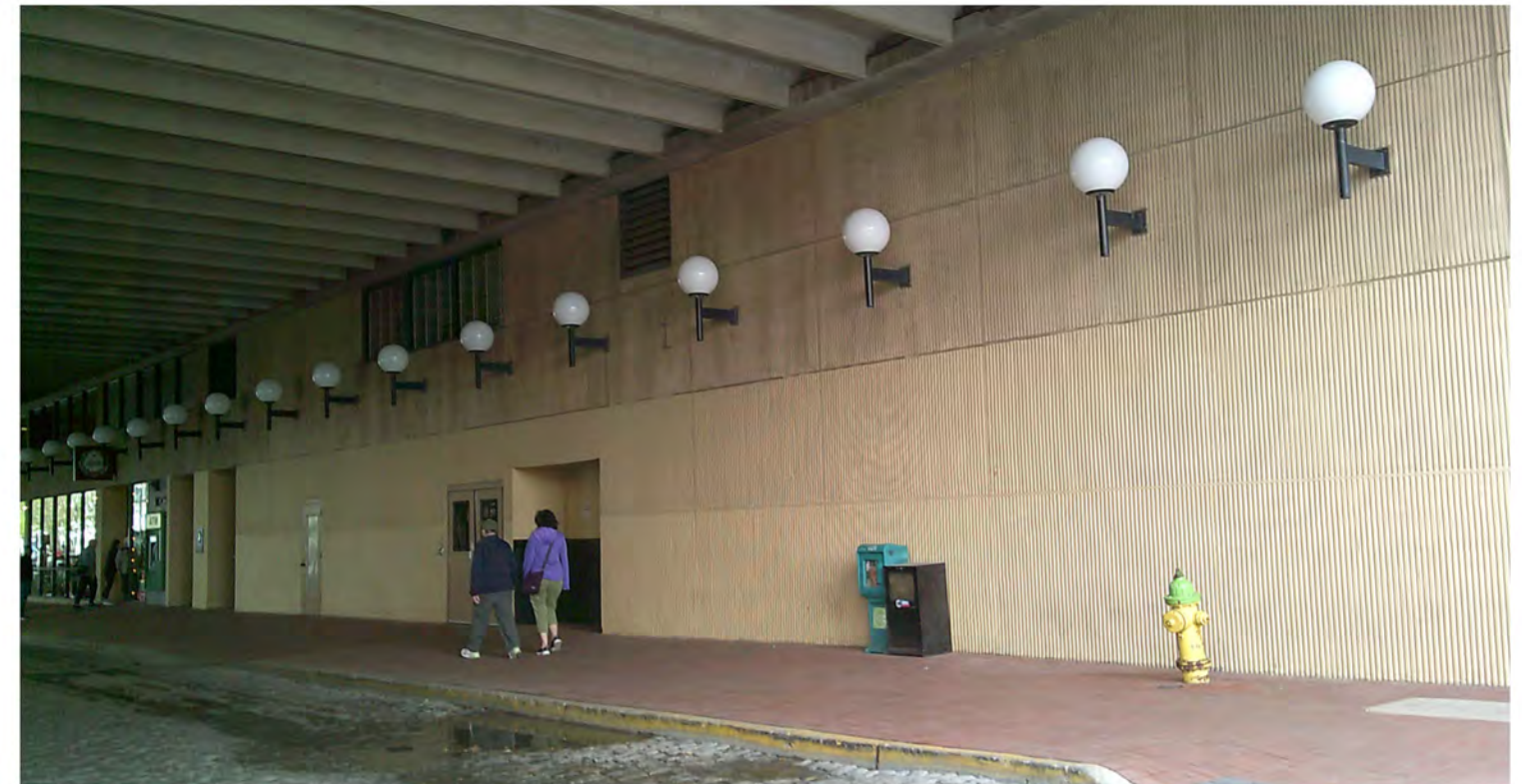
Cluttered electrical connections and exposed low-voltage and coaxial cables.



The retaining wall between Emmet Park and Morrell Park is disintegrating.



Uneven paving and abandoned signage can be hazardous to pedestrians.



Lighting under the Hyatt appears inconsistent with the rest of River Street and is not on during daylight hours.

LIGHTING & SECURITY

Existing Conditions Survey



Abandoned signage at the Barnard Street ramp stands beside an unmarked pedestrian stairway.



This leaning sign, describing the significance of Savannah's Waterfront, is set among an accumulation of traffic and business signage.



Signage directing pedestrians to the public elevator at Bull Street is minimal and easy to miss.



Wayfinding signs mixed in with warnings and 'no' signs do not create an inviting impression.

SIGNAGE, INTERPRETATION & WAYFINDING

Existing Conditions Survey

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The SWCID survey group noted and appreciated the new wraps on utility infrastructure.



Lincoln Street Ramp has a signage 'overload' with no consistency in size, style, material, or attachment.



Only two directories exist to guide visitors, and wayfinding signage overall is inconsistent.



T-shirt shops display products outside and contribute to the sense of signage overload.

SIGNAGE, INTERPRETATION & WAYFINDING

Existing Conditions Survey

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Bridges may present an opportunity to identify the name of ramp / street and to help with wayfinding.



Historical markers can be difficult to locate. The marker for "The Most Historic Spot in Georgia," sits right in front of the Hyatt and is easily overlooked.



Interpretive signage along the river is weathering, and often appears unrelated to unifying visual themes.



Factors Walk is lacking in interpretive signage and presents an opportunity to be more integrated.

SIGNAGE, INTERPRETATION & WAYFINDING

Existing Conditions Survey

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Sheltered spaces gather refuse.



Many surfaces are in need of regular cleaning. These steps on the west end of River Street and columns under the Cotton Exchange have accumulated stains and grime due to a lack of consistent cleaning.



Standing water and uneven paving presents a problem, and frequently collect refuse.



Poor condition of paving often collects small refuse and lends to a generally unkempt impression.

CLEANLINESS AND REFUSE

Existing Conditions Survey



Bags waiting for pickup were observed by the group during the survey.



Cluttered loading areas that should be hidden from view overflow into public view along the waterfront.



Trash enclosures without doors only partially conceal compactors from view, and their open top allows views down into the dirty enclosures from the bridges and walkways above.



Linen delivery can crowd Factors Walk, and businesses report that their linens have been taken by passersby.

CLEANLINESS AND REFUSE

Existing Conditions Survey

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Buildings still in need of renovation are often the first impression for visitors coming down to River Street.



Temporary banners remain in place for weeks after special events.



Many storefronts are obscured with decals and posted signs.



The survey group observed many retailers that have pushed their inventory into the right-of-way.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing Conditions Survey

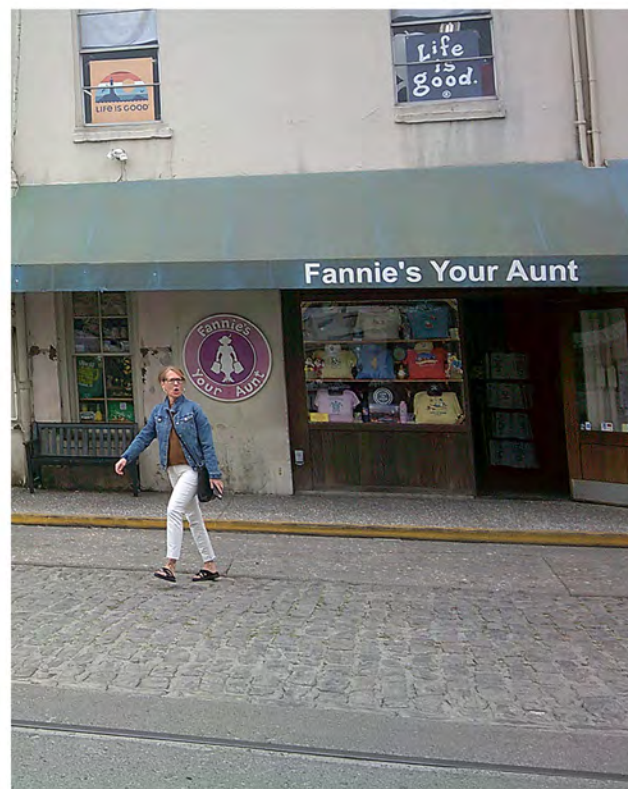
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Dirty facades with active biological growth were observed.



Well maintained plantings provided good examples that appeared to enliven facades and invite visitors.



Many awnings appear to be in need of cleaning or replacement.



Survey groups observed that painting utility boxes is often a simple and effective way to blend utilities into the facade.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

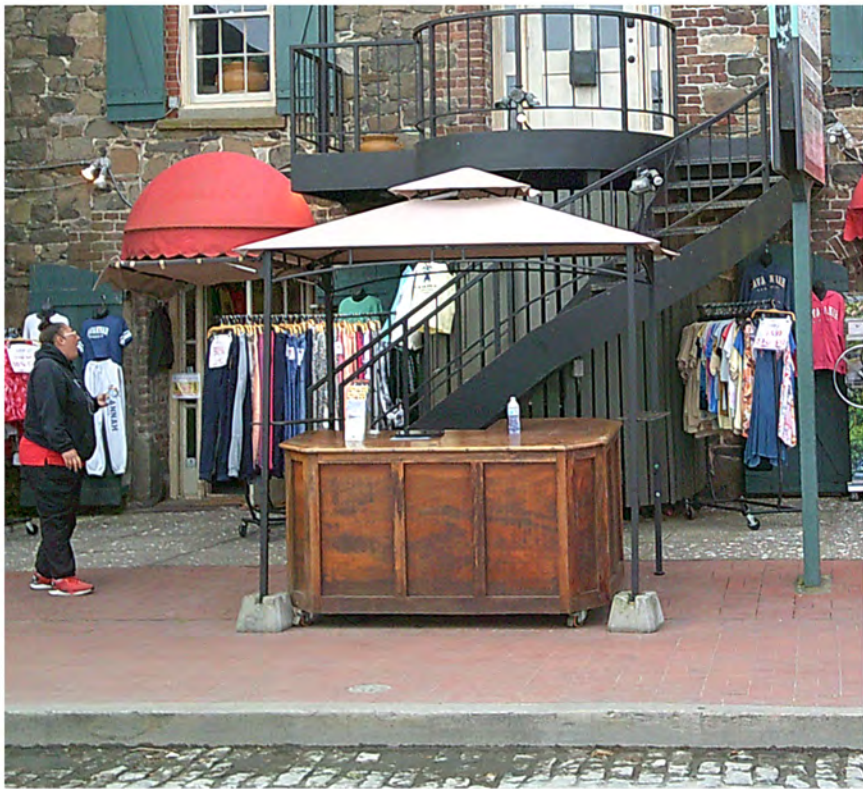
Existing Conditions Survey



Rooftop utilities on the east end can be viewed from Emmet Park.



