

SAVANNAH
▪ CIVIC LEGACY ▪

Welcome!

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
— CIVIC CENTER —



Programming Update

February 24, 2026

Civic Legacy – Project Partners

Roles

Arena Removal Design & Construction



Equity-Driven Public Engagement



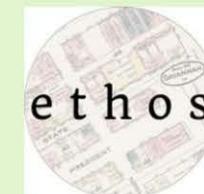
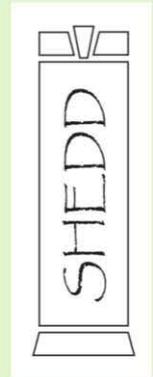
Real Estate Analysis



Market Study of Theatre



Urban Planning & Architecture



Today's Agenda

Welcome

Overview Presentation

Recent Milestones

Looking to the Future

Stations + Feedback

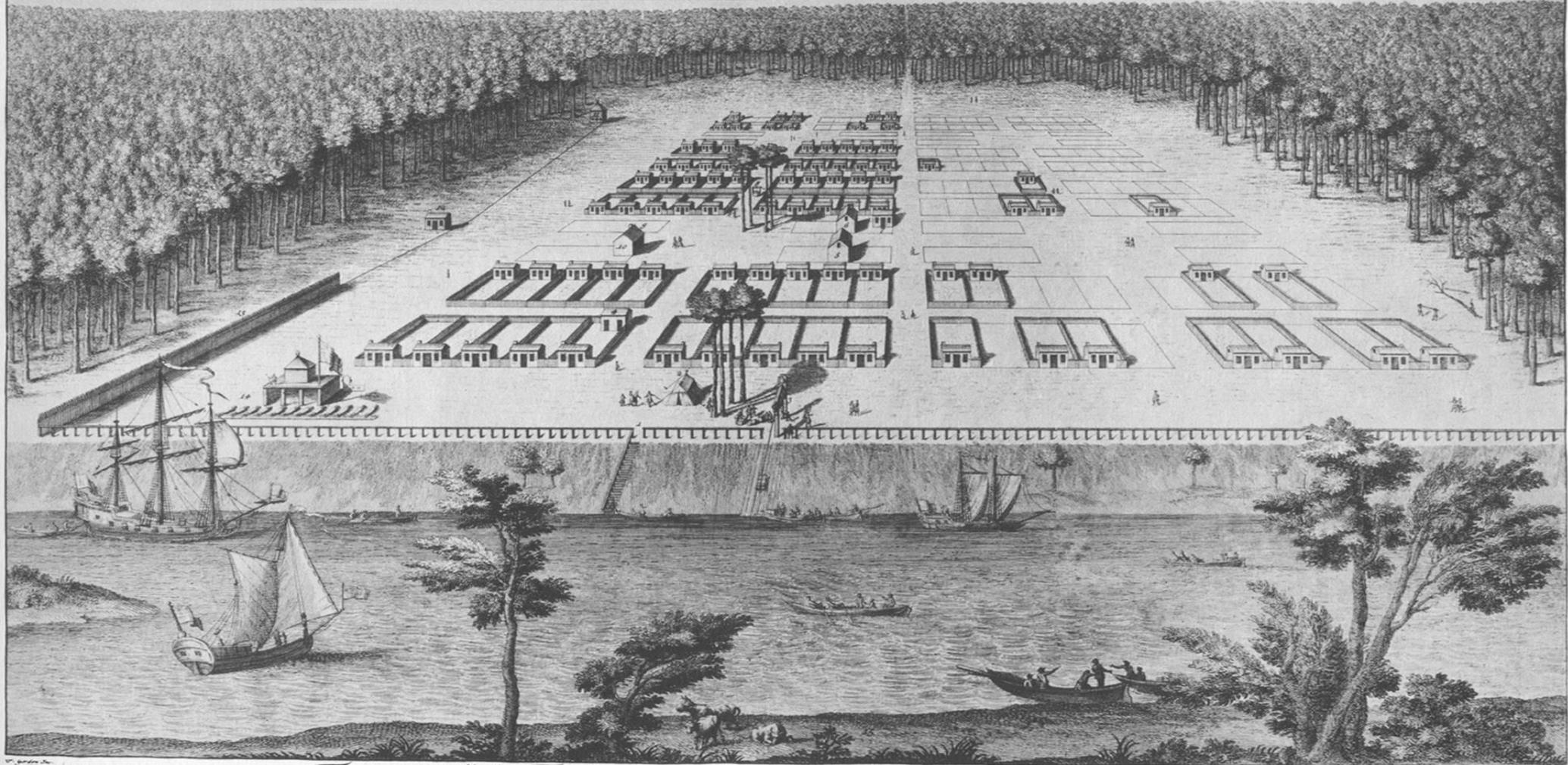
History & Evolution

Elbert and Orleans Wards...

But First, a Little Background...

A Brief Overview of
Elbert & Jackson Wards

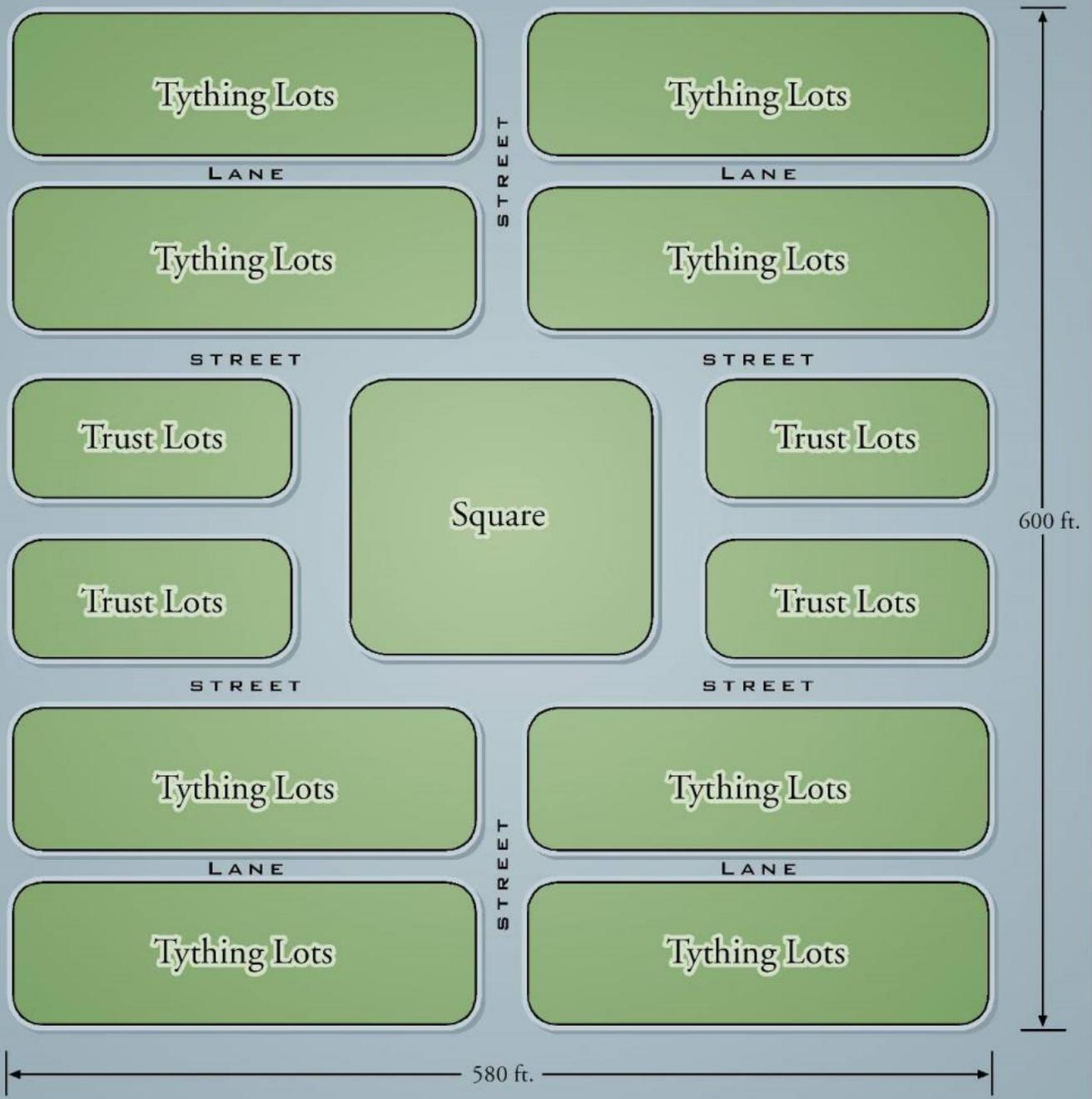
In the Beginning...

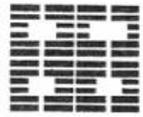


- 1. The Ships going up.
- 2. Mr. Oglethorpe's Tent.
- 3. The Crane & Bell.
- 4. The Tabernacle & Court House.
- 5. The publick Mill.
- 6. The House for Strangers.
- 7. The publick Oven.
- 8. The draw Well.

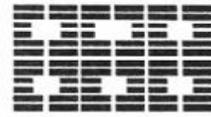
To the Hon.^{ble} the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America
 This View of the Town of Savannah is humbly dedicated by their Honours
 Obliged and most Obedient Servant
 Peter Gordon

- 9. The Hill for the Church.
- 10. The publick Store.
- 11. The Fort.
- 12. The Reasoning House.
- 13. The Pallisades.
- 14. The Guard House and Battery of Cannon.
- 15. Hutchinsons Island.





1733



1735



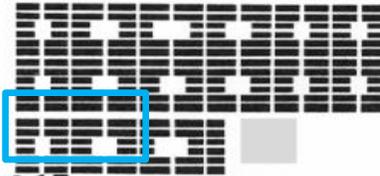
1790



1799



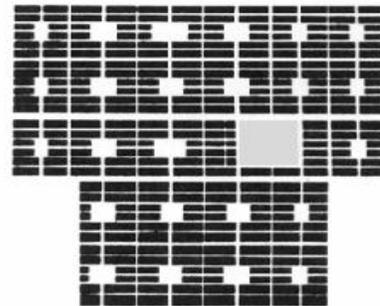
1801



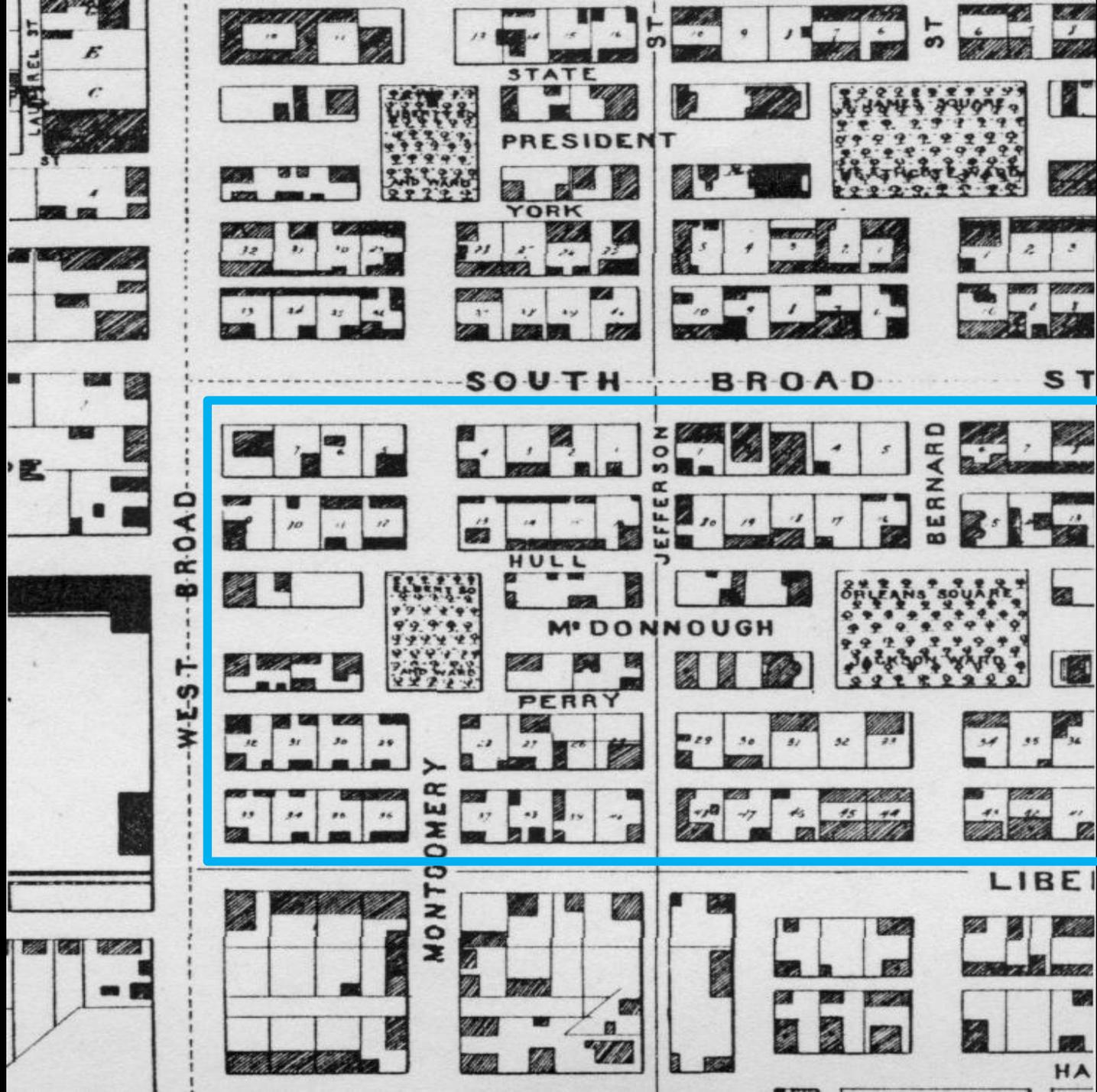
1815

1841

1856



*Elbert and Orleans
Laid Out
in Early 1800's*

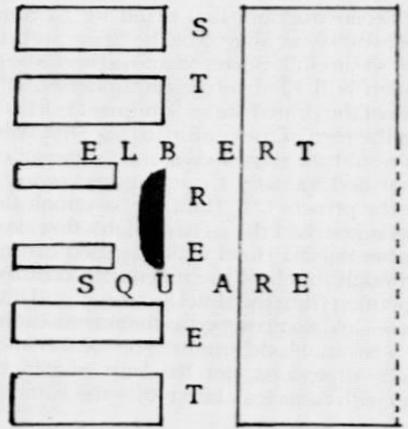
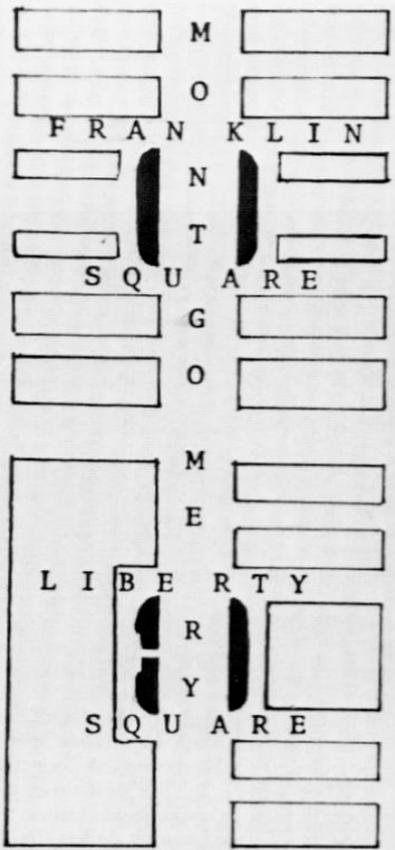


*Early
Development
Pattern*





Elbert Square



*1930's
Loss of Three Squares*



The Municipal Auditorium...