Utility screening, when applied, was observed to be an effective method of concealing unsightly rooftop units.



Host stands and kiosks placed in the pedestrian path.



The design and condition of older improvements do not appear to be in keeping with the character of River Street.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing Conditions Survey

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LANDSCAPING, HARDSCAPE & SIDEWALKS

Bridget Lidy
Todd Costin

- Southwest corner of MLK / Bay Street – bad stair
- No east sidewalk on MLK
- Landscaping needed on pinestraw beds
- Flooding into Generator Hall at PRD from MLK
- MLK – “River Gateway”
- Brick damage from impact at River Street / Factors Walk
- Consistent fauna along Factors Walk walls
- Maintenance / drainage infrastructure issues
- Smoking receptacles needed
- Dub’s alley a good example
- Granite curb on north side of River Street is a trip hazard - “Woonerf” approach?
- Parking lots - Change paving, use for Biergarten or outdoor dining
- Landscaping consistency
- Consistent smooth brick cross-walks
- Dark places on Factors Walk
- WWII Monument blocked by granite curbs
- Activate storefronts under Hyatt tunnel
- Lights don’t work on riverfront concrete bollards
- Interpretive DOT signs need to be replaced (project underway)
- North / South street terminus – public art
- Bad / inconsistent benches
- Murals in smaller alleyways
- Graffiti problem
- What to do with trolley rails?
- Rousakis Plaza live oaks look unhealthy - Explore other species or trellises
- Re-orient arbor stage
- Stage at east or west end of plaza
- Rousakis Plaza programming? - Build for desired program

- Lots of silver electrical panels
- Mismatched fencing
- Riverwalk discontinuity
- Wall along private parking is incompatible
- Sidewalk restriction on east end
- Little bridge at west end of Waving Girl (Morrell Park)
- Olympic Monument not performing / attracting attention
- Stage in Morrell Park?
- East Broad / Bay Street connection is scary
- Stair down from Emmett Park is closed
- Landscape theme for all of River Street

LIGHTING AND SECURITY

Whip Triplett
Julie Musselman

- Abandoned lighting
- Non-used wires / conduit
- String lights in north / south corridors are good! (Dub’s as an example)
- Factors Walk – dark areas in daylight conditions
- Abandoned low voltage and coaxial cables
- Abandoned sign arms
- Different paving materials
- Concrete bollard lights broken along the river
- Street lanterns do not match
- Vertical conduits on Factors Walk, clean up and paint out
- Conduit / wires to nowhere
- Duct tape on street lights
- Disintegrating retaining wall at Morrell Park / Emmett Park
- Concrete jutting out into Factors Walk travel lane
- Structural sagging on Factors Walk walkways
- Lighting under Hyatt doesn’t look like Savannah

SIGNAGE, INTERPRETATION & WAYFINDING

Chelsea Williams
Cynthia Knight
Jennifer Strickland

- Can’t see east sidewalk on MLK
- Lots of “NO” signs
- Not enough “YES” or helpful / welcoming signs
- Need ADA signs – better maintenance
- Coming out of the parking lot along the river – where do you go? Unclear
- More QR codes
- Signage overload is systemic
- Finding pedestrian path up ramps is inconsistent
- Barnard Ramp needs stopping blocks at parking spaces - crowding into pedestrian path
- Drainage issues interrupting pedestrian routes
- Crooked interpretive signs (right across from Visitors’ Center)
- Hard to find public elevator signs
- Bad benches
- Old monuments need TLC
- Signs needed to explain Factors Walk
- People forced to walk in the street on the east end of River Street
- Signs needed to direct up to Factors Walk
- Lack of interpretive information – Olympic Monument / Waving Girl
- No sidewalk in Morrell Park
- Lack of accessibility to River Street – only 2 public elevators
- Block signage – what street?
- Sign madness (see Lincoln Street Ramp on Bay)
- More wraps on utility infrastructure (old map example at Bull Street / Bay Street)
- Bike racks needed up on Bay Street
- Markers in front of Hyatt are hard to find – no one knows about them

CLEANLINESS AND REFUSE

Ansley Williams
Michael Leithead

- Dumpsters in MLK right-of-way
- Cigarette butts everywhere
- More / regular pressure washing
- Chart House linens
- Trash accumulating on street
- Trash pickup intervals insufficient
- Unsightly dumpsters looking down from above
- Trash in gaps between buildings
- Plenty of receptacles – just in bad shape

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Richard Kessler
Cristy Lawrence

- Facade at the split – first thing you see, is ugly
- Unsightly serving window across from PRD
- Canvas awnings in bad shape
- Bad signage / temporary banners
- Inventory out in right-of-way (t-shirts)
- Service / delivery hours for big trucks
- Screen mechanicals
- Remove abandoned pipes / conduits
- Stickers on doors / windows
- Canopy consistency
- Hyatt River side – make facade look like River Street / Savannah
- Activate Riverwalk along Hyatt - also needs shade
- Signage overload
- Enforcement of existing sign regulations - Set a date for enforcement + educate business owners
- Virtually every canvas awning on River Street needs replacing
- Limit color range for awnings
- Lincoln to Abercorn – worst building condition

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

Fact Finding

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2

VISIONING

Introduction

Food for Thought

Visioning Questions

Methodology

Vision Maps

Vision Master Plan



Visioning Session



Savannah's Historic River Street

GOAL:

The goal of the visioning session is to imagine the future of Savannah's waterfront in light of the observations made during the fact-finding phase. The concepts presented here respond to the information gathered with ideas intended to enhance the security, functionality, attractiveness, and opportunities of the waterfront.

PROCESS:

- Fact-Finding Observations Review
- Food for Thought: Design Precedents, *Waterfronts Around the World*
- Team Work Session: Vision Map
- Small Team Presentations



SWCID Board members and staff working in small teams to draft strategies for the vision plan.

GOAL & PROCESS

Introduction

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The background image is a blue-tinted photograph of a historic waterfront city. It features multi-story buildings with many windows and balconies. A stone wall runs along the water, and a large crowd of people is gathered on the promenade. There are several white umbrellas, likely for outdoor seating. The overall scene is vibrant and suggests a lively urban environment.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Waterfronts Around the World



An activated waterfront in a historic port city. (Porto, Portugal)



Dining reaches out from colorful facades to expand the footprint of restaurants. (Copenhagen, Denmark)



Strategic lighting highlights riverfront seating and historic buildings in view. (Oslo, Norway)



Landscaping and paving divide the waterfront into distinct zones while maintaining a uniform level. (Puerto Vallarta, Mexico)

RIVERFRONTS AROUND THE WORLD

Analogies and Precedents

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A defined dining area pushes close to the water and allows for a clear separation between patrons and passersby. (Chicago, USA)



A dining pier with generous outdoor seating. (Vancouver, Canada)



Private glass dining pavilions provide all-weather dining with unobstructed views. (Hamburg, Germany)



A dining barge offers a unique experience and expands the footprint of an adjacent restaurant. (Hamburg, Germany)

WATERFRONT DINING

Analogies and Precedents



Misting stations can be welcome cooling locations on warm days. (Paris, France)



Contained playground areas offer recreation for families and a reference to local history. (Brooklyn, USA)



An enclosed dog park accommodates pet owners in an urban setting. (Brooklyn, USA)



Splashpads draw families to the waterfront. (New York City, USA)

PLACES FOR PLAY

Analogies and Precedents



A well lit covered passage creates a more welcoming connection. (Phoenix, USA)



Festive string lights define the space between buildings as a place to inhabit. (Oslo, Norway)



Historic facades are highlighted by up lighting set into the paving. (Sydney, Australia)



Lighting creatively incorporated into urban furniture and site features. (Brooklyn, USA)

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NIGHTTIME LIGHTING

Analogies and Precedents



Lighting and art installations transform an alley into a lively outdoor gallery. (Wichita, USA)



A fog bridge offers a cooling place to gather. (Brooklyn, USA)



An open grassed area serves as a flexible gathering venue for movies, concerts, and other events. (Brooklyn, USA)



A permanent bonfire invites pedestrians to gather at the end of a pier. (Washington, D.C., USA)

PLACES TO GATHER

Analogies and Precedents



Signage that provides orientation and estimates walking times. (Bath, England)



Interactive wayfinding apps can augment signage and integrate navigation and storytelling. (East Grinstead, England)



Stairways highlighted with distinctive lighting and color schemes provide orientation. (New York City, USA)

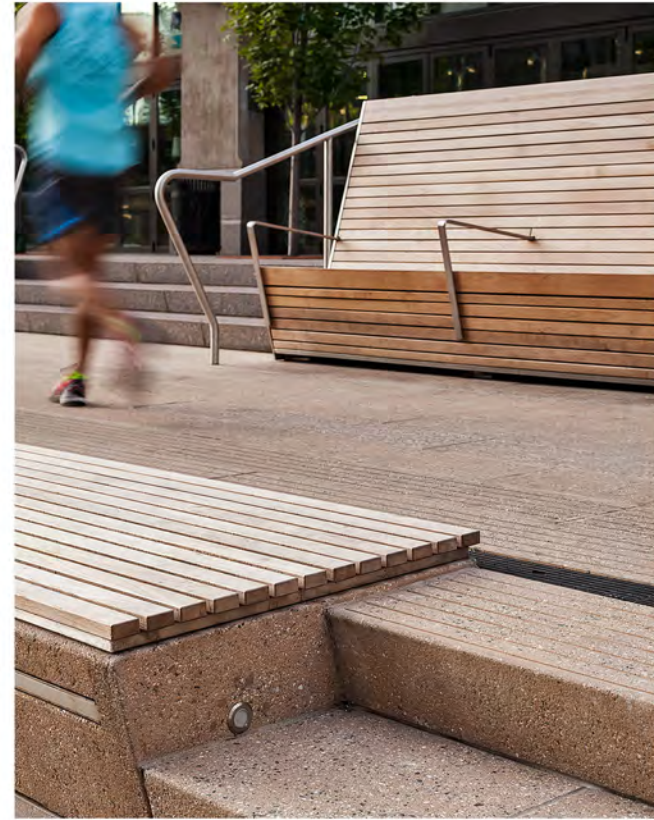


Street names set into the pavement with quality materials help orient pedestrians. (New Orleans, USA)

SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING, AND INTERPRETATION

Analogies and Precedents

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Public seating creates opportunities to pause and enjoy the waterfront. (Brooklyn and Chicago, USA)



Lighting integrated into a terraced landscape. (Brisbane, Australia)



Gradual terraces provide river access and opportunities for observation. (Lyon, France)



Elevation transitions can incorporate landscaping and ramps.