*The Former Civic Auditorium
On Orleans Square....*



The Municipal Auditorium on Orleans Square



From the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, Frederick Baldwin Collection

Later Developments...

Greatest Hits
of the
60's 70's and 80's...







Civic Center Construction...

Savannah Civic Center Development



Arena under construction, 1969, City of Savannah Municipal Archives

1960: First proposed

1967: Council approved on site of Municipal Auditorium; Ritzert & Nowell, Architects, selected to design combined arena/theatre complex; funded thru Federal Urban Renewal program and general obligation bond issue

1971 December 18: First event opening performance of Savannah Symphony Orchestra's season

1972 February 11: Official Grand Opening

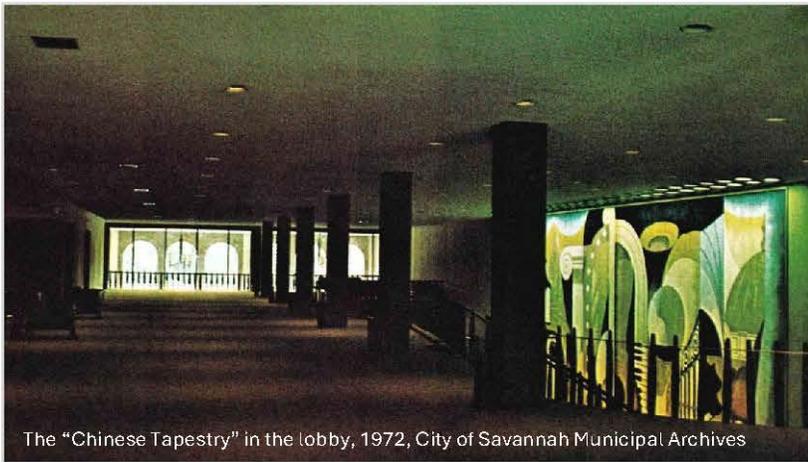
1996: Addition of 9,000sf of meeting room spaces

Late 1990s: First proposed building new arena elsewhere

Savannah Civic Center Grand Opening Week Feb. 5th - 15		
Date	Arena	Theatre
Saturday February 5	7:00 p.m. Pat LaBrec Super Bowl South of America, Football League Dinner. Table reservations only: \$10.00 per table. Call 253-5065.	8:30 p.m. Savannah Symphony, All Concert. All performing programs, Symphony No. 1 in E Flat Major, Tchaik. 1868. Adagio con moto. Funeral march: Adagio andal. Scherzo: Allegro Vivace. Finale: Adagio. Ballet for two Dances, two Chorists, two Horns, and two Bassoons (1829). Concerto No. 4 in G Major for Piano and Orchestra (1908). Allegro moderato Audience can vote Bonds: Vance Piano Soloist: Nancy Lewis Tickets: \$6.50, \$5.00, \$3.50, \$2.50.
Sunday February 6	Tunes of the complete Civic Center complex. Conducted by the Junior League of Savannah.	4:00 p.m. Children's Theatre presents "Johnny Manhattan and the Silver Arrow". Tickets \$200 adults, \$1.00 children. 8:00 p.m. Concert of Black Music by the Community Chorus. Free Admission.
Monday February 7	8:00 p.m. "Holiday on Ice"	2:15 p.m. Presentation to the City of Savannah, "Freedom Shores" by the Exchange Club.
Tuesday February 8	8:00 p.m. "Holiday on Ice"	4:00 p.m. "Trustees" Garden Club presents Dr. Warren Wagner, Botanist, Slide Lecture on "Rare and Disappearing Plants". Free Admission.
Wednesday February 9	8:30 p.m. "Holiday on Ice"	
Thursday February 10		8:00 p.m. U. S. Army Band and Chorus. Free Admission.
Friday February 11	Champagne Reception to follow the Grand Opening Gala.	8:00 p.m. Grand Opening Gala. Featuring: Julie Adams, Bobby & Cleo; Pat Buffram, Marc Cowan, Phil Harris, Hal Kester, George Kirby, Stella Madson, John McIver, Johnny Morer and Freda Payne. All seats \$10.00. No reserved seats.
Saturday February 12	11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Georgia Day Pageant, Marine Corps Band; Children's Costume Parade; Puppet Shows; Craft and Foods Booths; Parade; Antique Car Show; Dancing by Academy of Black Culture.	
Sunday February 13	2:00 p.m. Ice Hockey: Florida Allstars vs St. Petersburg Sun. Tickets \$1.00, \$2.00.	4:15 p.m. Savannah Youth Orchestra. Free Admission.
February 5-15	Children's Art Exhibit by School Children of Chatham County depicting Georgia's history - Hall of Fame Room.	
Friday February 11	"The Flag Ceremony" Girl Scouts of Savannah. Grand Opening Gala.	



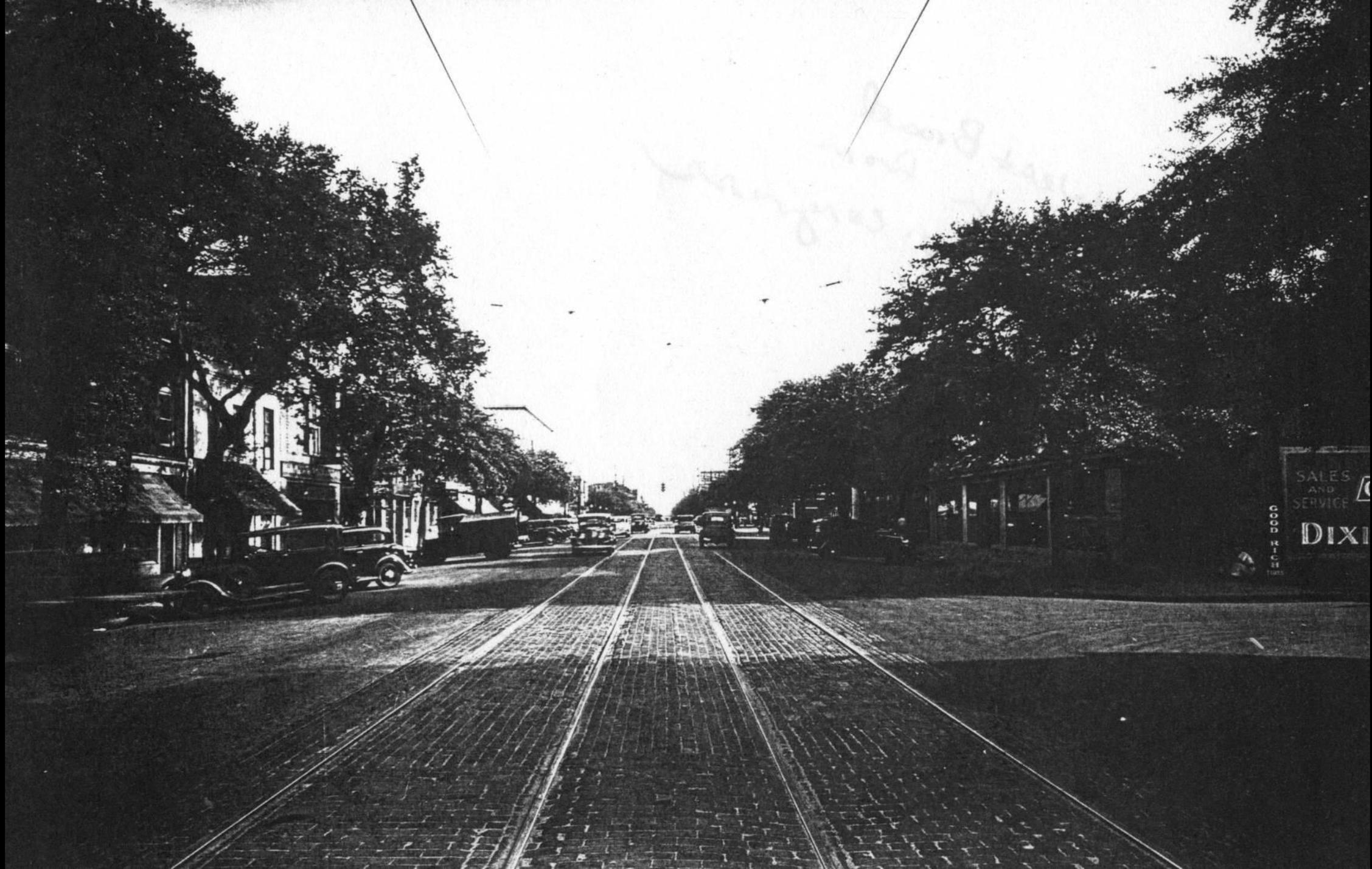
Second floor meeting room addition, 2022, City of Savannah Municipal Archives



The "Chinese Tapestry" in the lobby, 1972, City of Savannah Municipal Archives

Evolution & Loss...

W. B. ...



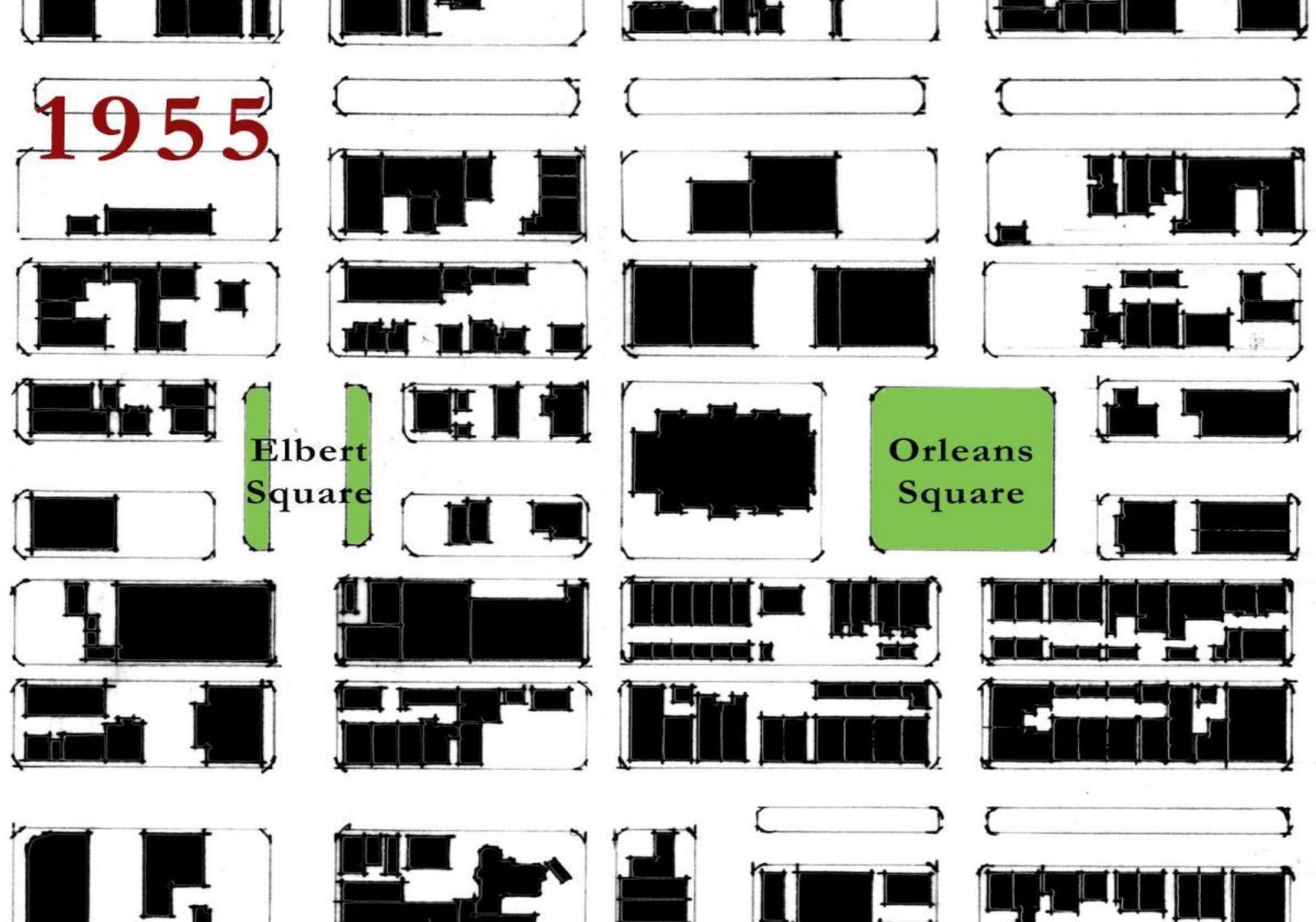
SALES
AND
SERVICE
DIXIE
GOODRICH
TIRES



1955

Elbert
Square

Orleans
Square



2002

Elbert
Square

Orleans
Square



Community Process

Master Planning and Input...

Civic Legacy – How Did We Get Here?

More than 300 participants with nearly 500 comments

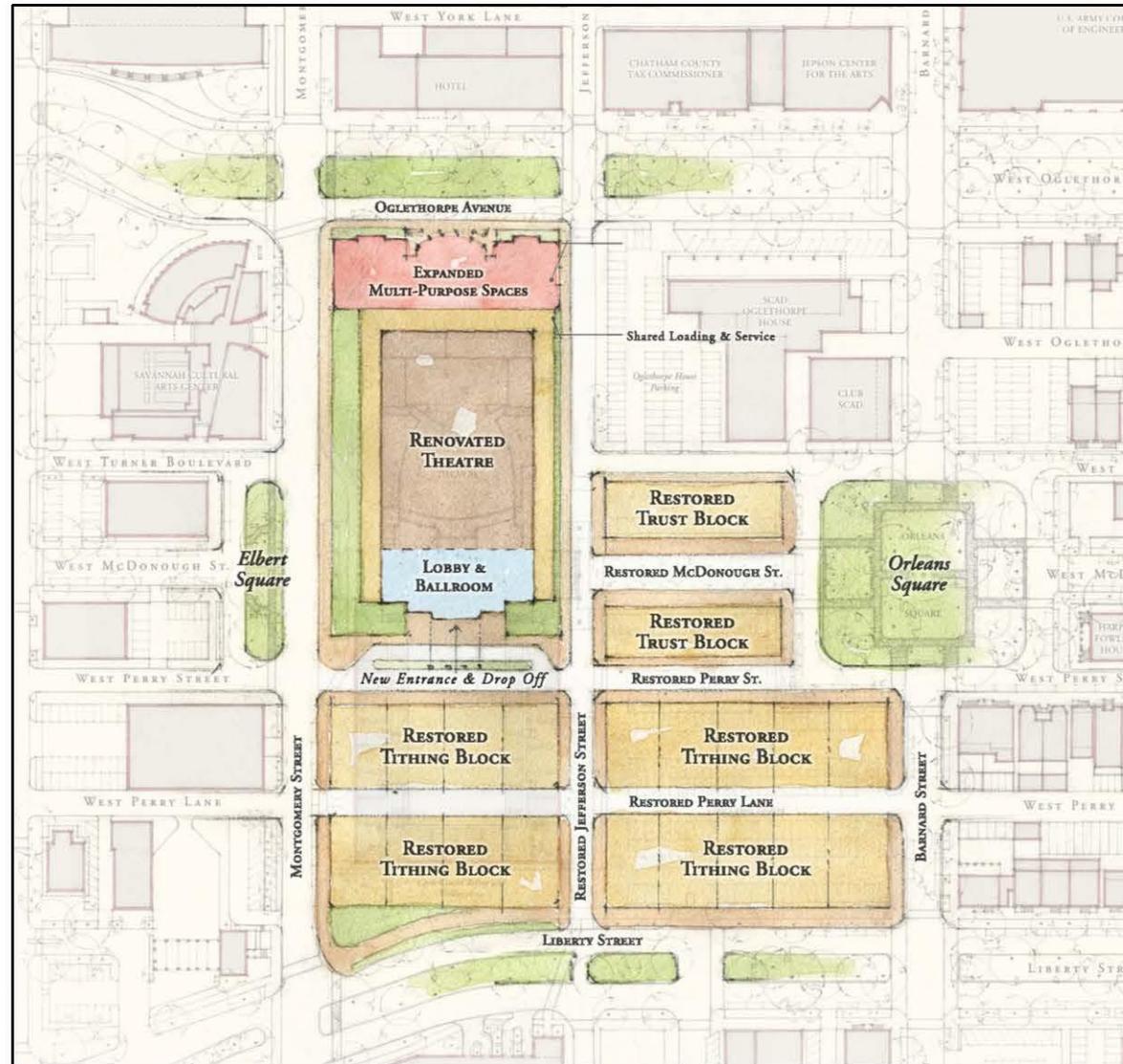
- **Stakeholder Meetings**
April 25, 2024 (79 participants)
- **Community-wide Open House #1**
May 7, 2024, Civic Center Ballroom (155 participants)
- **Virtual Meeting**
May 16, 2024 (23 participants)
- **Community-wide Open House #2**
May 18, 2024, John Delaware Center (31 participants)
- **Community-wide Open House #3**
May 20, 2024, Armstrong Center (25 participants)



*Civic Block +
Oglethorpe Plan Blocks...*

Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

Project Approach



Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

Project Approach

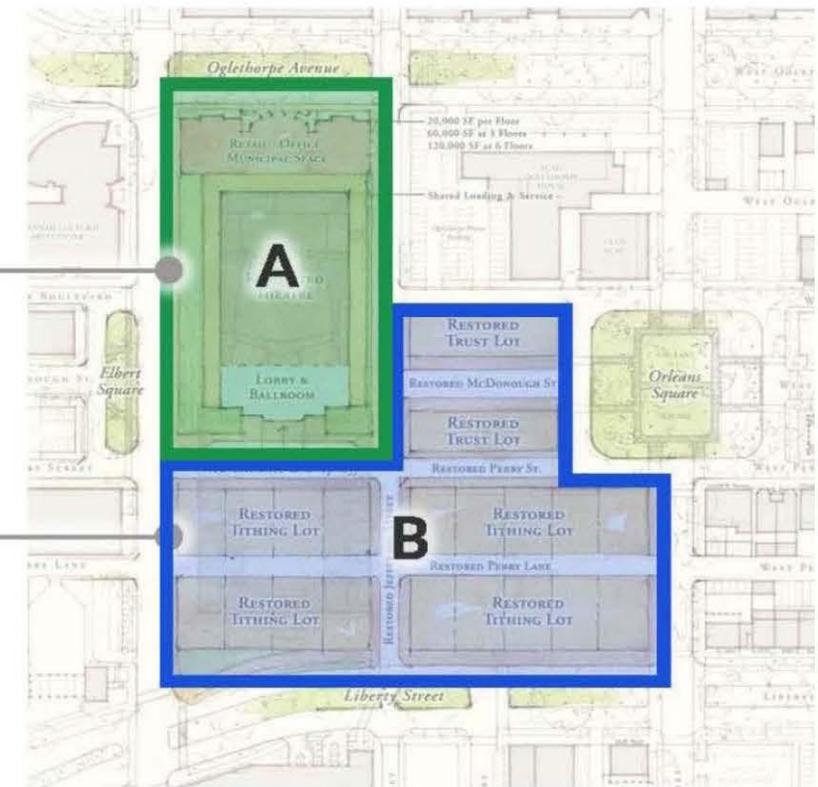
PROJECT AREAS

A. Civic Block

Theatre, Ballroom, Community Meeting Rooms,
New Multi-Use Space, Reimagining Elbert Square

B. Oglethorpe Plan Blocks

Restoration of Oglethorpe Plan, Blocks & Lots,
Streets, and Subgrade Parking



City Council Resolution...

City Council Resolution

City Council Resolution, June 2024

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH, GEORGIA TO PROCEED WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE ARENA AND RENOVATION OF THE THEATRE, BALLROOM, AND COMMUNITY MEETING ROOMS.

WHEREAS, in 1972, the City of Savannah Center on the site of the former M 9,700-seat Martin Luther King, Jr. Ballroom, several multi-purpose r surface parking lot; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Aldermen re important milestones for individuals the years since its construction; and

WHEREAS, the Civic Center stands as t Historic Landmark District (SNH Historic District Ordinance, and th project. This designation led to rec claiming portions of the Elbert and size and prominence, the alteration neighborhoods to the west; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the significance the City has endeavored to restore location. This goal emerged in the demolishing the arena, constructi preserving the Theatre, Ballrooms

WHEREAS, in 1984, the Mayor and Ald Leadership Conference to honor D Arena in his memory; and

WHEREAS, a 2001 Civic Center Arena least favorable of eight potential s traffic congestion, the size of the p facilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Mayor and Ald the location for a new arena; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the City establishes community members and City sta arena project. These subcommittees Center, convened regularly to disc areas of focus; and

Resolution 3: Remove Arena & Renovate Theatre, Ballroom

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Arena Advisory Committee for Utilization of the Current Civic Center

recommended retaining the Johnny Mercer Theatre, preserving the arena for locally sponsored events, at the south and the two trust lots to the east of the site Feasibility Study, commissioned by the Mayor and the arena due to the substantial costs associated with bringing the building into compliance with development ADA compliance;

WHEREAS, in 2019, the City requested the Urban Land In Panel to consider the highest and best uses for the C Aldermen unanimously approved the ULI report with entire Civic Center complex be removed in preparat Oglethorpe Plan; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Enmarket Arena, located at 620 S downtown. In the same year, the Mayor and Alderm the demolition of the old arena, while aiming to pre Theatre, Community Ballroom, and multi-purpose r to the Civic Center along the building's south faad office building on the north side of the Civic Center office space; and restoration of a larger section of th trust lots and four tything lots lost during the develo this presentation, the City Manager was directed to and

WHEREAS, since 2022, the City engaged Akustiks, LLC general feasibility of renovating the existing Johnny and found that it is a community asset and could be once again in the cultural life of Savannah, recogniz many segments of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City finalized the Cultural Landscape Ans understanding of the Civic Center site, as well as E decisions that minimize the loss of historic fabric, n community amenity, and ensure that future develop the Savannah National Historic Landmark District;

WHEREAS, the City is completing a Phase I Archaeology and

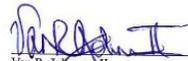
WHEREAS, the City is conducting a comprehensive civil facilitate the redevelopment of the Civic Center are

Resolution 3: Remove Arena & Renovate Theatre, Ballroom & Community Meeting R

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, Georgia adopt this resolution and direct the City Manager to prepare and execute a plan, inclusive of robust community engagement and the required Council approval on annual or amended budgets, project financing, zoning, contracts and agreements, that does the following:

1. Proceeds with the removal of the arena and renovation of the theatre, ballroom, and community meeting rooms;
2. Achieves an equitable approach to redevelopment of the area;
3. Retains the name and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
4. Restores as much of the Oglethorpe Plan as feasible;
5. Prioritizes housing, including affordable and workforce housing;
6. Prohibits the development of new hotels and restricts the use of short-term vacation rentals;
7. Optimizes space for public and municipal use, as well as appropriate retail and commercial spaces; and
8. Achieves future parking needs.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, Georgia on this the 27th day of June, 2024.


Van R. Johnson, II
Mayor

ATTEST:


Mark Massey
Clerk of Council



Resolution 3: Remove Arena & Renovate Theatre, Ballroom & Community Meeting Rooms

3

1. Proceeds with Removal of Arena & Renovation of Theater, Ballroom & Community Rooms;
2. Achieves an equitable approach to redevelopment of the area;
3. Retains the name & legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
4. Prioritizes housing, including affordable & workforce housing;
5. Prohibits the development of new hotels & restricts the use of STVRs;
6. Optimizes space for public and municipal use, as well as appropriate retail and commercial spaces; and
7. Achieves future parking needs.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.
Civic Center Dedication...*

Civic Legacy – Civic Center Naming & Dedication

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

- Resolution presented at City Council, December 2025
- Formal renaming of the Civic Center to honor Dr. King's legacy, January 17, 2026

MLK Weekend Celebration – January 2026

- Program in the Ballroom celebrating the Civic Center's history and renaming
- Tours of the entire facility
- Historical materials curated by Municipal Archives
- Launch of Civic Center "lifespan" video
- Event highlighted community memories and Dr. King's legacy
- Renaming of facility to **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center**

RENAMING CELEBRATION AND CEREMONY FOR
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
PROGRAM

RENAMING CELEBRATION AND CEREMONY
FOR SAVANNAH'S
**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
CIVIC CENTER**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026 | 3 P.M.

Musical Prelude

Welcome - *Midori Carpenter, City of Savannah*

Opening Prayer - *Pastor Lydia Rayner-Syed,
Grace & Deliverance Kingdom Church of Christ*

Presentation of Colors - *Savannah Fire Department & Savannah Police Department*

Star Spangled Banner

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Recognitions - *Midori Carpenter, City of Savannah*

Greetings

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, City of Savannah, GA
Judge LeRoy Burke, III, President, Savannah MLK Observance Day Association
Bishop Thomas J. Sills, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

Musical Selection - *MLK Dedication Choir*

Community Message - *Joseph A. Melder, City of Savannah City Manager*

Savannah Civic Center History - *Luciana Spracher, City of Savannah Archives &
History Officer*

Musical Selection - *MLK Dedication Choir*

DEDICATION CEREMONY

Dedicatory Prayers

Imam Ibrahim Abdul-Malik, Masjid Jihad, Inc.
Bishop Stephen D. Parkes, Diocese of Savannah
Rabbi Robert Haas, Congregation Mickve Israel

Unveiling of Ceremonial Plaque - *Mayor Van R. Johnson, II*

Ceremony Host - *Pastor Thurmond N. Tillman, First African Baptist Church*

Musical Selection - *MLK Dedication Choir*

Recognition of the Founders of the MLK Observance Day Association
Bishop Thomas J. Sills, Connor's Temple Baptist Church

Introduction of Messenger - *Pastor Charles P. Roberson, Kingdom Life Christian
Fellowship*

Musical Selection - *MLK Dedication Choir*

Dedication Message - *Dr. Da'Henri R. Thurmond, Sr., St. Paul CME Church*

Closing Hymn - *We Shall Overcome*



The Old Arena Removal...

Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

Arena Removal



Scope:

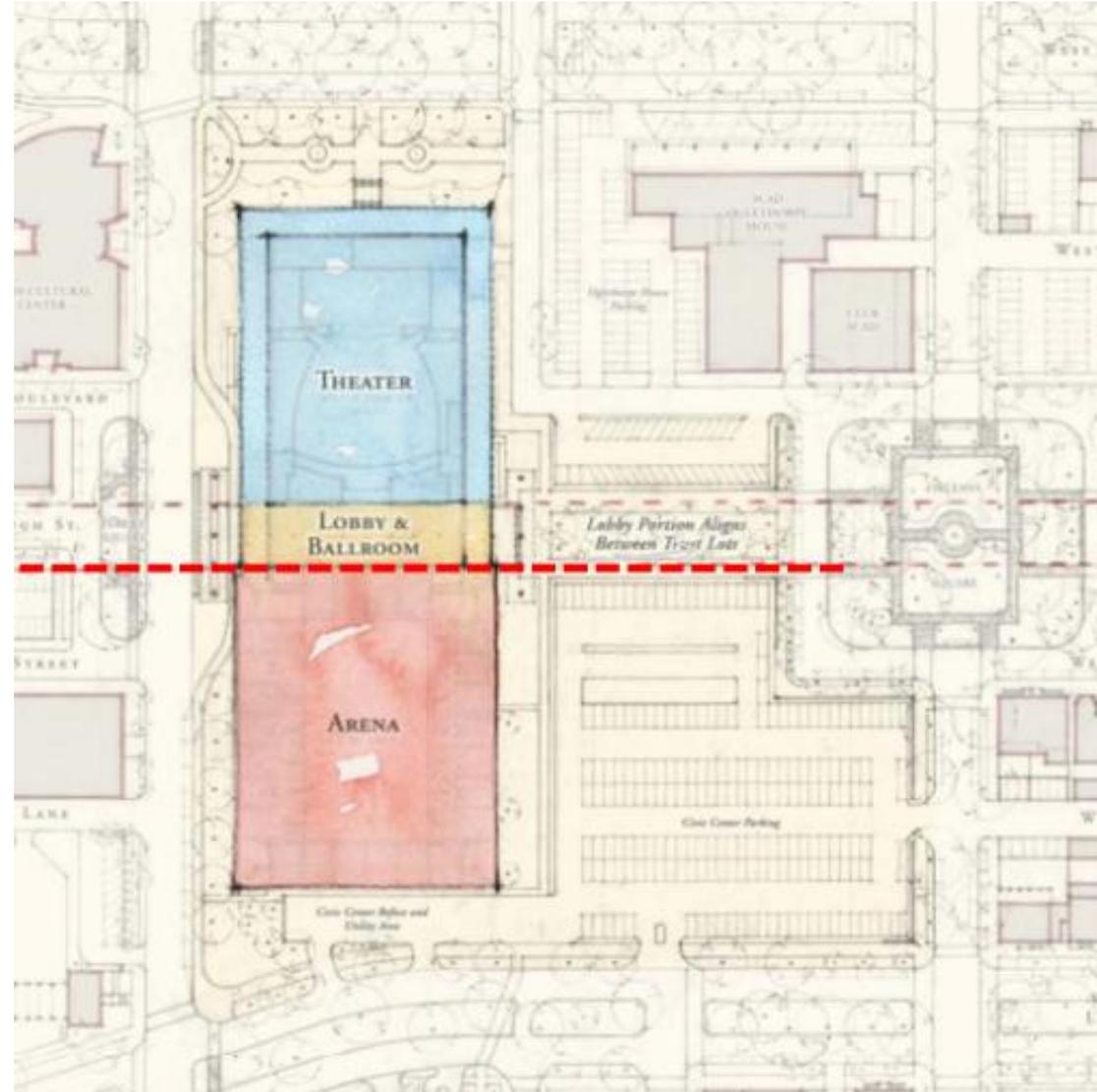
- Careful, controlled removal of the old Arena
 - No wrecking ball, no explosives
 - Hand removal within 30 feet of the existing Civic Center structure
- Installation of a temporary kitchen and lobby vending area
- Chiller replacement
- Construction of a temporary enclosure at the south wall of the existing lobby
- All work sequenced to keep the Johnny Mercer Theatre, Ballroom, Meeting Rooms, and Lobby operational throughout construction