PLACES FOR REST & TRANSITION

Analogies and Precedents

VISIONING QUESTIONS

Where are the Waterfront Character Areas?

How can the Waterfront be Activated?

How can Signage be Improved?

Where are the Opportunities for Play?

Where can People Gather?

Where can People Dine?



Methodology



The group reviewed several hundred images of exemplary waterfronts, and identified the precedent images that most resonated with local needs and context.



With examples fresh in mind, the group divided into three teams to put ideas to paper.



Each team presented a vision for the waterfront to the group.



The precedents prompted productive discussion, and common themes emerged across all the teams' work.



SMALL TEAMS VISION MAPPING *Visioning Session*

TEAM 1 - VISION MAP



TEAM:

RICHARD KESSLER
CYNTHIA KNIGHT
MICHAEL LEITHEAD
CHRISTIAN SOTTILE
CHELSEA WILLIAMS



*Opportunities to
dine by the river*



*Riverfront points
of interest draw
visitors down
to the water*



Team 1

Christian Sottile
Richard Kessler
Cynthia Knight
Chelsea Williams
Michael Leithead

*Enhance gateway at
MLK and pedestrian
connection*



*Improve river access
flanking City Hall*

*Outdoor gallery
in Factors Walk*



*Enhance safety, and
consider perimeter
fence at Emmet Park*



VISION MAPPING | TEAM 1

Work Session

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TEAM 2 - VISION MAP



TEAM:

CRAIG CLEMENTS
JULIE MUSSELMAN
CRISTY LAWRENCE
WHIP TRIPLETT
ANSLEY WILLIAMS

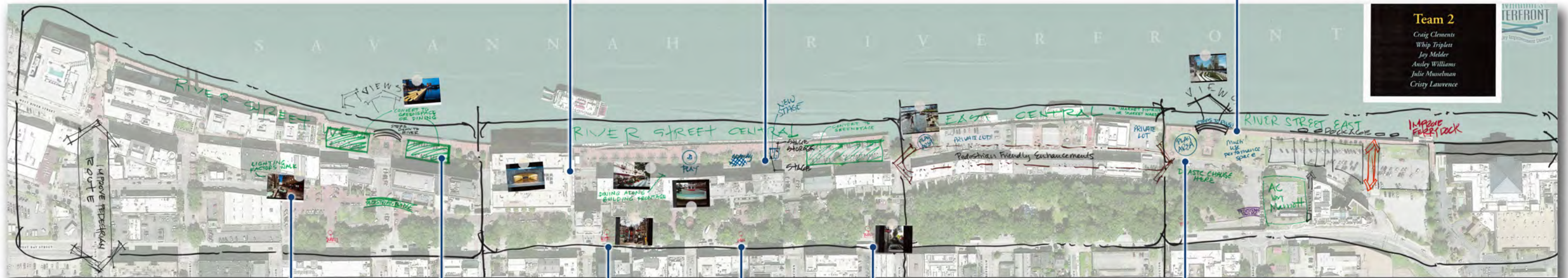
*Over-light the Hyatt passage
and Factors Walk*



- Enhance dining along building frontages



*Riverfront spaces
draw visitors
to the water*



*Create an inviting
atmosphere in
Factors Walk*



- Convert old parking lots to dining or greenspace



- *Create distinctive and memorable entry points down to River Street*



*Consider ways
to introduce areas
for play and
performance space*



VISION MAPPING | TEAM 2

Work Session

TEAM 3 - VISION MAP



TEAM:
 TODD COSTIN
 TAD LEITHEAD
 BRIDGET LIDY
 WILLIAM SANTIAGO
 JOE SHEAROUSE
 JENNIFER STRICKLAND

*Enhance historic
 facades with
 architectural
 lighting*

*Connect scattered
 monuments with
 interactive wayfinding*



*Transform the east
 end of River Street
 into a hub for
 active and passive
 recreation*



*Consider some
 pedestrian-only
 zones and times*



*Create a transition
 from Emmet Park
 to Morrell Park*

*Explore
 possibilities for
 floating dining*



*Add a restroom
 in Morrell Park*



VISION MAPPING | TEAM 3

Work Session

3

MASTER PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION

Savannah's Waterfront Vision Plan
Selected Recommendations
Implementation Strategies



SAVANNAH'S MOST
HISTORIC DISTRICT

A WORLD-CLASS DESTINATION

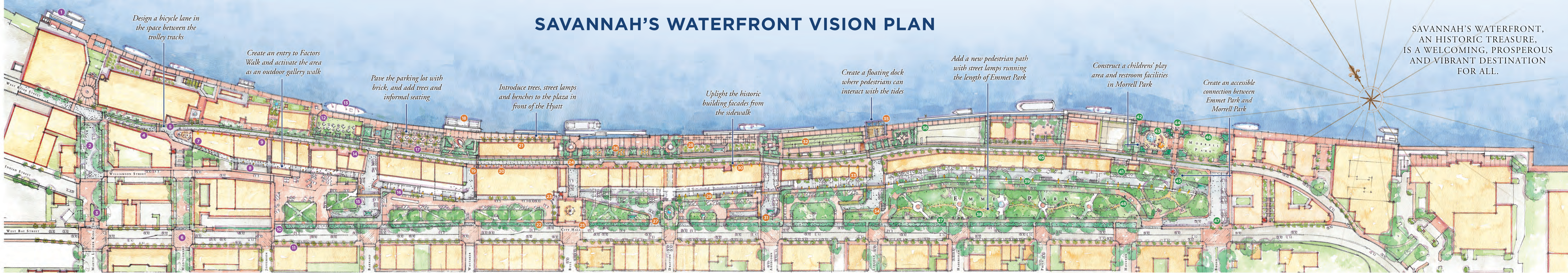
This Vision Plan for River Street in Savannah Georgia has been developed by Savannah's Waterfront Community Improvement District (SWCID). It builds upon previous plans developed by the City of Savannah, including the 2009 River Street Vision and Gateway Plan, the 2017 EDSA Savannah Downtown Streetscapes Plan, and the original design of River Street commissioned by the city and developed by Eric Meyerhoff in the 1970's. In addition, it includes the work of the SWCID Board of Directors through a yearlong process of careful observation and study, with an eye to successful urban waterfronts around the world.

The SWCID Vision Plan shows a wide range of short, medium, and long-term projects to greatly enhance the experience of River Street for visitors and residents alike. Some of these projects would be implemented by the SWCID directly, while others would be facilitated in cooperation with the City of Savannah, other project partners, and private property owners within the SWCID boundaries.

The aspirational goal of the SWCID Vision Plan is the transformation of Savannah's beloved River Street and Factor's Walk into a premier destination for visitors and locals that rivals the world's greatest urban waterfronts.

SAVANNAH'S WATERFRONT VISION PLAN

SAVANNAH'S WATERFRONT,
AN HISTORIC TREASURE,
IS A WELCOMING, PROSPEROUS
AND VIBRANT DESTINATION
FOR ALL.



WEST WATERFRONT

CENTRAL WATERFRONT

EAST WATERFRONT

- 1 Add a new ferry dock to the west waterfront
- 2 Remake the streetscape to echo the historic River Street ramps
- 3 Create a monumental gateway to River Street
- 4 Add narrow tree wells with palm trees
- 5 Design a bicycle lane in the space between the trolley tracks
- 6 Pave Bay Street intersections in brick
- 7 Create an entry to Factors Walk with overhead signage
- 8 Activate Factors Walk as an outdoor gallery
- 9 Uplight historic building facades
- 10 Add a cobble rumble-strip threshold at all vehicular entries
- 11 Introduce trees along south side of Bay Street
- 12 Convert parking into flexible green space, add public restroom
- 13 Create an opportunity for a floating museum
- 14 Introduce trees along south side of River Street
- 15 Restore Barnard Street bridge with a generous stair to River Street
- 16 Uplight historic wall in Factors Walk
- 17 Pave parking lot with brick and add trees, tables and chairs

- 18 Introduce a location for a dining barge
- 19 Frame the tunnel with a mural and a truss over both entrances
- 20 Introduce street lamps and overhead lighting at Hyatt tunnel
- 21 Add trees, street lamps and benches
- 22 Landscape between the sidewalk and the street
- 23 Add decorative railing to direct pedestrians to the elevator
- 24 Raised intersection to provide easy pedestrian crossing
- 25 Bronze directional plaques on City Hall
- 26 Convert every other planter to a seating area under the trees
- 27 Pave all crosswalks and sidewalks with brick
- 28 Replace oaks with palm trees and add informal seating and arbor stage improvements
- 29 Uplight historic walls in Factors Walk
- 30 Uplight historic facade
- 31 Add gates and a roof to all trash enclosures
- 32 Convert parking to terraced lawn and multipurpose plaza with a pull-off for emergency services
- 33 Introduce narrow tree wells at parking stalls
- 34 Mark all stairway access with distinct lighting and signage
- 35 Create a floating dock where pedestrians can interact with the tides

- 36 Narrow the parking lot slightly to create a continuous river walk
- 37 Add a new iron fence along the south side of Emmet Park
- 38 Add a new pedestrian path with street lamps
- 39 Uplight historic walls in Factors Walk
- 40 Introduce varying facade colors to the south side of River Street
- 41 Construct new public restroom facility
- 42 Add stairs to allow for continuous riverwalk
- 43 Construct children's play area with integral water feature
- 44 Move Waving Girl statue closer to the riverwalk
- 45 Construct a bridge connecting Emmet Park to an elevator / stair tower down into Morrell Park
- 46 Bring hardscape around Olympic Torch and uplight the flame
- 47 Expand pedestrian walkway along north side of Bay Street and improve stair down to East Broad Street Ramp
- 48 Develop an interpretive historical signage program for all of River Street





Brick paved crossing calms traffic



Each intersection becomes inviting



BAY STREET CROSSINGS

Creating paved brick street crossings along Bay Street transforms each intersection into an entrance to the waterfront, and signals to drivers that Bay Street is a pedestrian friendly corridor while slowing east-west traffic through the Historic District. This design recommendation corresponds with the City of Savannah's streetscape planning for Bay Street.