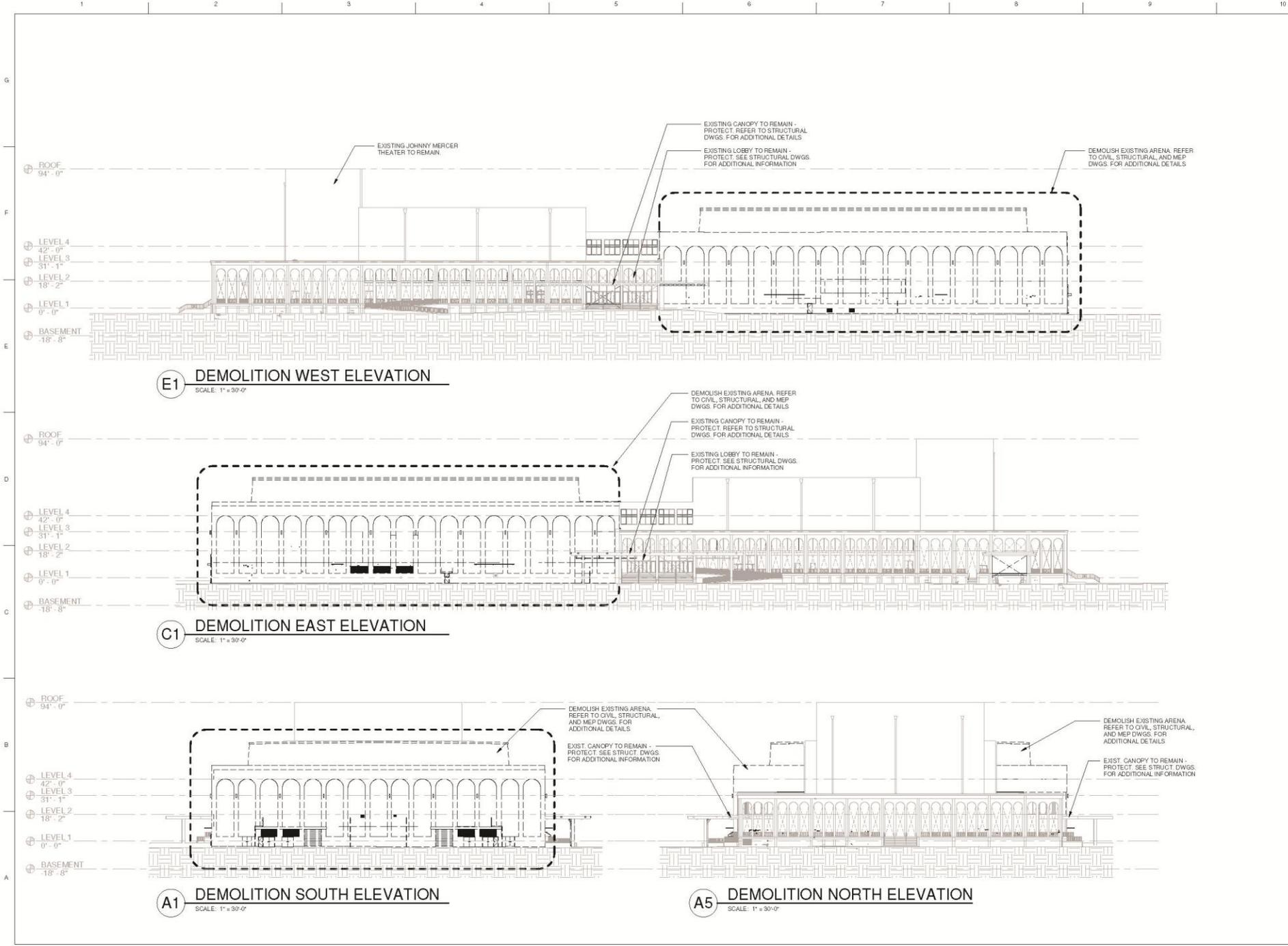
Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

Arena Removal

Key Project Milestones:

- Council Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) Approval: February 12, 2026
- Notice to Proceed / Mobilization:
Week of March 2, 2026
- Lead & Asbestos Abatement:
March-June 2026
- Temporary Kitchen Construction:
March 2026
- Arena Demolition Begins: June 2026
- Temporary South Wall Installed:
January - February 2027
- Substantial Completion: February 2027
- Final Completion & Site Restoration:
March 2027





E1 DEMOLITION WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

C1 DEMOLITION EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

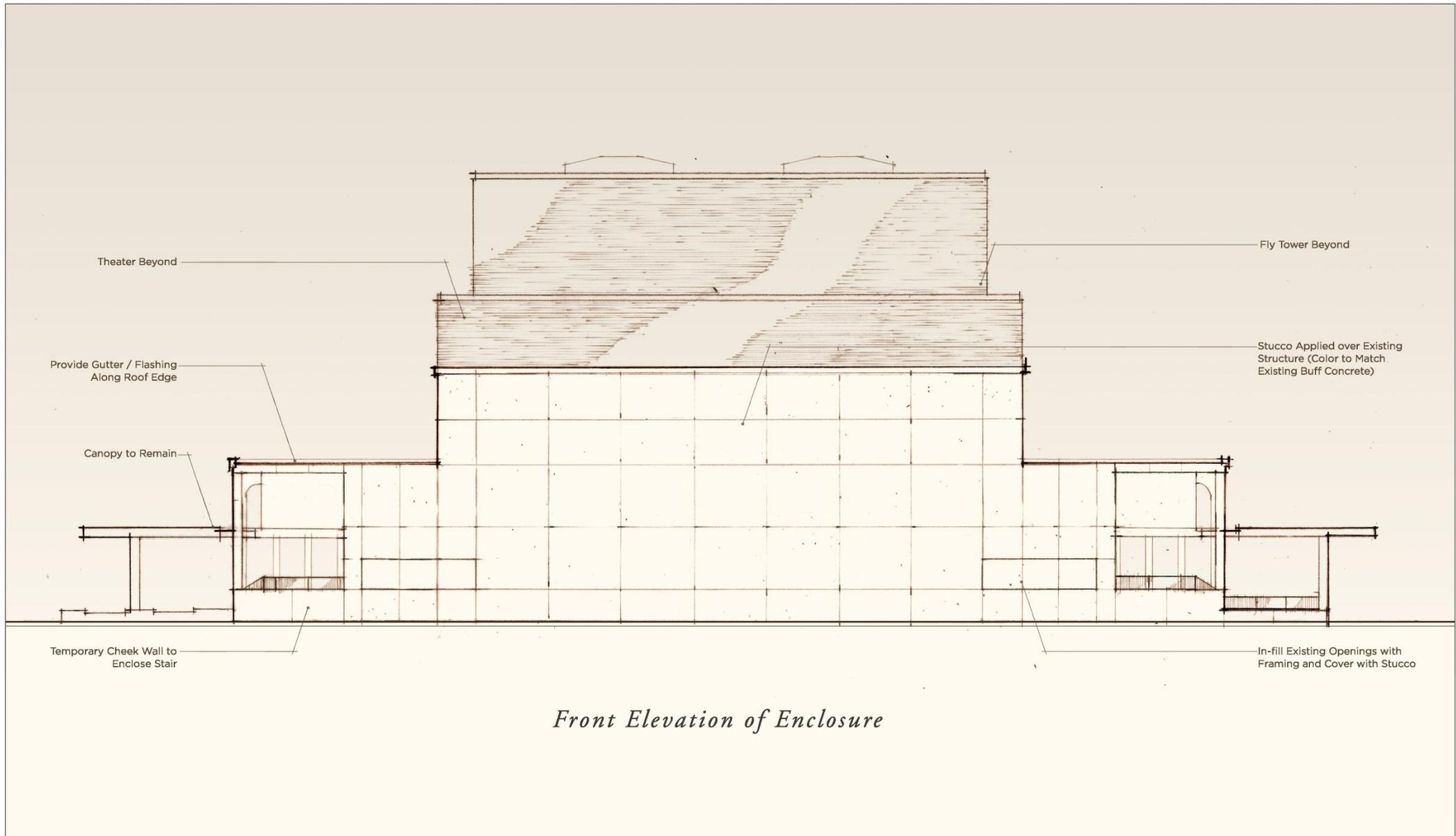
A1 DEMOLITION SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

A5 DEMOLITION NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

DESIGNED BY: ANS	ISSUE DATE: 22 JULY 2025
DRAWN BY: ANS	SCHEMATIC NO.:
CHECKED BY: ANS	CONTRACT NO.:
APPROVED BY: ANS	DATE:
PROJECT NO.:	DATE:
PROJECT NAME:	DATE:
PROJECT ADDRESS:	DATE:
PROJECT PHONE:	DATE:
PROJECT FAX:	DATE:
PROJECT EMAIL:	DATE:
PROJECT WEBSITE:	DATE:
PROJECT SOCIAL MEDIA:	DATE:
PROJECT VIDEO:	DATE:
PROJECT PHOTO:	DATE:
PROJECT DRAWING:	DATE:
PROJECT MODEL:	DATE:
PROJECT REPORT:	DATE:
PROJECT PLAN:	DATE:
PROJECT SPECIFICATION:	DATE:
PROJECT CONTRACT:	DATE:
PROJECT AGREEMENT:	DATE:
PROJECT ORDER:	DATE:
PROJECT INVOICE:	DATE:
PROJECT RECEIPT:	DATE:
PROJECT WARRANTY:	DATE:
PROJECT LICENSE:	DATE:
PROJECT CERTIFICATE:	DATE:
PROJECT PERMIT:	DATE:
PROJECT APPROVAL:	DATE:
PROJECT SIGNATURE:	DATE:
PROJECT STAMP:	DATE:
PROJECT SEAL:	DATE:
PROJECT NOTARIZATION:	DATE:
PROJECT RECORDATION:	DATE:
PROJECT FILING:	DATE:
PROJECT PUBLICITY:	DATE:
PROJECT MARKETING:	DATE:
PROJECT SALES:	DATE:
PROJECT SERVICE:	DATE:
PROJECT SUPPORT:	DATE:
PROJECT TRAINING:	DATE:
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT:	DATE:
PROJECT RESEARCH:	DATE:
PROJECT ANALYSIS:	DATE:
PROJECT DESIGN:	DATE:
PROJECT CONSTRUCTION:	DATE:
PROJECT MAINTENANCE:	DATE:
PROJECT REPAIR:	DATE:
PROJECT REPLACEMENT:	DATE:
PROJECT RENOVATION:	DATE:
PROJECT RESTORATION:	DATE:
PROJECT PRESERVATION:	DATE:
PROJECT DEMOLITION:	DATE:

MLK ARENA DEMOLITION
301 W GOLETHORPE AVE
SAVANNAH, GA 31401
DEMOLITION ELEVATIONS

SHEET ID
A201



Front Elevation of Enclosure

Scale: 1"=20'-0"

Information contained herein is conceptual. Information has been compiled from various sources and does not claim complete accuracy nor guarantee zoning or other types of development approvals. It is intended to provide an overview and analysis of urban conditions and strategies for revitalization. Sottille & Sottille, 2025

TEMPORARY ENCLOSURE
Civic Center Lobby and Ballroom

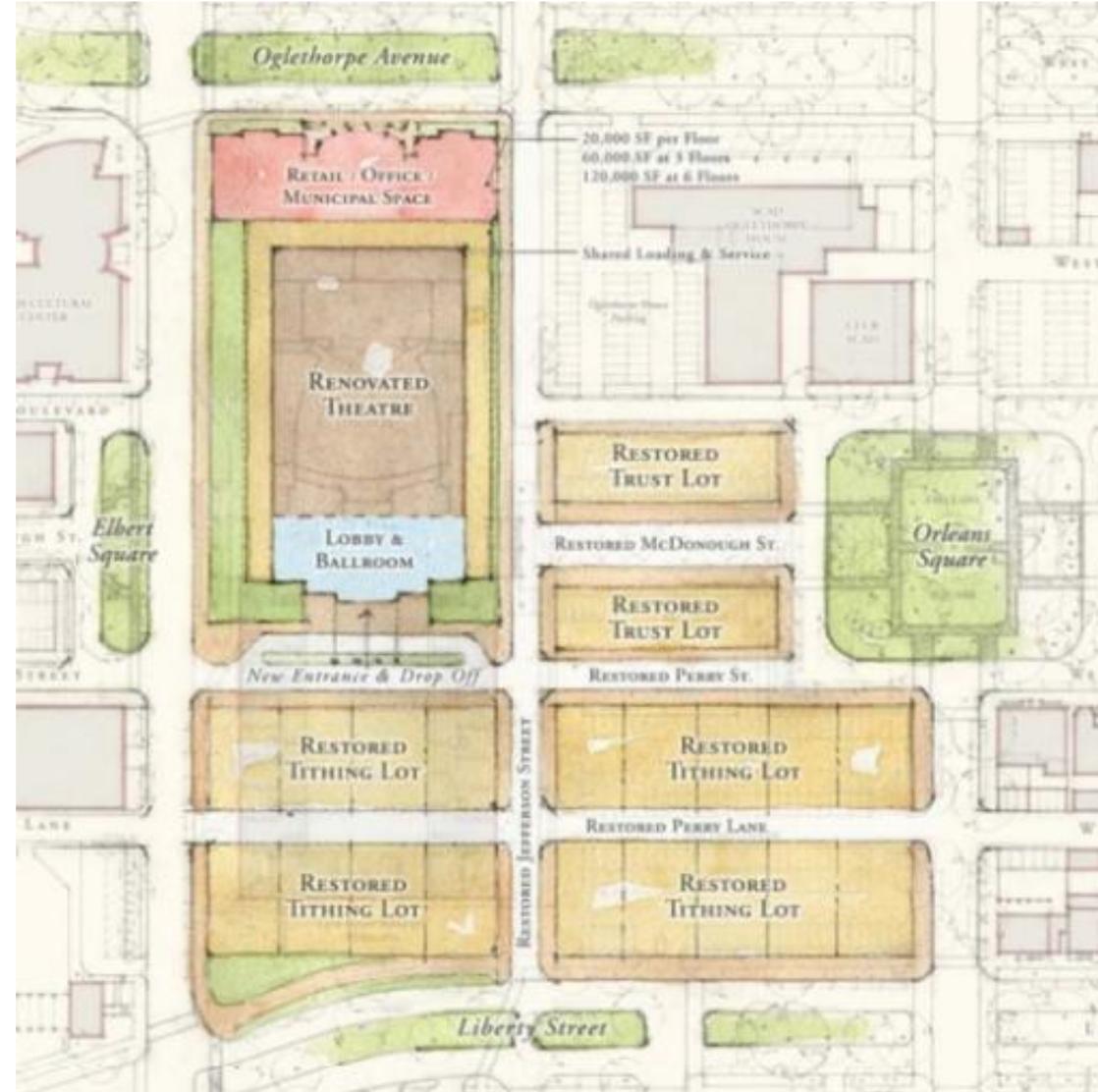
Non-Historic Arena Removal
 SAVANNAH CIVIC CENTER
 National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Planning for the Arts & New Community Spaces

Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

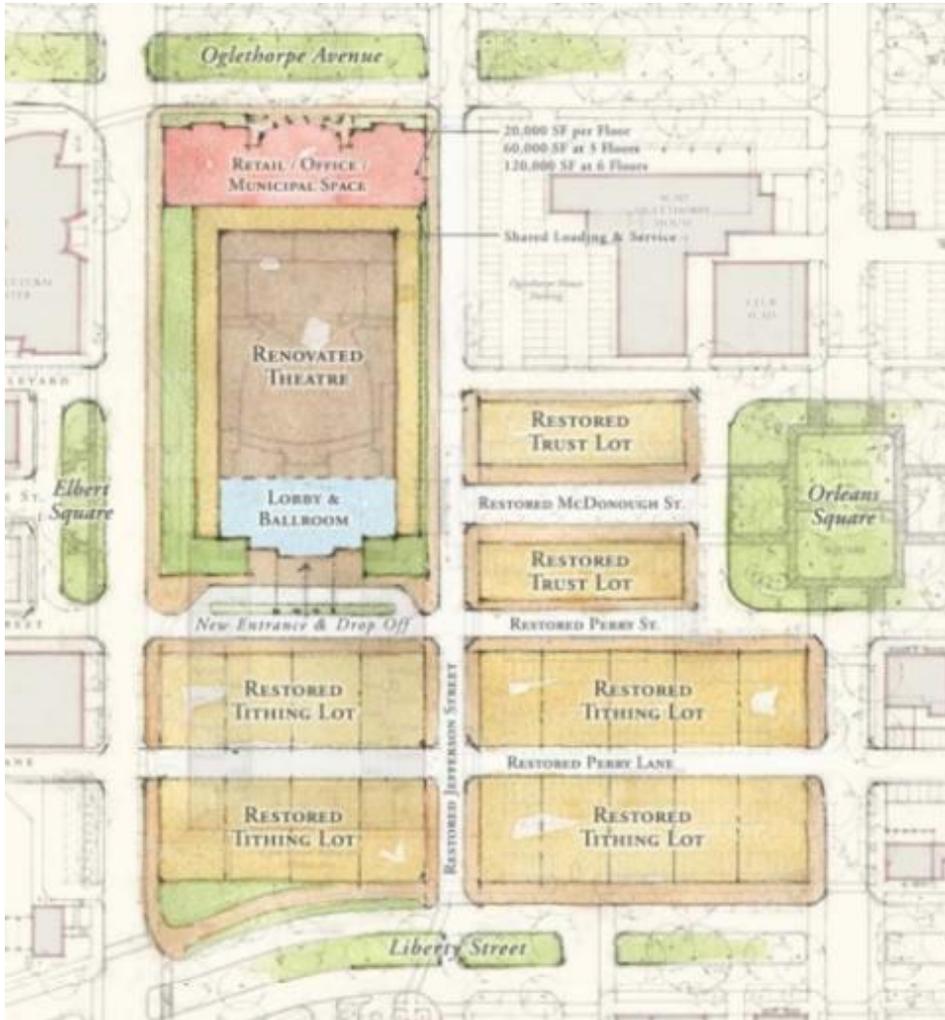
Renovation of Johnny Mercer Theatre

- New Lobby addition with entry off restored Perry St.
- New Civic/Expo building addition on Oglethorpe frontage
- Upgraded service spaces and modernized patron amenities
- Connectivity improvements between the Theatre, Ballroom & new Civic Spaces
- Work to Restore Elbert Square



Civic Legacy – Civic Center Redevelopment

Reestablishing the Oglethorpe Plan



Economic and Land Use Study

- Evaluate the redevelopment of approximately 4.5 acres into four tithing blocks and two trust lots under the Oglethorpe Plan

Key Findings:

- Strong housing demand (market-rate, rowhomes, condos)
- Need for workforce/affordable and senior housing
- Retail opportunities for food, beverage & daily-use shops
- Some office potential (small creative spaces)

Next Steps:

- Redevelopment strategy with cost-benefit & phasing plan
- Align program mix with community priorities & market demand
- Build financial models to guide implementation

Civic Legacy – Renovation of Facility

Theatre, Community Ballroom, and Community Meeting Rooms

- Design RFP to be released in 2026
- New lobby addition with entry off restored Perry St.
- Expanded multipurpose building addition on Oglethorpe frontage
- Upgraded back-of-house spaces and modernized patron amenities
- Renovated Community Ballroom and Meeting Rooms
- Connectivity improvements between the Theatre, Ballroom & new civic spaces



Preliminary Acoustical Analysis...

**Preliminary Renovation Feasibility Assessment
for the**

Johnny Mercer Theatre

Prepared for:
City of Savannah
Savannah, Georgia

Sottile & Sottile
Savannah, Georgia

**Akustiks Project No. 23-0961
20 September 2023**

20 September 2023

Mr. Christian Sottile
Mr. William Santiago
Sottile & Sottile
10 West Taylor Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

Re: Johnny Mercer Theatre – Preliminary Renovation Feasibility Assessment
AKS Project No. 23-0961

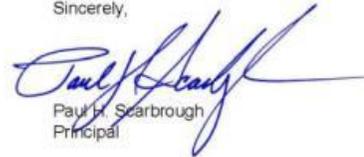
Dear Christian and William,

It was such a pleasure to be in Savannah and to meet you both. That my visit was so productive was, in no small measure, due to your efforts to organize my time and arrange meetings with so many key stakeholders. While the existing Johnny Mercer Theatre is certainly very tired from aesthetic and functional perspectives, there is no doubt in my mind that the facility is a valuable community asset that could be transformed to play a leading role once again in the cultural life of Savannah. Were it to be demolished, its loss would be keenly felt by many segments of the community.

Enclosed is my final report outlining the assessment of the Johnny Mercer Theatre along with specific concepts and strategies that could be considered to bring the auditorium up to contemporary levels of acoustical and theatrical functionality while refreshing the architecture to be more welcoming and engaging.

I hope that you find the enclosed to be both informative and interesting. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



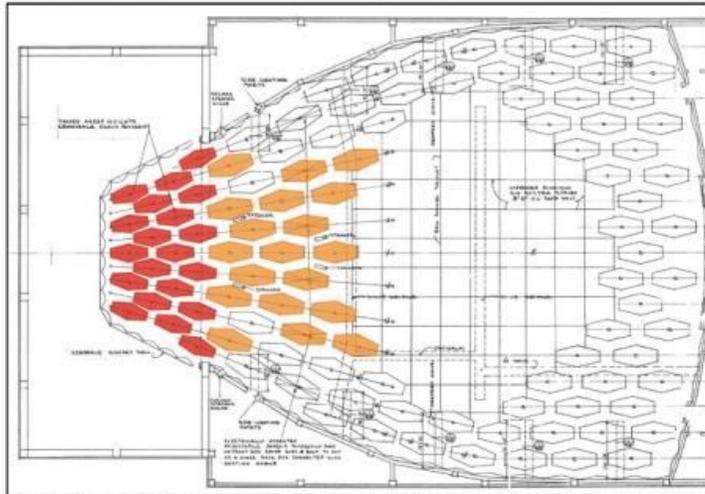
Paul H. Searbrough
Principal

“While the existing Johnny Mercer Theatre is certainly very tired from aesthetic and functional perspectives, there is no doubt that the facility is a valuable community asset that could be transformed to play a leading role once again in the cultural life of Savannah.”

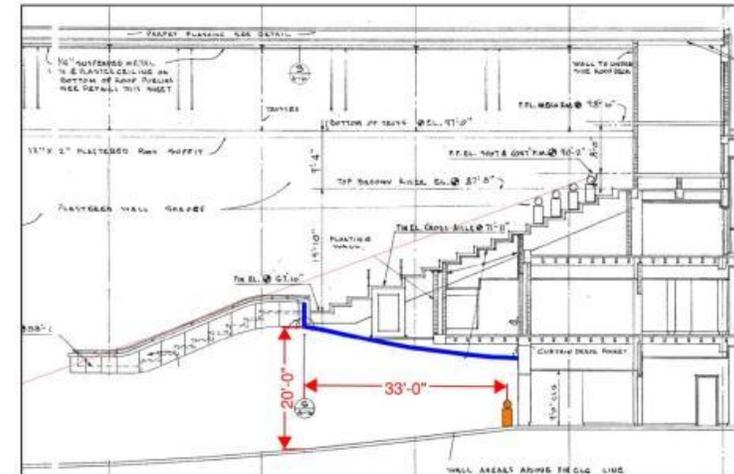




- 2.03 The shape of the auditorium (in plan) would commonly be referred to as fan-shaped, with the side walls of the auditorium flaring from a proscenium width of 60-feet to a fairly sizable width of over 120-feet by the rear of the auditorium.
- 2.04 The walls of the auditorium largely appear to be plaster that has been shaped into folded planes to diffuse sound energy. The original concept for the ceiling comprised a very high plaster ceiling resiliently hung from the underside of the roof with some 86 lightweight glass-fiber reinforced plastic acoustical clouds suspended below. Within a few years after the opening of the hall in 1974, a number of the clouds nearest the stage were removed, ostensibly on a temporary basis to facilitate theatrical lighting for a specific touring Broadway production. Unfortunately, these clouds were never reinstalled, and it appears that additional panels were removed over subsequent years, much to the consternation of the original acoustical designer of the facility, J. Christopher Jaffe. Refer to Drawing #1 below.
- 2.05 The orchestra shell comprises a series of demountable towers, which look to be the originals from 1974. The stage crew noted that the orchestra shell towers are quite hard to align and that the individual towers must be lashed together to avoid unsightly gaps being visible from the audience. The original shell ceiling comprised a series of 20 glass-fiber reinforced acoustical clouds that were designed to blend seamlessly with the clouds in the auditorium itself. At some point, these were removed and destroyed. Refer to Drawing #1 below. The current orchestra shell ceiling is a system of standard Wenger acoustical ceiling panels (from either the Diva or Maestro lines). This system originally comprised three separate canopy panels. According to sources at the Theatre, the upstage canopy panel was damaged and subsequently removed from the building. This leaves approximately 25-30% of the upstage area of the shell with no overhead acoustical support.



Drawing #1: A reflected ceiling plan showing the original configuration of acoustical clouds in the Johnny Mercer. The yellow panels are the ones that appear (from photographs) to have been removed from the auditorium. The red ones are the shell ceiling panels that were removed and later replaced with Wenger acoustical panels.



Drawing #2: A longitudinal section through the Johnny Mercer. The balcony overhang is shown in blue. The height of the opening at the leading edge of the balcony is 20'-0" while the depth to the last listener under the balcony is 33'-0", a ratio of height to depth of 1:1.65. Well-designed multiple-use performance halls keep this ratio at or below 1:1.25.

- 4.03 The preliminary acoustical findings are encouraging, as many of the deficiencies noted can be explained by alterations to the original acoustical designs or can be addressed by replacing outdated technology or introducing new understandings about acoustics, theatre design, architecture and/or building systems. The bottom-line finding is that the Johnny Mercer has much that can be built upon to create a first-class performing arts venue. Leveraging this potential would seem to offer a cost-effective alternative to demolition and replacement.

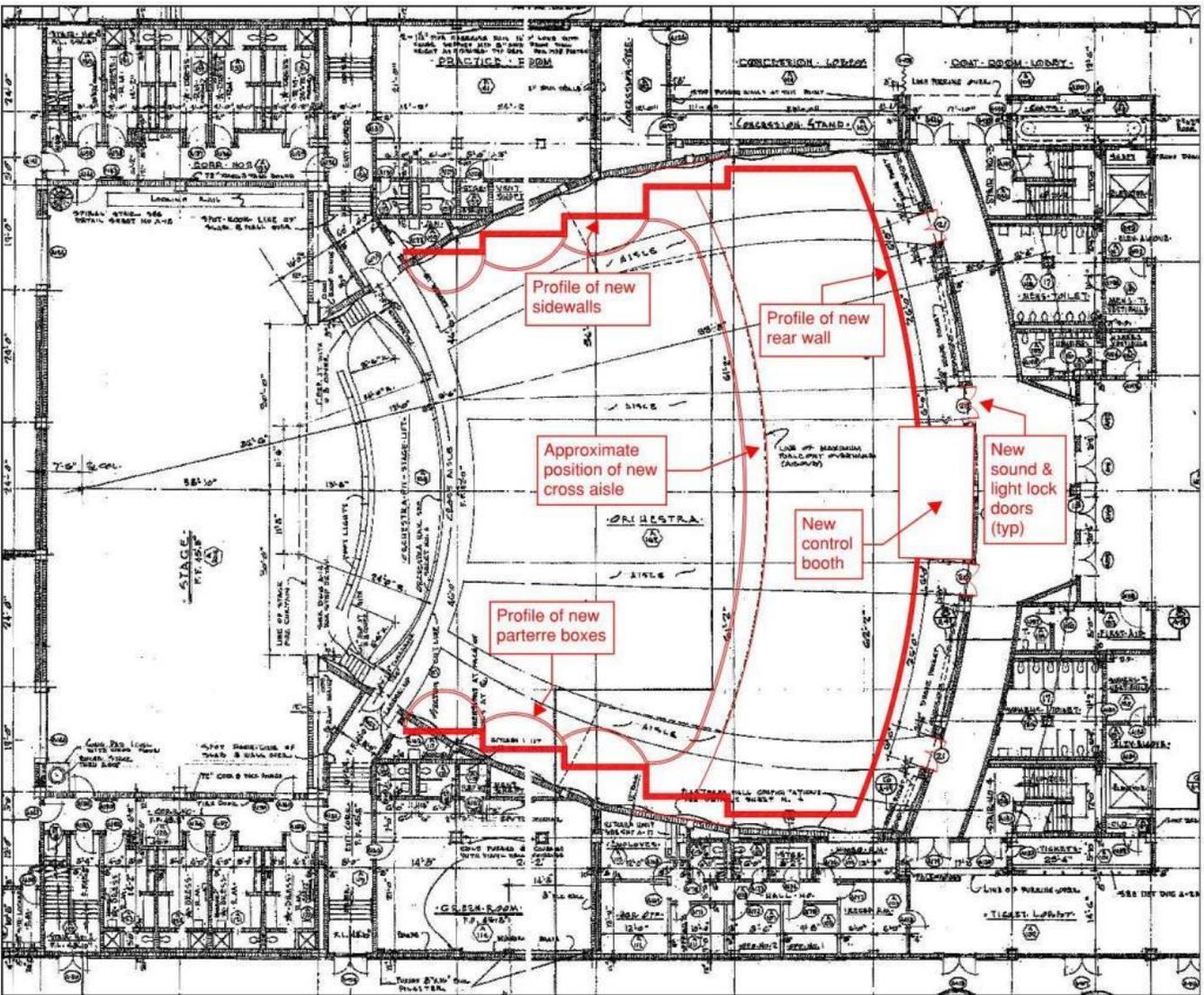
5.0 Detailed Discussion of Acoustical Characteristics

There are a variety of acoustical characteristics that acousticians consider in the design of space for natural acoustic performance. The following outlines these characteristics and the degree they are reflected in the Johnny Mercer Theatre:

5.01 Acoustical Intimacy, Presence & Immediacy

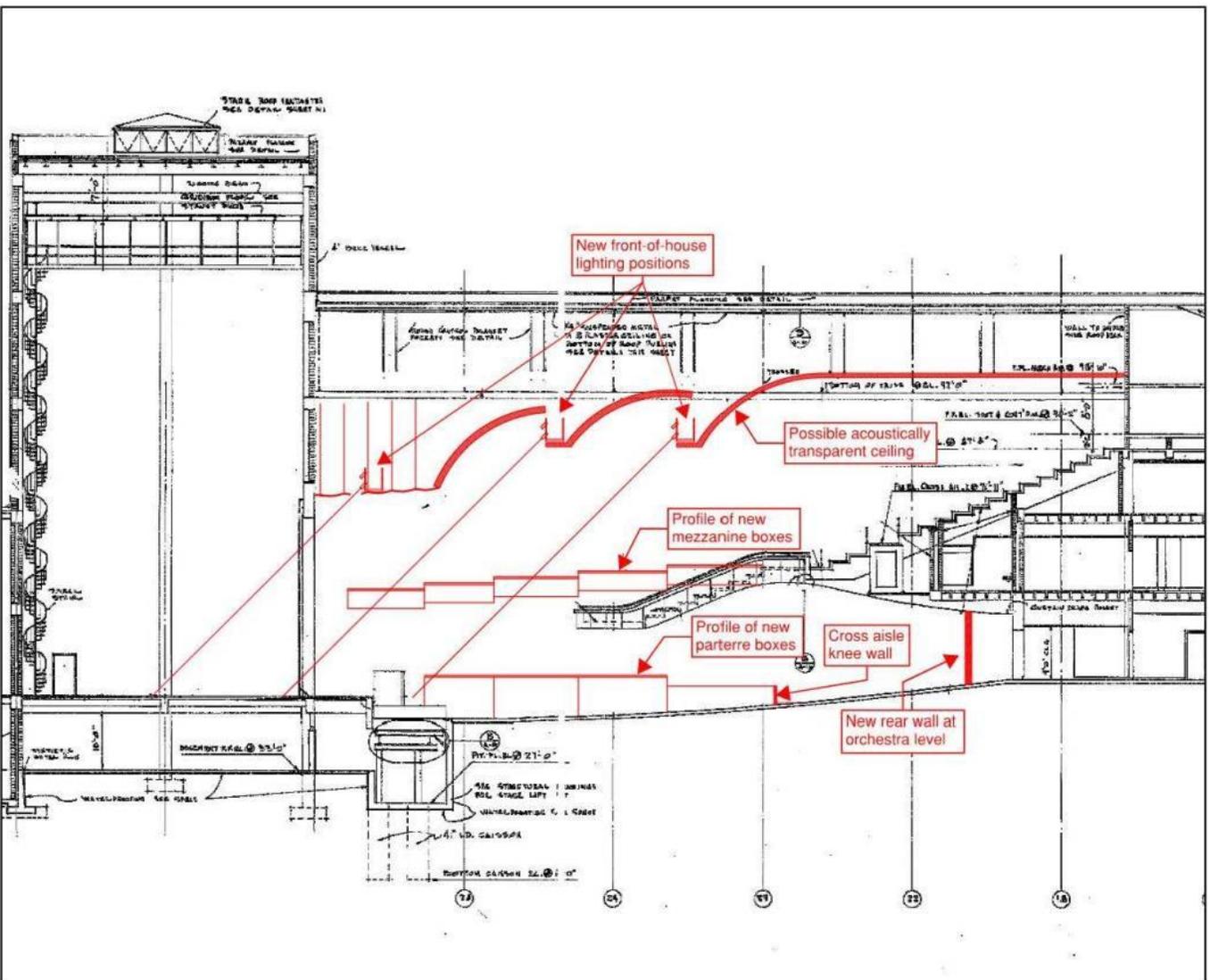
These qualities are governed by what are called early reflections. Early reflections are the first sounds to arrive at the listener after the direct sound arrives in a straight-line path from the source to the listener. Reflections that arrive within 15 to 50 milliseconds of the direct sound contribute to intimacy and immediacy. The fan shape of the auditorium, at least in its current configuration, would not tend to support strong early reflections. This could be mitigated by redesigning the sidewalls of the hall in the forward portion of the room and/or by adding a raised parterre of seating around the sides of the orchestra floor.

Appendix A: Scenario 1 Drawings



Drawing #3 – Scenario 1: Orchestra level floor plan showing the profile of potential new sidewalls at this level along with the parterre boxes, cross aisle, rear wall and control room.

Scenario 1



Drawing #5 – Scenario 1: Longitudinal section through the theatre showing potential new mezzanine and parterre boxes, new forstage canopy, cross aisle knee wall, orchestra level rear wall, front-of-house lighting catwalks and the potential for a new acoustical transparent ceiling to screen the truss space and catwalks from view.

Scenario 1

“We believe that there is great potential for redeveloping the Johnny Mercer Theatre to bring it up to contemporary standards of acoustics, theatrical functionality, audience comfort, and performer accommodations while greatly improving its architectural ambiance.”

*Programming and
Operational Analysis...*

AMS Planning and Research

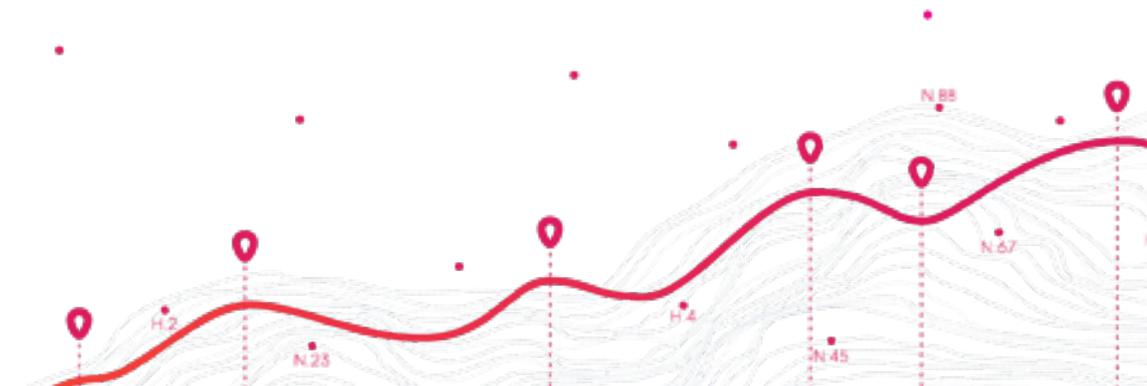
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

Final Presentation

February 2026



AMS
PLANNING
& RESEARCH



Scope of Work

Two stages, lasting ~ eight months, plus a four month pause

Situation Analysis

- **Project Orientation**
- **Background Review**
- **Kickoff Meeting**
- **Key Stakeholder Meetings**
- **360 Market Conditions Scan**
- **Competitive Assessment**
- **User & Content Provider Needs Assessment**
- **Presentation & Workshop**

Management, Operations, & Financial Forecasting

- **Activity Forecast**
- **Governance & Management Recommendations**
- **Operating Projections**
- **Socializing the Plan**

Success, Defined

Based on our interviews and workshops

■ Community Impact

- Creates an inclusive, welcoming space for all community members
- Ensures accessibility and affordable pricing for all Savannah residents
- Represents and celebrates the city's diversity
- Honors MLK's legacy

■ Cultural Development

- Establishes a world-class venue featuring national and local talent
- Returns Broadway productions to Savannah
- Serves as a cultural hub connecting venues
- Enhances arts appreciation and regional cultural prominence
- Facilitates new collaborations and productions

■ Economic Benefits

- Stimulates local business growth
- Boosts regional economic success
- Creates new employment opportunities
- Project completed with full funding

■ Civic Achievement

- Begins to restore Oglethorpe Plan
- Fosters community partnerships in education and business
- Represents significant civic investment in cultural arts
- Acts as a catalyst for cultural renewal



What have we
learned about
the market in
Savannah?

360° Market Conditions Scan

An overview of what we've learned...

- Savannah's history and culture provides a **rich foundation for arts development** and redevelopment.
- The City of Savannah is actively engaged in gathering community input and has placed a strong focus on **access, resilience, and quality of life.**
- A **young, diverse and growing population** puts Savannah in a strong position for continued cultural and economic growth.
- The region is **experiencing economic development** across multiple sectors including, but not limited to, the arts.
- The **arts help drive prosperity in Savannah**, serving as both a powerful economic engine and a source of community vitality.

Where do the arts fit in

Landscape of Local Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit Organizations
in Savannah, GA

2,288

not-for-profits

serving

424,935

people

6.8% are
nonprofit arts, culture
& humanities organizations

156

registered arts not-for-profits

and

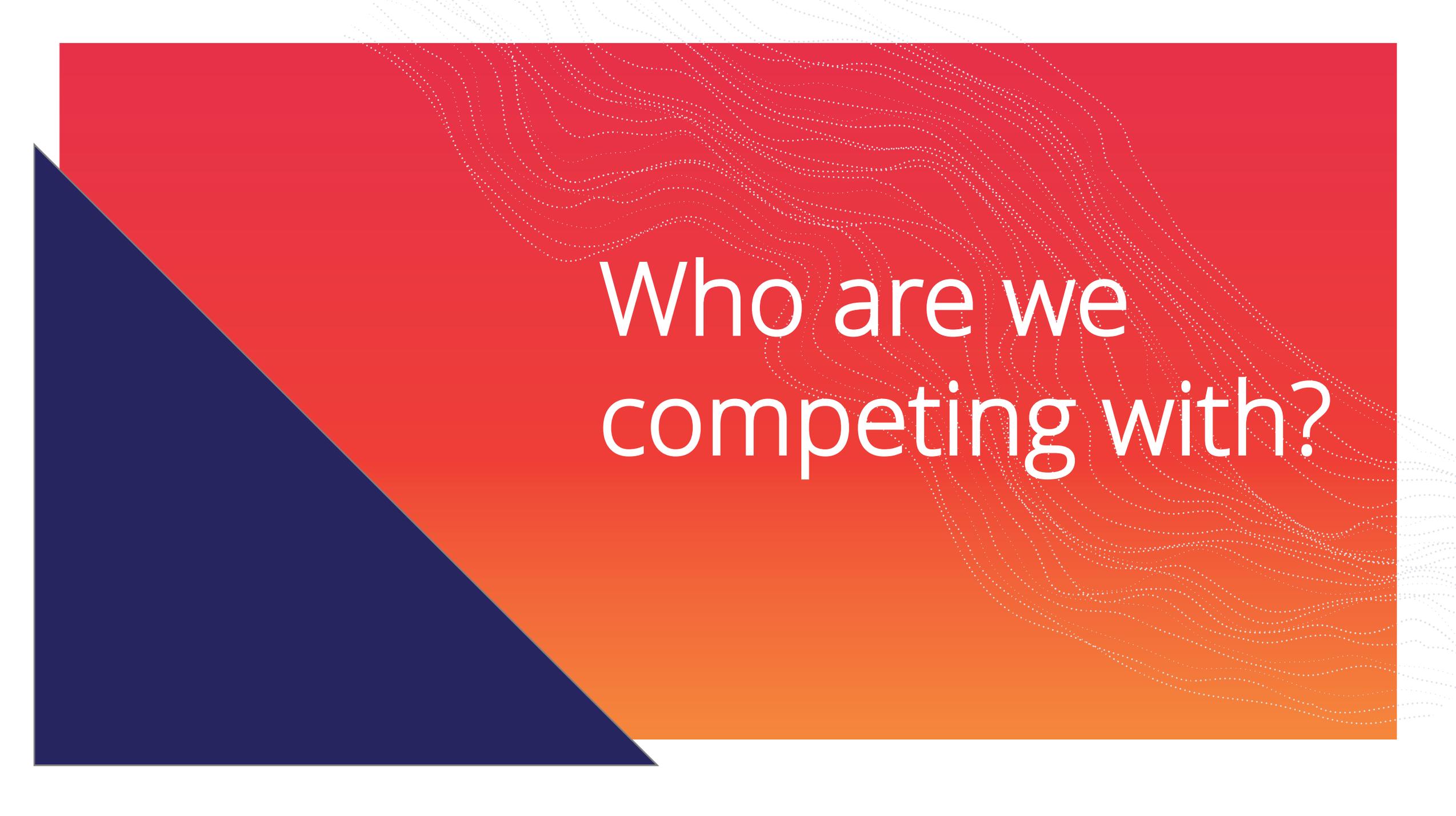
11

have total revenues

> \$1M

Primary areas of
nonprofit arts, culture
& humanities organizations

- Historical Societies, Historic Preservation
- Performing Arts Organizations, Activities
- Cultural, Ethnic Awareness
- History museums
- Theater
- Music



Who are we
competing with?

Highlights

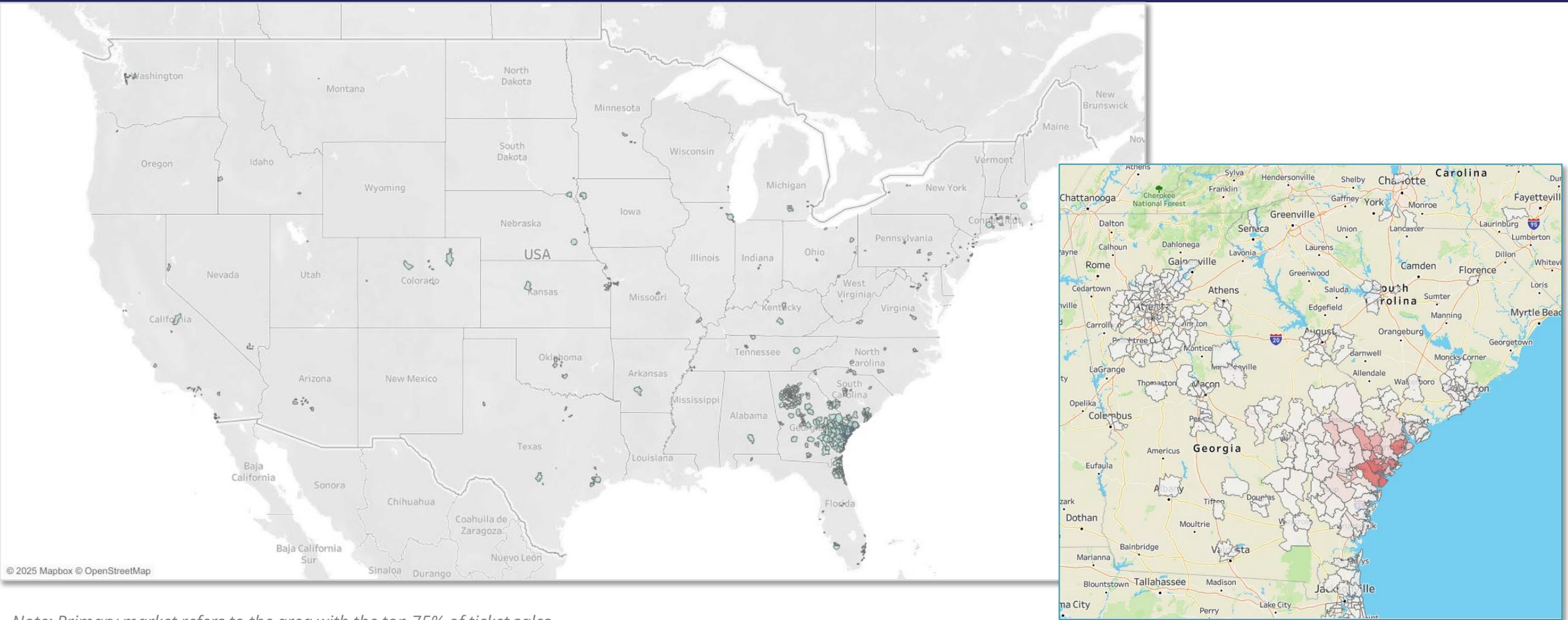
Learnings from competitive venues

- The regional market—anchored by six primary cities—features a vibrant performing arts scene.
- The commercial presenter Live Nation maintains a strong presence throughout the region.
- Comparable venues typically seat 1,800 to 3,000 patrons and are located within a 2 to 2.5-hour drive.
- There is an opportunity for Savannah to expand Broadway touring variety within the region.
- Many peer venues have undergone renovations, highlighting how venue quality influences both presenters and audiences.