Existing Condition



CONNECTING BAY STREET TO THE RIVER

Selected Recommendations

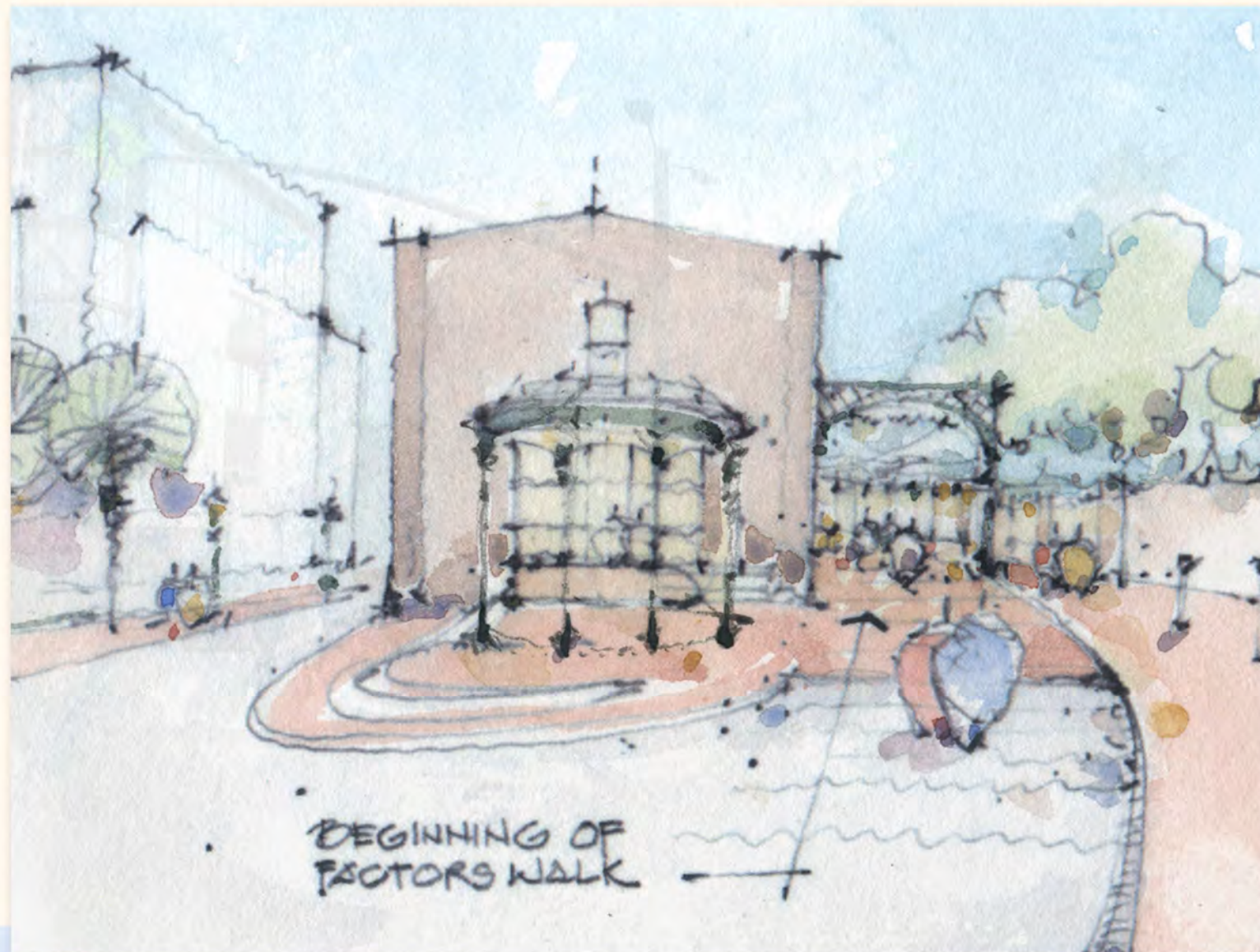
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Signage creates a gateway



A welcoming passage



FACTORS GATEWAY

Creating a gateway element at the west entrance to Factors Walk would invite visitors to explore one of the most intriguing spaces of Savannah's urban waterfront.



Existing Condition



ENTRANCE TO FACTORS WALK

Selected Recommendations

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Alley walls become a gallery space



Art activating Factors Walk



FACTORS WALK GALLERY

The first block of Factor's Walk could be transformed into a vibrant outdoor gallery. The Art Walk could draw visitors up into this beautiful but otherwise utilitarian space and could incentivize businesses to activate the lane by orienting entrances toward it.



Existing Condition



FACTORS WALK OUTDOOR GALLERY / ART WALK

Selected Recommendations

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Waterfront Dining



Dining and Recreation



CONVERTED PARKING

Asphalt surface parking is clearly not the highest and best use of Savannah's waterfront today. The transformation of existing surface parking lots into plazas for outdoor dining would be a timely step toward reducing automobile traffic on River Street and further activating the waterfront.



Existing Condition



CONVERTING PARKING TO PARKS

Selected Recommendations

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Cyclists can share the historic street



A dedicated lane for safer cycling



CONSIDERING A BIKEWAY

The existing asphalt lane on the north side of River Street is not conducive to cycling and is utilized primarily for walking and pushing strollers to avoid the rough ballast stone street. The existing rails down the center of River Street could be an ideal place to create a new cycle track by paving and painting the area between the tracks. It would also signal to motorists to slow down and share the road.

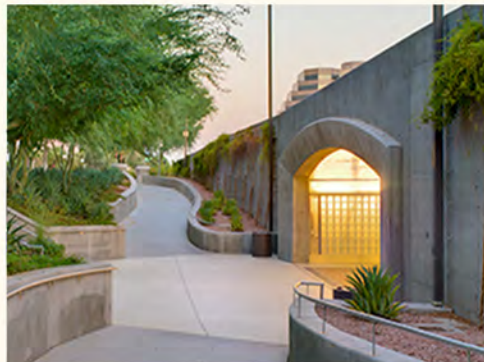


Existing Condition



CONSIDERING A BIKEWAY
Selected Recommendations

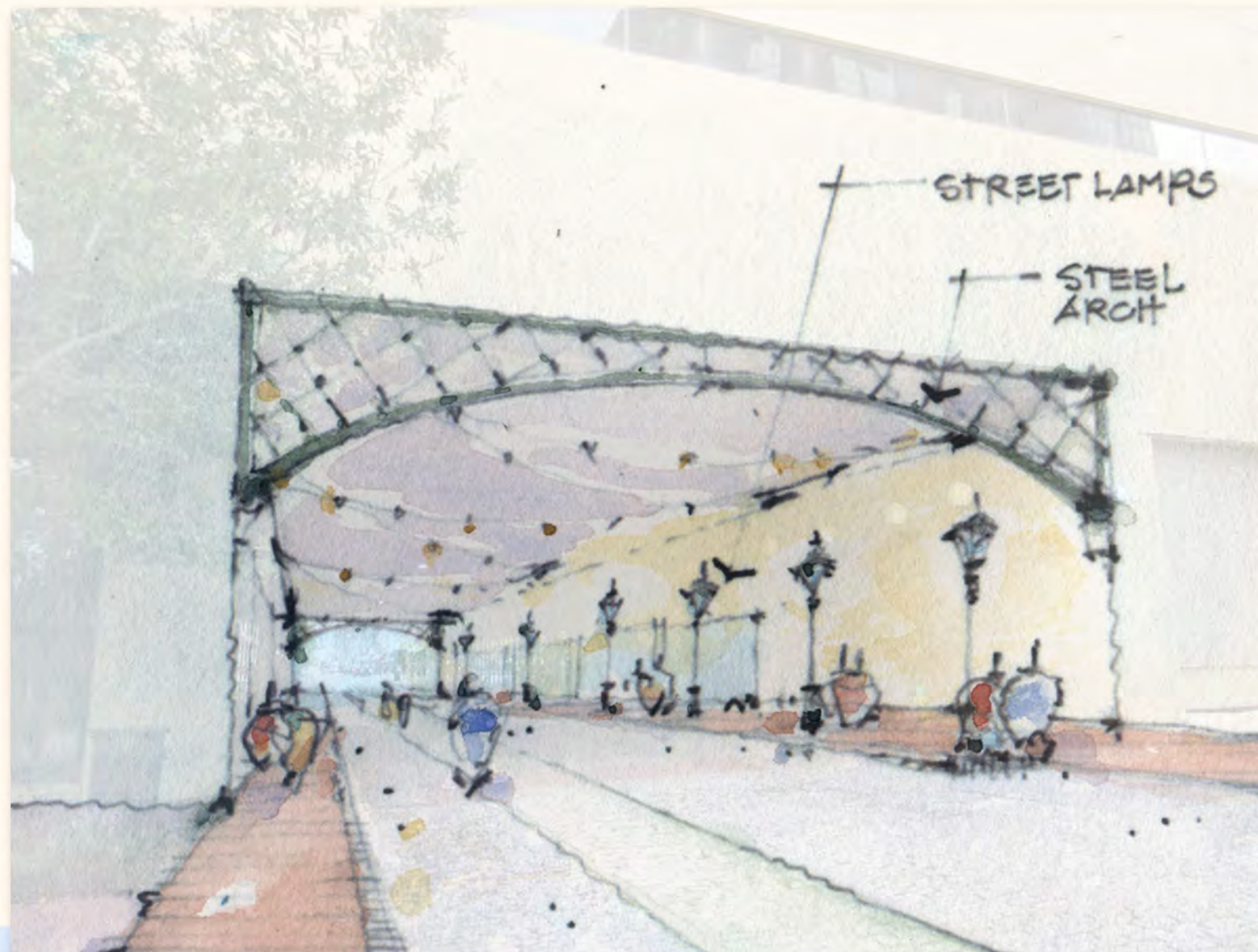
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Overlit passage invites pedestrians



The passage becomes public realm



THE HYATT PASSAGE

The passage under the Hyatt Hotel could take on a more inviting and interesting character with the addition of arched gateways at each entrance, as well as pedestrian scaled streetlamps connecting the public sidewalk, and specialty lighting developed through the passage.



Existing Condition



IMPROVING RIVER STREET PASSAGE AT HYATT

Selected Recommendations

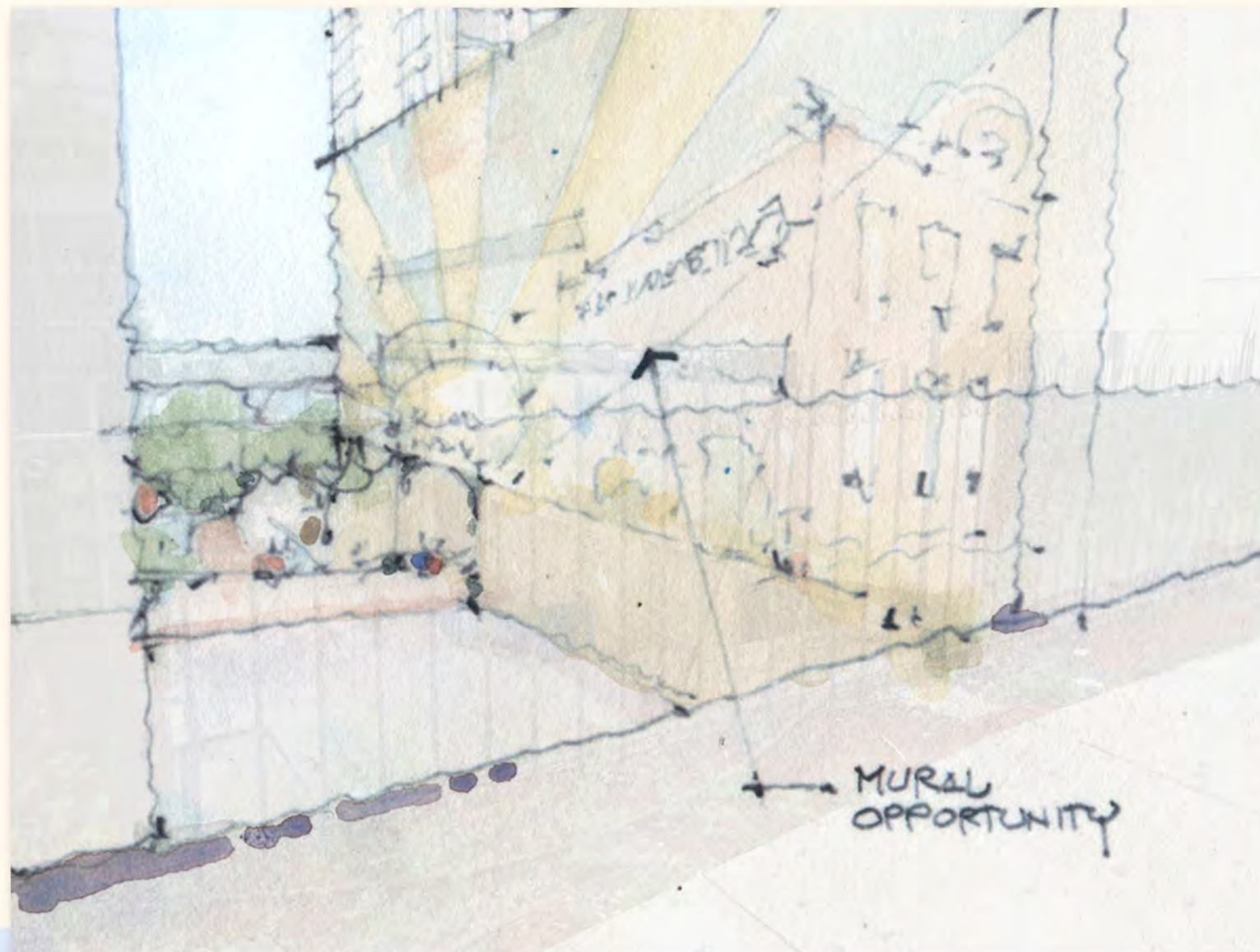
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Historic signs enliven a facade



Murals create opportunities for art



MURAL OPPORTUNITY

The windowless facade of the Hyatt Hotel's parking levels could become a canvas for a large-scale mural that would be visible from River Street, offering interest to the public realm and turning a somewhat unfriendly facade into a visual landmark.



Existing Condition



MURAL / ART OPPORTUNITIES

Selected Recommendations

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Planters define the riverfront path



Lamps invite pedestrians to the river



THE HYATT WATERFRONT

The waterfront along the Hyatt is currently one of the most vacant and underutilized sections of the Savannah Riverwalk. The addition of planters and streetlamps would make this frontage more inviting through the introduction of human-scale elements that offer visual continuity with the more vibrant stretches of the riverfront to the east and west.



Existing Condition



IMPROVING RIVERFRONT ALONG THE HYATT

Selected Recommendations

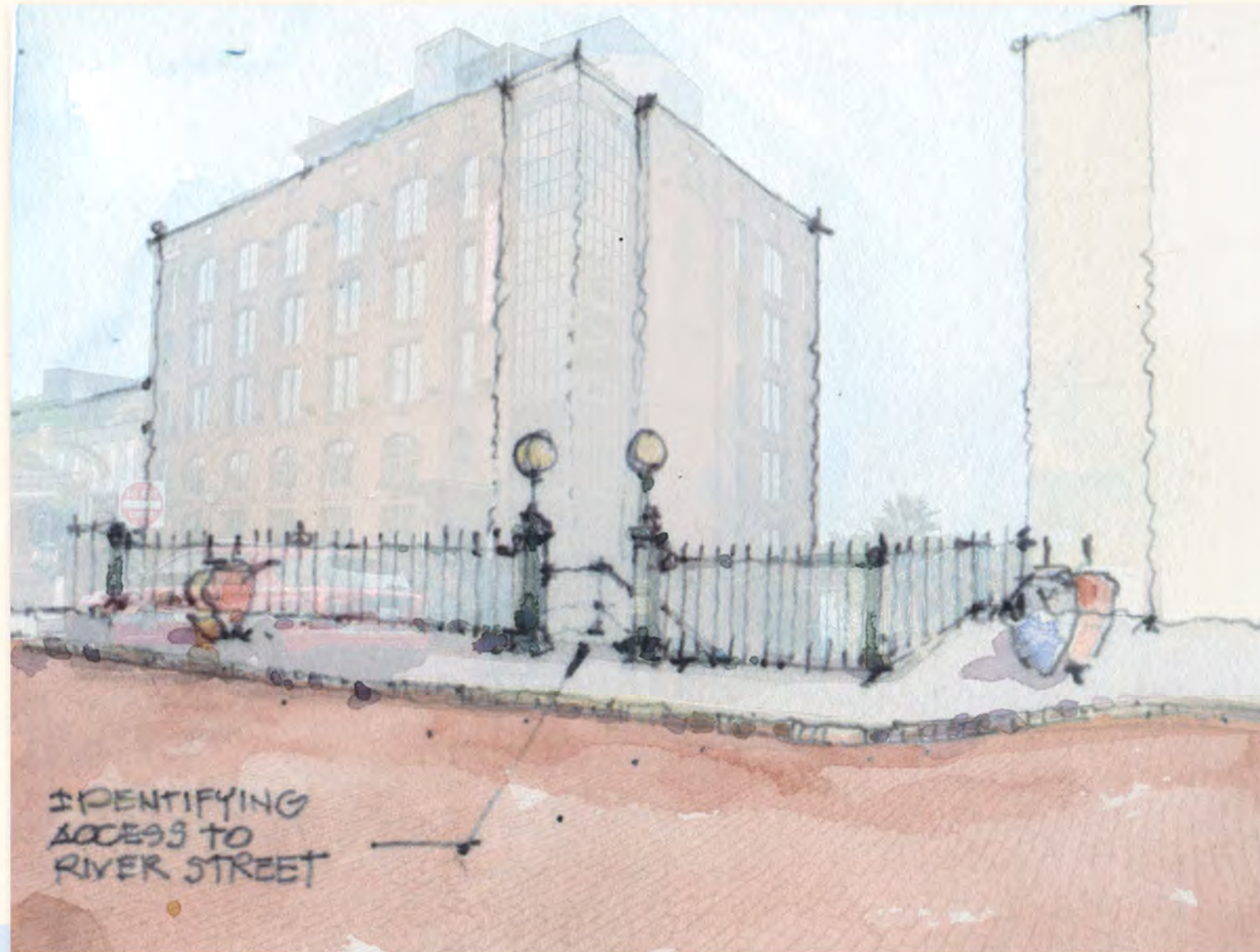
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Durbale and Iconic Urban Features



Public Identification of Steps



RIVER ACCESS POINTS

Points of access to River Street should be recognizable and easy to find. Developing a consistent and easily recognizable treatment for each of the access points would enhance the sense of welcome to the waterfront, enable more intuitive wayfinding, and enhance the beauty and imaging of the public realm.