Where do the arts fit in?

The primary market for JMT includes patrons from 23 states

Patron base concentrated in coastal Georgia with regional reach into SC and FL

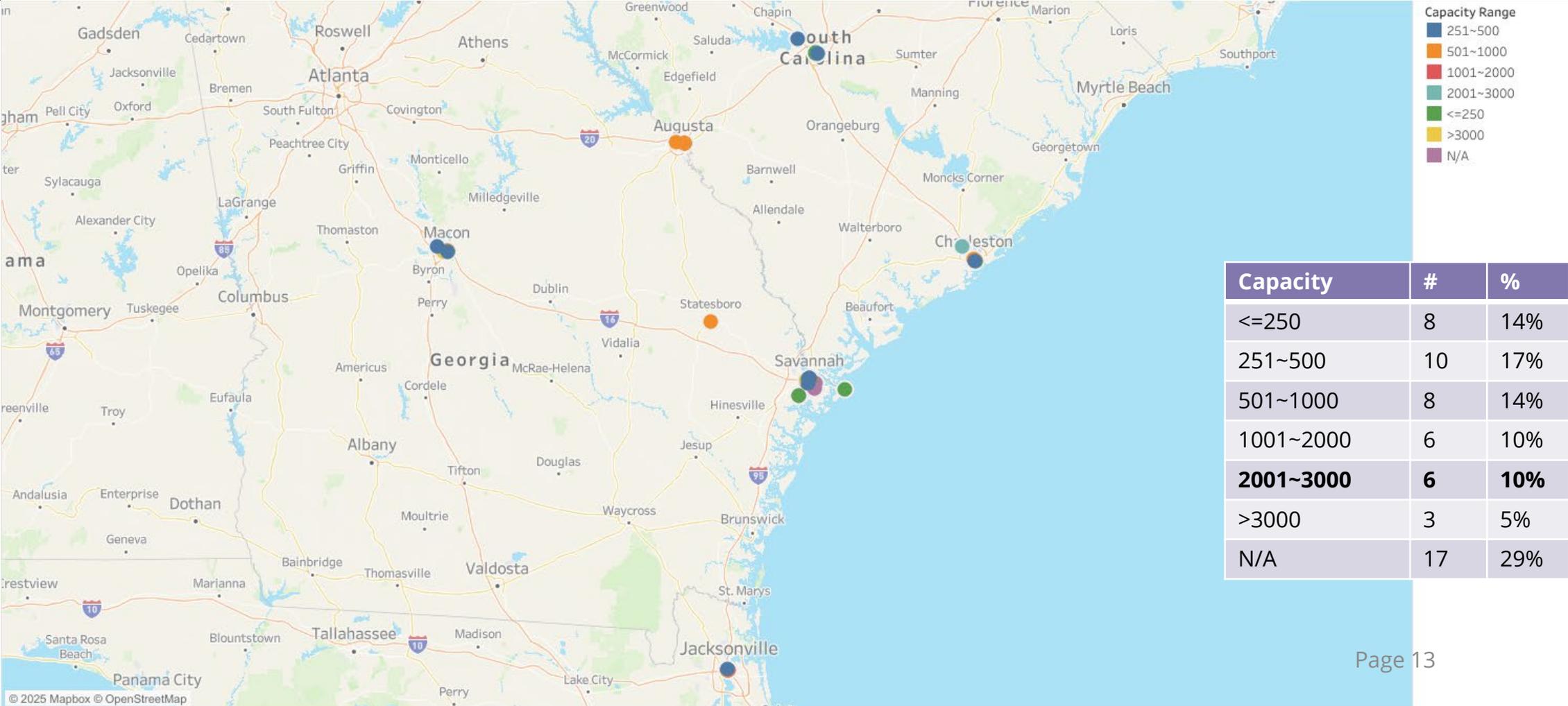


Note: Primary market refers to the area with the top 75% of ticket sales

Who are we competing with?

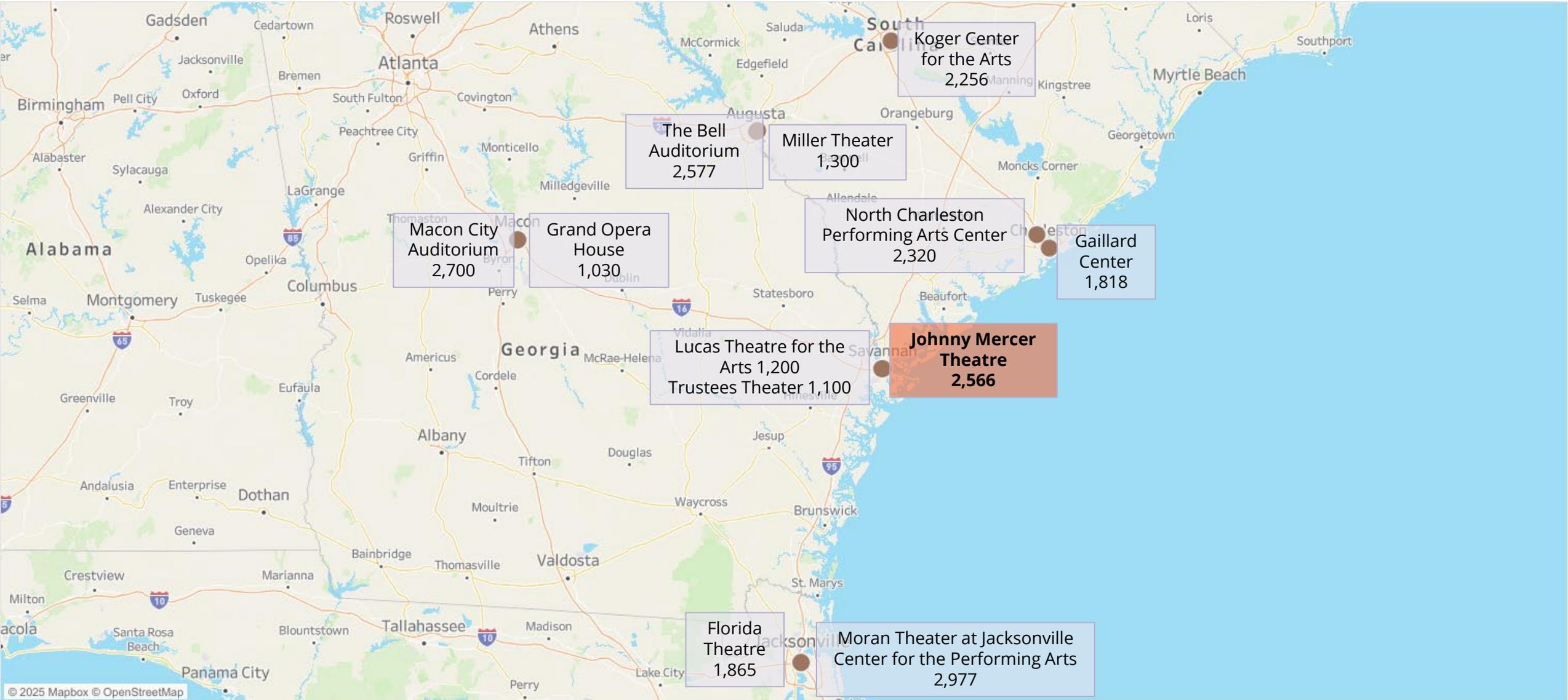
58 perf venues have been identified in the regional market

28 identified in Savannah; comparable venues make up 10%



Who are we competing with?

Primary Competitive Venues



Who are we competing with?

Comparable Venues (1,800~3,000 Seats)

Name	Owner	Operator	Seating Capacity	Opened	Renovated	Primary Programming	Series	Distance from JMC
Koger Center for the Arts	University of South Carolina	University of South Carolina	2,256	1989	2023 and 2025	Broadway, comedy, conference, country, dance, family, holiday, Jazz, lecture, literary arts, music, opera, orchestra, theatre, visual arts, free events, game shows	Live in the Lobby, Live Outside, Black Box Live, Onstage with...	~2.5h
North Charleston Performing Arts Center	City of North Charleston	ASM Global	2,320	1999	N/A	Broadway tours, concerts, comedy, family shows	Best of Broadway	~2h
Johnny Mercer Theatre	City of Savannah, GA	OVG	2,566	1972		Broadway tours, comedy, community events concerts, ballets	N/A	
The Bell Auditorium	The Augusta-Richmond County Coliseum Authority	OVG	2,577	1940	2024	Concerts, family shows, comedy, community events	N/A	~2.5h
Macon City Auditorium	Macon-Bibb County	OVG	2,700	1925	2022	Music, public events, graduations	N/A	~2.5h
Moran Theater at Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts	The City of Jacksonville	The Florida Theatre Performing Arts Center, Inc.	2,977	1962	1997	Broadway, comedy, orchestra, concerts, community events	N/A	~2h
Gaillard Center	The City of Charleston, South Carolina	Charleston Gaillard Management Corporation	1,818	1968	2015	Broadway, classical & CSO, comedy, country, dance, family & education, holiday, Jazz, music, theater, authors & lectures	N/A	~2h
Florida Theatre	The City of Jacksonville	The Florida Theatre Performing Arts Center, Inc.	1,900	1927	1983 and 2023-2027	Concerts, comedy, family shows, theater	The Theatreworks program (free summer theatre), Summer Sound Waves	~2h

Regional market has opportunity for Savannah to add to the variety of Broadway touring

Key venues as tours come down U.S. highway 95 to Florida



Koger Center for the Arts
2,256 seats

- Broadway in Columbia series is sponsored by Bank of America
- Mrs. Doubtfire (Nov 2025)
- The Music Man (Jan 2026)
- Riverdance (Feb 2026)
- Chicago (Feb 2026)
- Wicked (March 2026)
- Beetlejuice the Musical (April 2026)
- Clue (June 2026)



Gaillard Center
1,818 seats

- Charleston Gaillard Center Presents
- Annie (Feb 2024)
- Jagged Little Pill (March 2024)
- Dear Evan Hansen (Jan 2025)
- The Addams Family (Oct 2025)



North Charleston Performing Arts Center
2,300 seats

- The Best of Broadway is presented by the Nederlander Producing Company of America and the North Charleston Performing Arts Center
- Disney's Beauty and the Beast (Sep 2025)
- The Sound of Music (Nov 2025)
- Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical (Dec 2025)
- Chicago (add-on, Feb 2026)
- & Juliet (Feb 2026)
- MJ The Musical (March 2026)
- The Wiz (April 2026)



Moran Theater at Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts
2,966 seats

- Broadway Series presented by Broadway Across America – Jacksonville
- Clue (Nov 2025)
- Mrs. Doubtfire (Feb 2026)
- Moulin Rouge! The Musical (March 2026)
- A Beautiful Noise, The Neil Diamond Musical (April 2026)
- Beetlejuice (May 2026)



What have we learned
from analysis,
stakeholders, and
potential users?

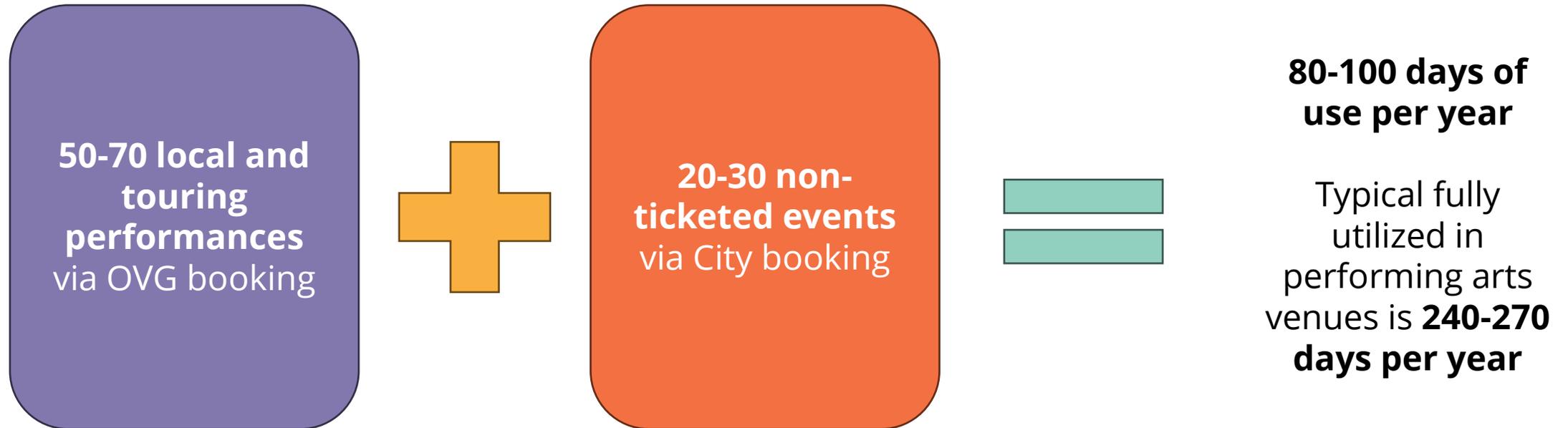
Data Inputs

Understanding
view of JMT in
the community
and future
opportunities

- Interviewed **29 key stakeholders**, including City officials and staff, local arts, business, and community organizations, venue operators for OVG and SCAD, and touring entertainment promoters.
- Potential user survey results from **20 organizations and individuals**.
- Assessment of Savannah's competitive market

Johnny Mercer Theatre is Significantly Underutilized

Ticketed events, plus community usage

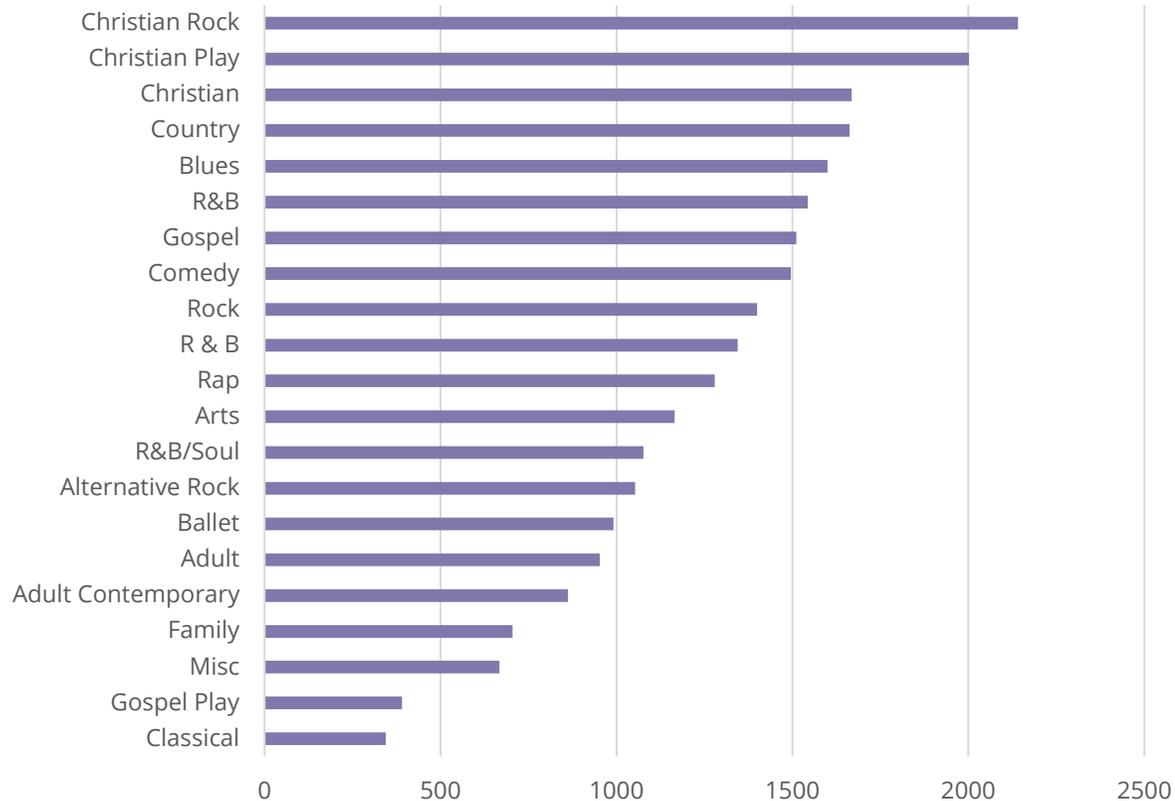


What does this mean for us?