Existing Condition



IDENTIFYING ACCESS POINTS TO RIVER STREET

Selected Recommendations

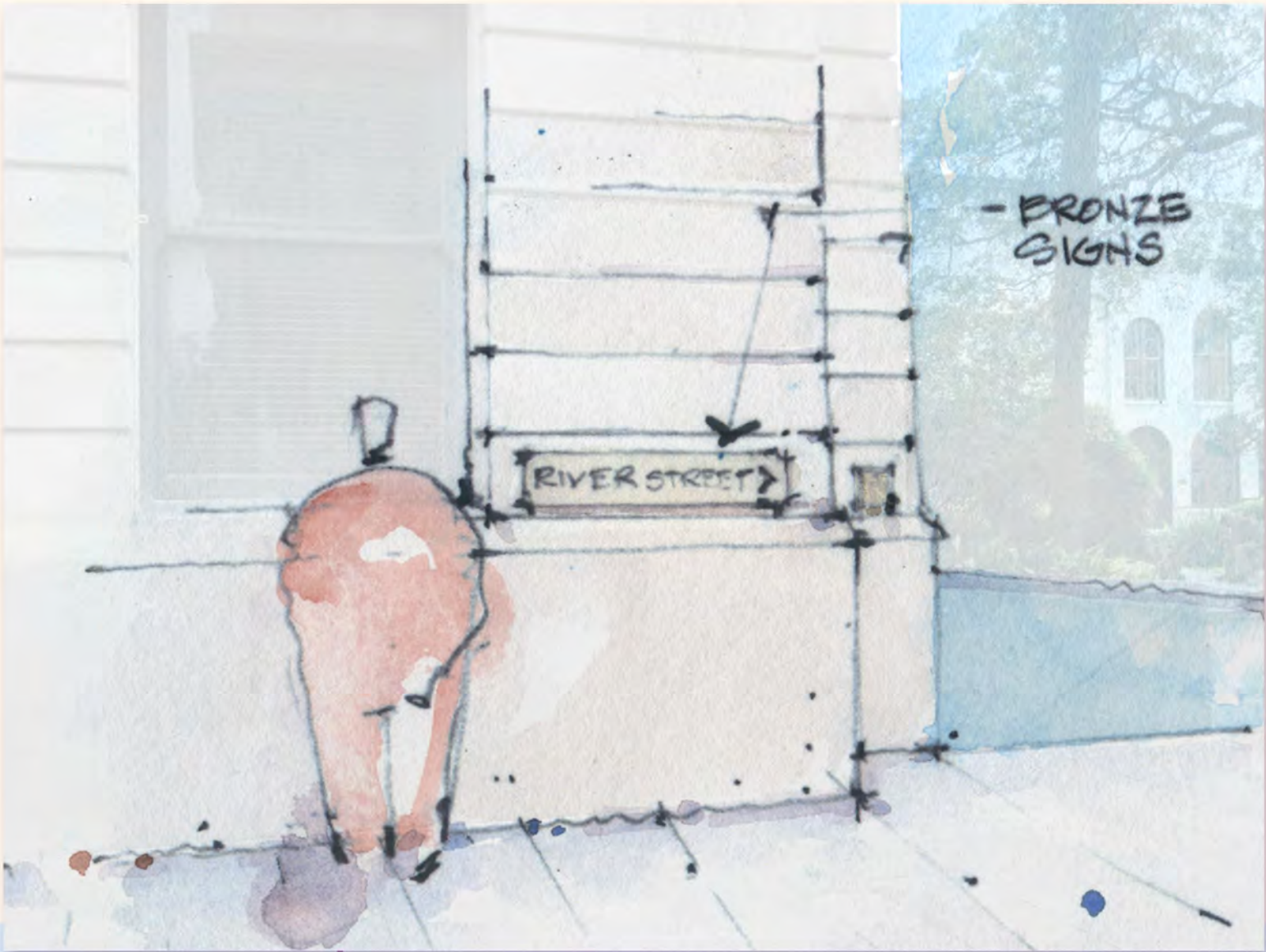
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Bronze complements a stone facade



Quality materials weather well



BRONZE SIGNAGE

Carefully designed bronze signage in keeping with Savannah's durable, high quality public realm could be developed to strategically guide visitors to River Street, while avoiding the more temporary approach to wayfinding signs that often weather poorly and can feel outdated in a few years.



Existing Condition



CONSIDERING WAYFINDING

Selected Recommendations

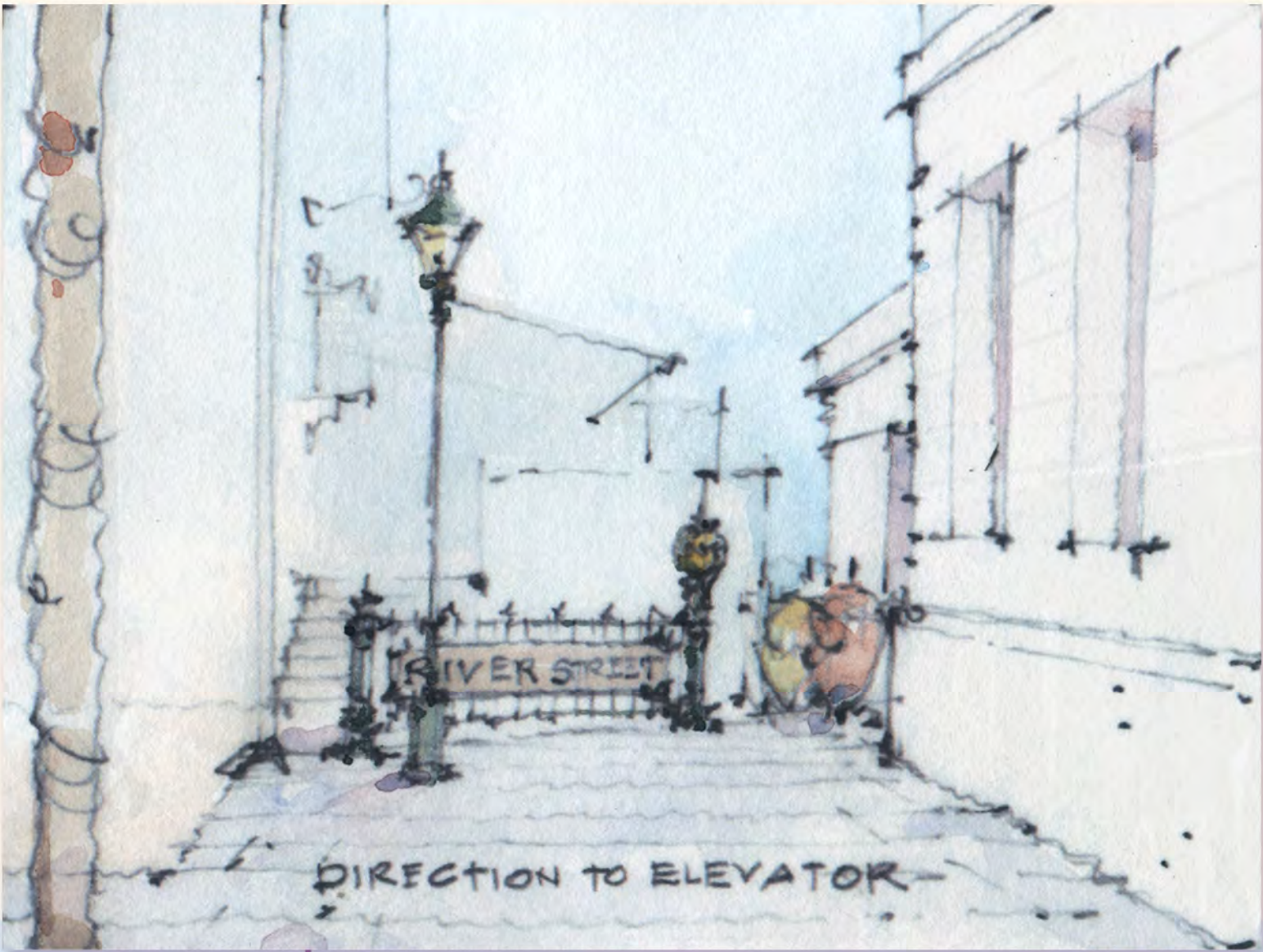
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City of Savannah welcome sign



Durable directional signage



ELEVATOR DIRECTION

The elevator to River Street at City Hall is the central accessible route down to River Street; and as such, it should be easy to find. Installing a wrought iron railing in front of the opening to the Hyatt's parking garage and installing a high-quality directional sign would serve both to screen an unsightly view and give clear direction to the elevator for approaching visitors.



Existing Condition



ORIENTATION TO RIVER AT CITY HALL
Selected Recommendations

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Current condition



Uplighting of historic facades

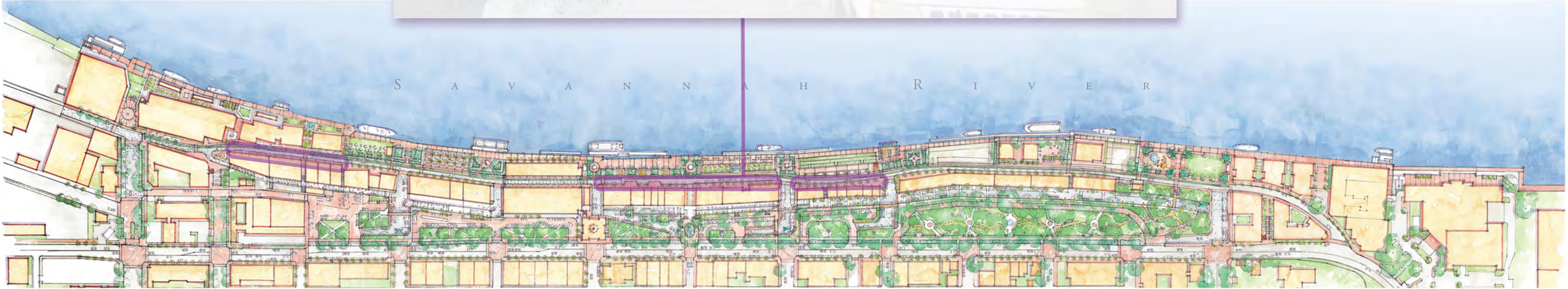


UPLIGHTING FACADES

Many of the distinct and expressive facades of River Street could be up-lit to accent the rich texture and patina of their historic surfaces. Lighting would create a beautiful and iconic ambiance along the waterfront during evening hours.



Existing Condition



UPLIGHTING SIGNATURE FACADES

Selected Recommendations

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Dining terraces within landscaping



Informal seating groups

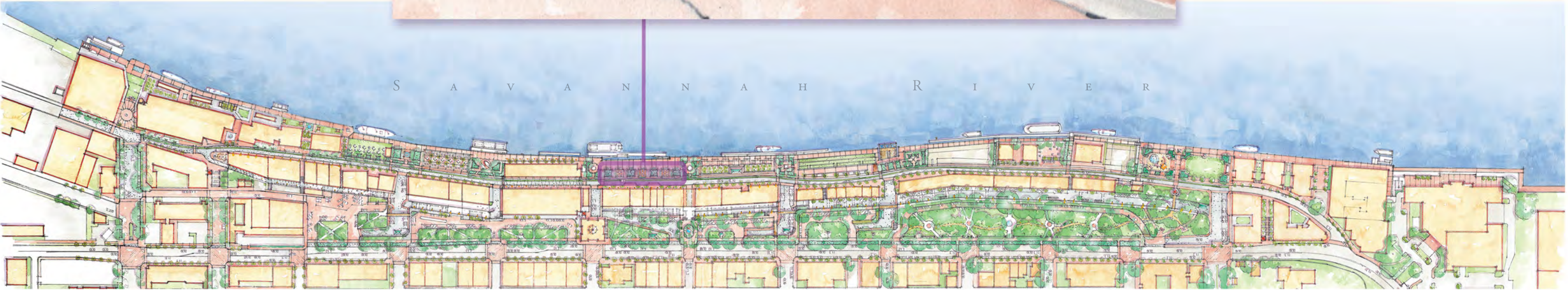


MULTI-USE TERRACES

By opening up the shrubbery in selective planters, and replacing it with gravel or hardscape, the tree canopy would be retained in the center of each space. These select planters could then be transformed into open terraces for outdoor seating or dining to be utilized by adjacent restaurants.



Existing Condition



SEATING AND DINING TERRACES
Conceptual Views

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Brick paved sidewalks



Raised, textured pedestrian crossing

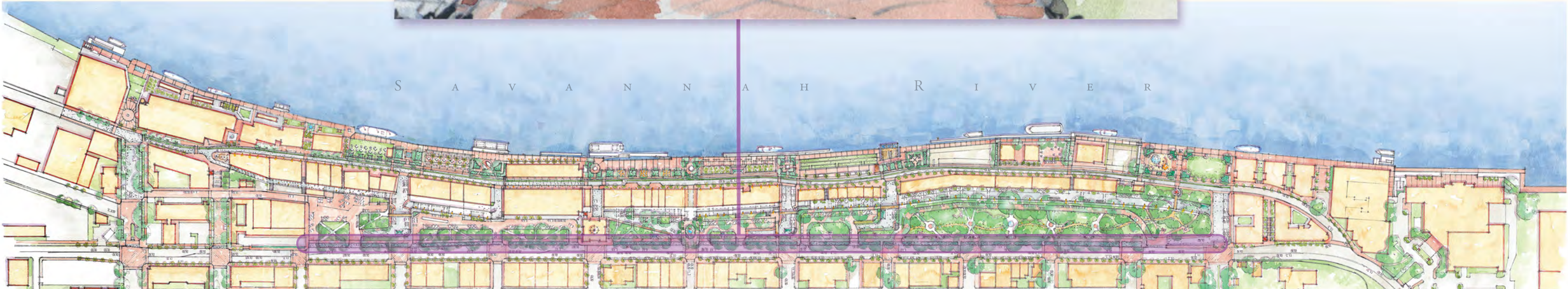


IMPROVE SIDEWALKS

Bay Street's sidewalks are in poor condition and subject to standing rain water at the accessible crossing ramps. Re-paving the sidewalks in brick on the riverfront side of the street would improve the visual quality of the riverfront district, while additional upgrades to paving in the east-west crossing aprons with belgian block would help to slow vehicles turning off Bay Street.



Existing Condition



IMPROVING SIDEWALKS AND SAFETY ON BAY STREET

Conceptual Views

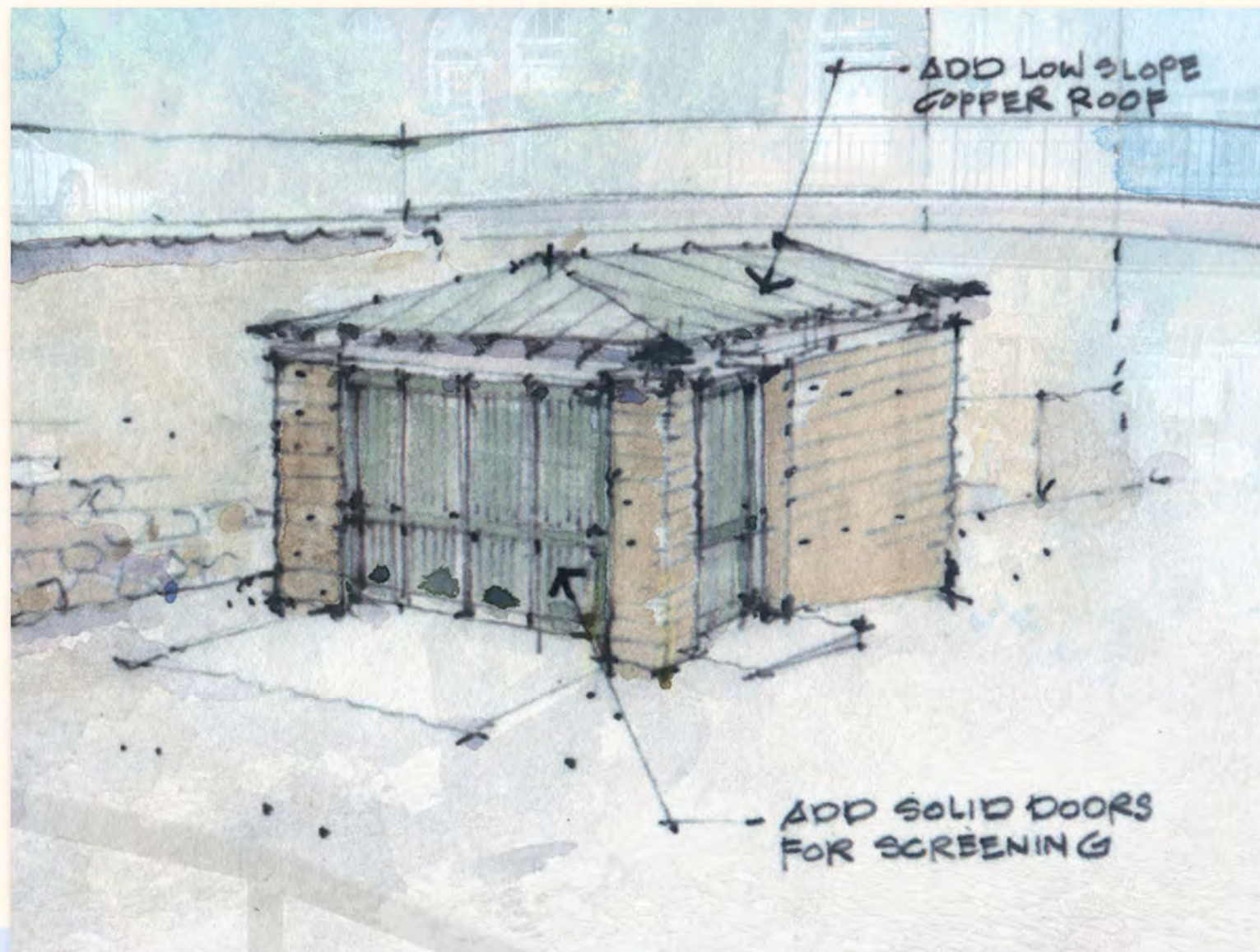
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Raised, low slope roof over enclosure



Screened refuse enclosure

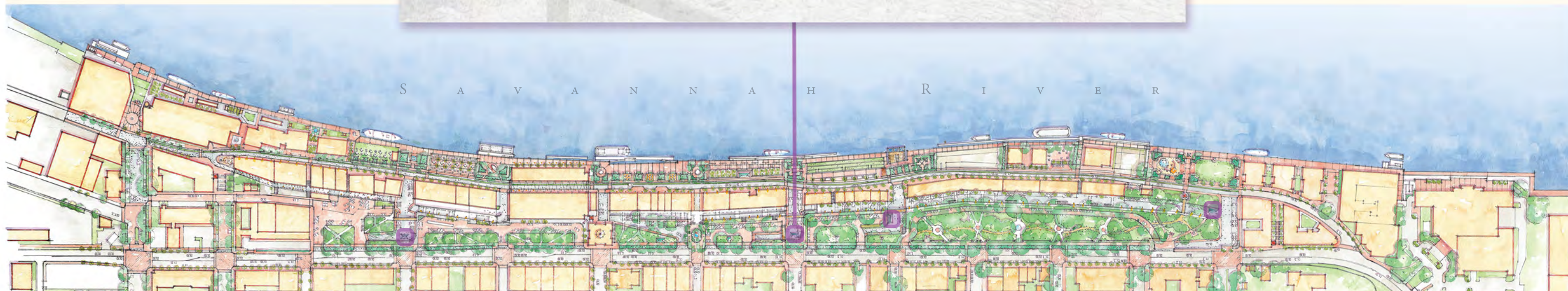


REFUSE ENCLOSURES

The existing refuse enclosures on the River Street ramps are a significant visual eyesore, especially when one approaches on foot toward their open end, or looks down from upper Factor's Walk and the pedestrian bridges. Adding doors with automatic closers and a ventilated roof above would greatly enhance their appearance.



Existing Condition



IMPROVING REFUSE ENCLOSURES

Conceptual Views

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Enhanced overhead lighting



Improved wall-mounted lanterns



IMPROVE PASSAGES

The various pedestrian passages down to River Street could be greatly enhanced by installing beautiful high quality wall lanterns and overhead café lighting.



Existing Condition



IMPROVING PASSAGES TO PARKS ON RIVER

Conceptual Views

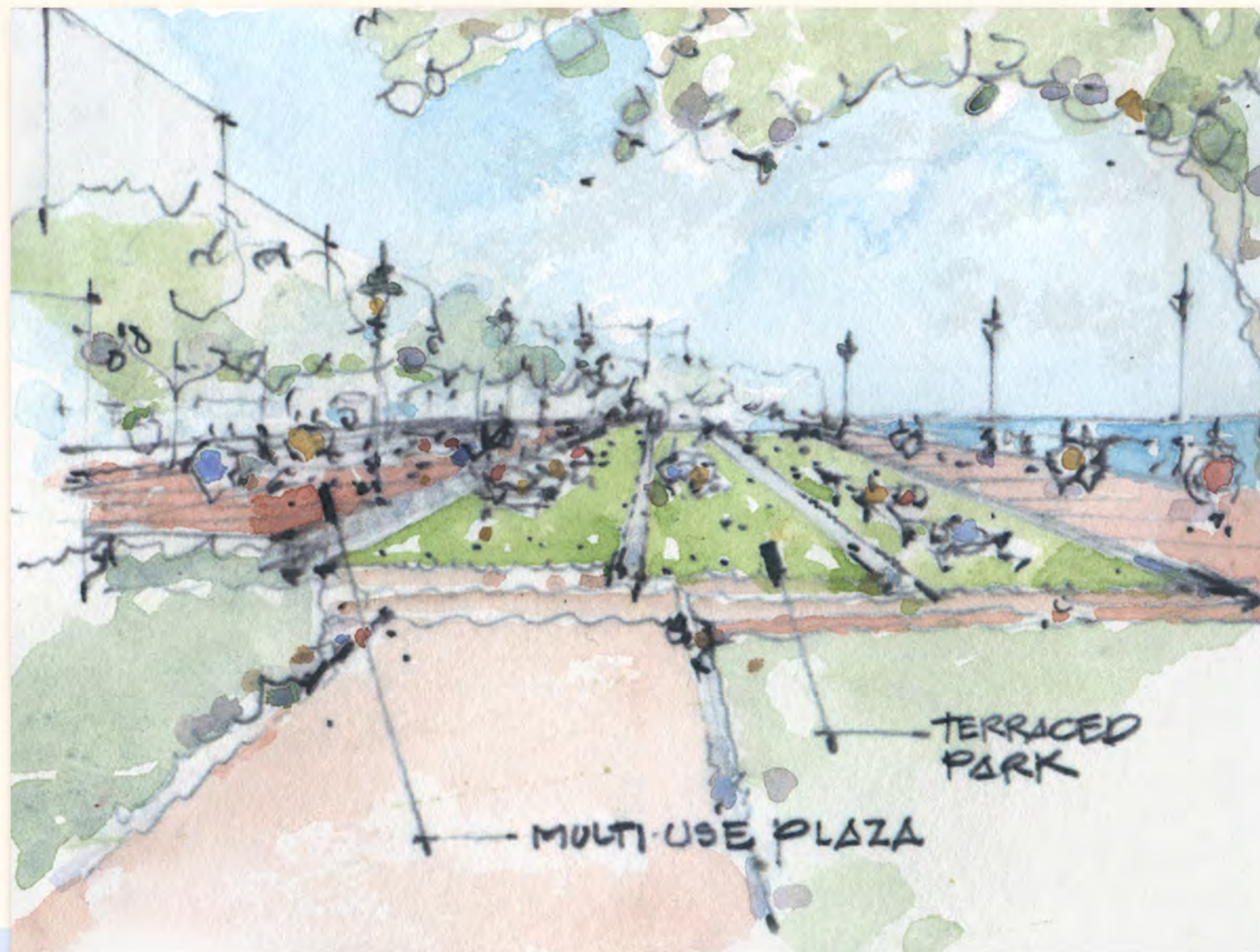
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Terraced plazas orient to the river



Pedestrians activate a multiuse plaza



PARKING TO PARKS

The selective transformation of existing surface parking lots into multi-use plazas and terraced green spaces could be a step toward reducing auto traffic on River Street and further activating and engaging the waterfront.



Existing Condition



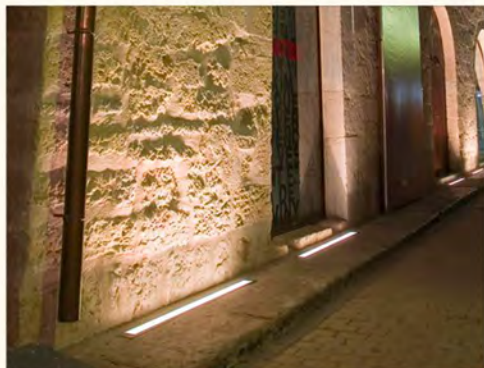
CONVERTING PARKING TO PARK AND PLAZA SPACE

Conceptual Views

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Palm trees enhance a linear space



Uplighting highlights masonry texture



FACTORS WALK LIGHTING

Selective eastern portions of Factor's Walk could be enhanced by lighting the beautifully tactile stone retaining walls. Additionally, in areas with angled parking, landscape could be introduced in the form of palm trees planted in the unused triangular spaces at the front of the parking bays.



Existing Condition



ADDING LANDSCAPE IN FACTORS WALK

Conceptual Views

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Color differentiates distinct facades



Varying colors enliven a waterfront



FACADE VARIATION

This long row of buildings on the east end of River Street is currently all painted plain white, effectively eliminating the distinction between the different historic structures, making them visually uninteresting. The existing paint is also worn and in poor condition. Repainting these structures in a variety of appropriate colors would renew and enliven this neglected portion of River Street.



Existing Condition



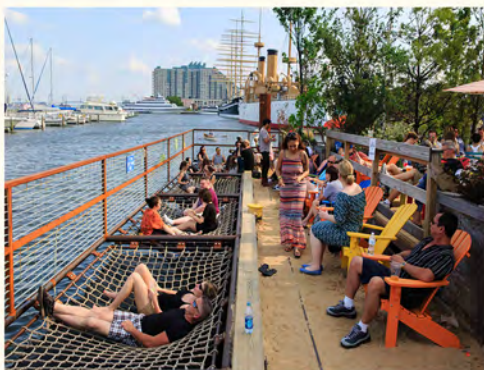
VARYING FACADES AT EAST END
Conceptual Views

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Areas for play along the river



A floating dock interacts with the tide

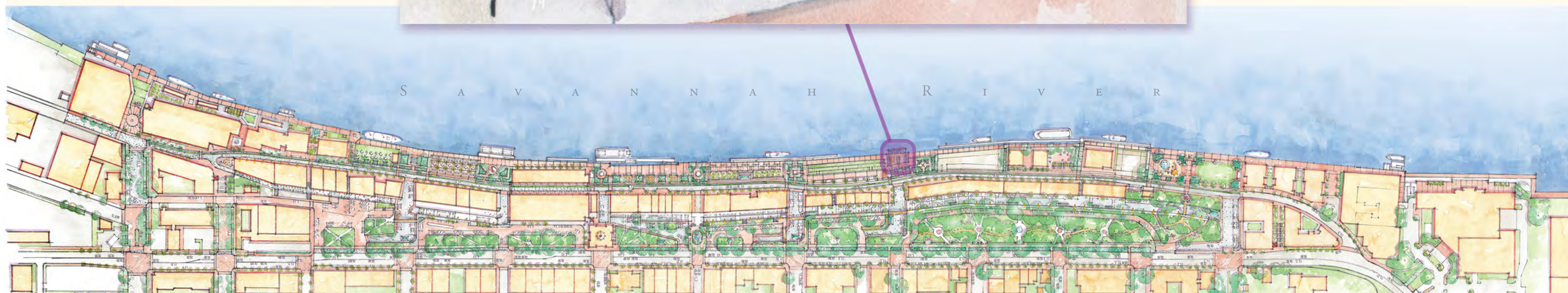


A NEW PLAY DOCK

The existing notch in the riverfront at the end of Lincoln Street is a unique opportunity to allow people more direct access to the river. A terraced dock with a play feature at the river's edge could allow interaction with the water and create a memorable and unique feature at this location along the riverwalk.



Existing Condition



DEVELOPING A CONNECTION TO THE RIVER

Conceptual Views

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An inviting, connected riverfront



Continuous pedestrian movement



WATERFRONT PATH

The continuity of the riverwalk is broken on the east end where private parcels adjoin the riverfront. These breaks in the riverwalk re-route pedestrians back up to River Street in an area where pedestrian accommodations are the most restricted. Creative solutions should be explored to repair these broken connections and allow for continuous riverfront pedestrian movement along the length of the riverfront.



Existing Condition



CONNECTING THE WATERFRONT

Conceptual Views

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Short span bridge with stairs



Stair bridges between elevations



CONNECTED EDGE

Continuity in the riverfront plaza edge could be addressed at a key break through the installation of a bridging stair across the narrow slip.



Existing Condition



CONNECTING THE WATER'S EDGE

Conceptual Views

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Historic bridge over Factors Walk



Pedestrian bridge to a stair tower



EMMETT PARK ACCESS

Emmett Park is a beautiful space, but is underutilized due to a lack of public connections. It currently functions as a dead end with no connection to the waterfront. As a more ambitious project, a new bridge over Factor's Walk with a stair and elevator connection down to River Street could connect Emmett Park with Morrell Park and unite these two green spaces on the east end of the waterfront.



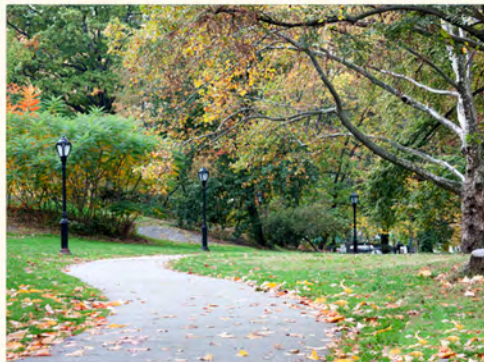
Existing Condition



NEW ACCESS TO RIVER AT EMMETT PARK
Conceptual Views

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A winding, lit path from east to west



Monuments connected by a path



EMMETT PARK WALK

Emmett Park contains numerous public monuments, each of which is accessed by north-south pathways between Bay Street and Factor's Walk. Developing Emmet Park's identity as a Monument Walk could be achieved by adding a gravel walk through the middle of the park that connects the monuments and allows people to walk through the park rather than along Bay Street, while also making room for several new monuments in the future.



Existing Condition



MONUMENT WALK ALONG UPPER BAY STREET

Conceptual Views

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IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation strategies have been developed in a working matrix that outlines short, medium, and long-term projects. The matrix encompasses initiatives that will be either facilitated by the SWCID, or directly implemented by SWCID, and is designed as a living document. Implementation strategies will be continually updated to reflect evolving priorities as they are identified, refined, and completed.