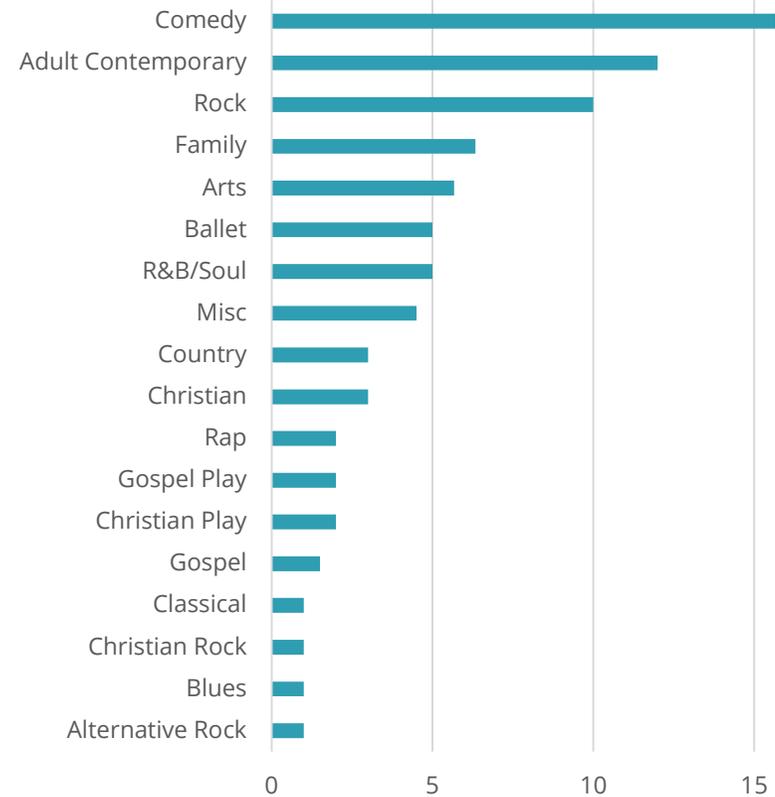
Music and comedy performances draw the highest attendance

Broadway is absent and there is limited classical in JMT's current programming

Average Attendance by Genre



Average of #of Events



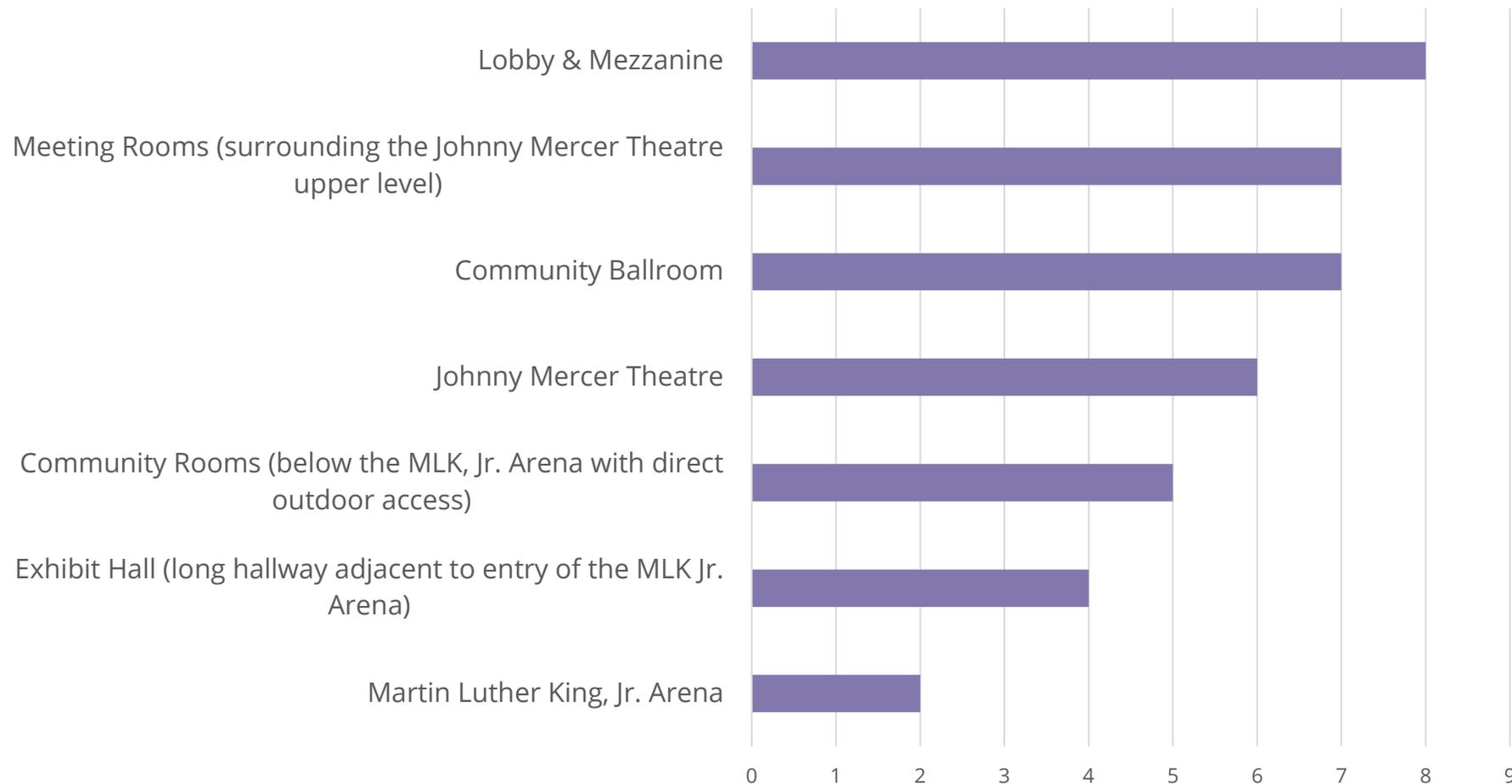
What people told us about the Johnny Mercer Theatre

Lack of investment over time makes this a critical moment

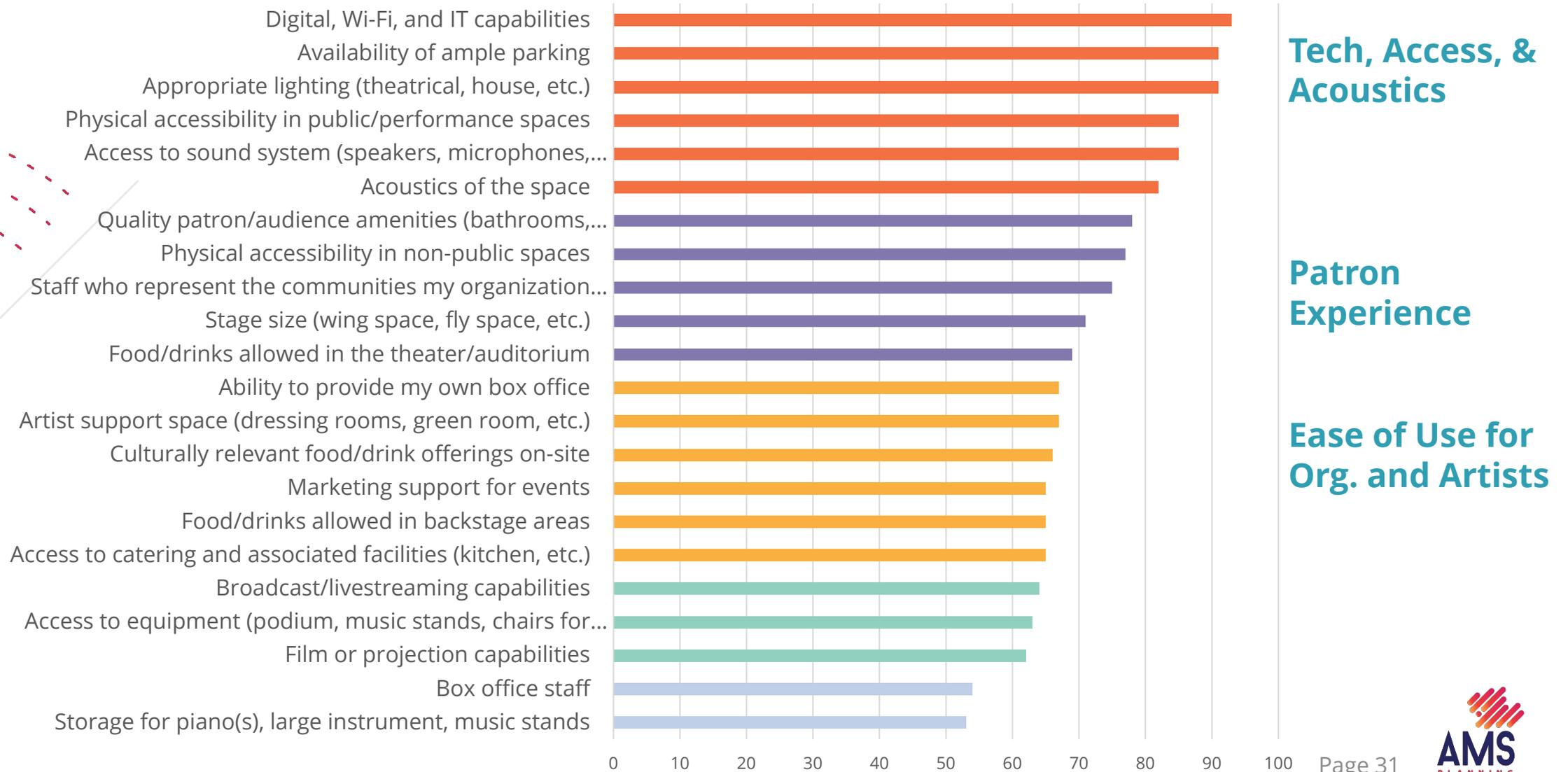
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The theatre has a long history of service to the community.• The central location makes it accessible to a broad audience.• The ballroom and meeting rooms offer flexible spaces for various events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdated infrastructure in both the theatre and community spaces.• Limited seating and accessibility challenges for people with disabilities.• Acoustics and technical capabilities in the theatre are not up to modern standards.
Opportunities	Threats/Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renovating the facilities to include state-of-the-art technology could attract larger touring productions, events, and local arts organizations.• Enhancing accessibility and comfort would broaden the potential audience base.• Expanding the community spaces could allow for more diverse programming, including educational workshops, conferences, and local arts events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition from newer, more modern venues in the region.• Potential funding challenges for a large-scale renovation project.• Community hesitation if the renovated spaces do not meet their needs or expectations.

Which spaces has your organization currently or previously used at the JMT and Civic Center?

All spaces used, with more use of meeting and community spaces



When choosing space, how important are the following facility and operational characteristics?



Tech, Access, & Acoustics

Patron Experience

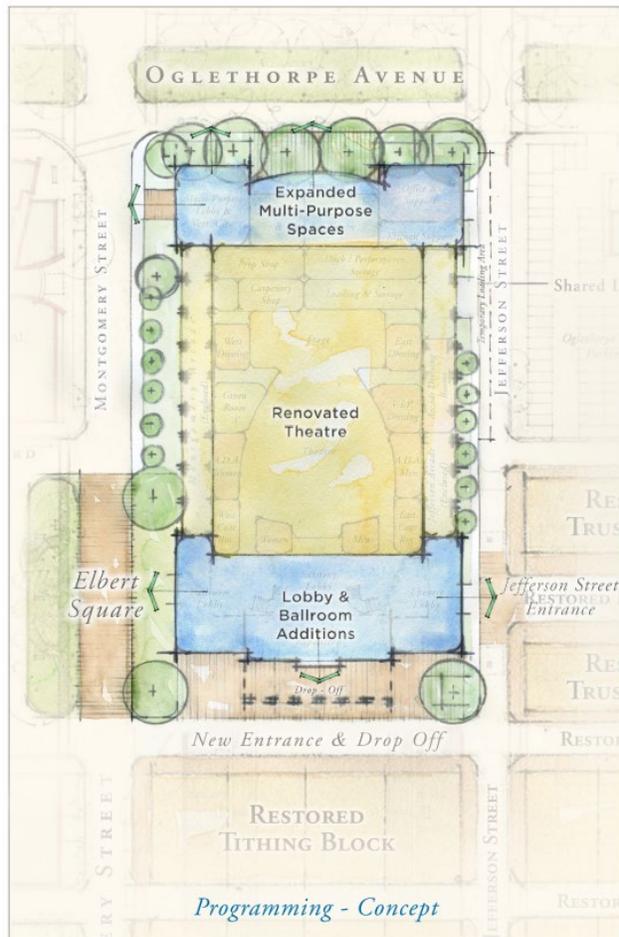
Ease of Use for Org. and Artists



Modeling the Future

Civic Center will serve as a hub for arts, community, and civic events

Renovation will introduce new spaces that respond to user needs



Johnny Mercer Theatre

Ballroom

Rehearsal Rooms

Meeting Rooms / Classrooms

Multi-purpose Expo Hall

Black Box Theater

Activity is modeled based on accumulated inputs

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center will be home to...

INPUTS

Operational Analysis

Interviews with Staff and OVG team

Interviews with Stakeholders

Potential User Survey

Discussions with Staff and OVG Team

ASSUMPTIONS

Activity Mix

Use Day

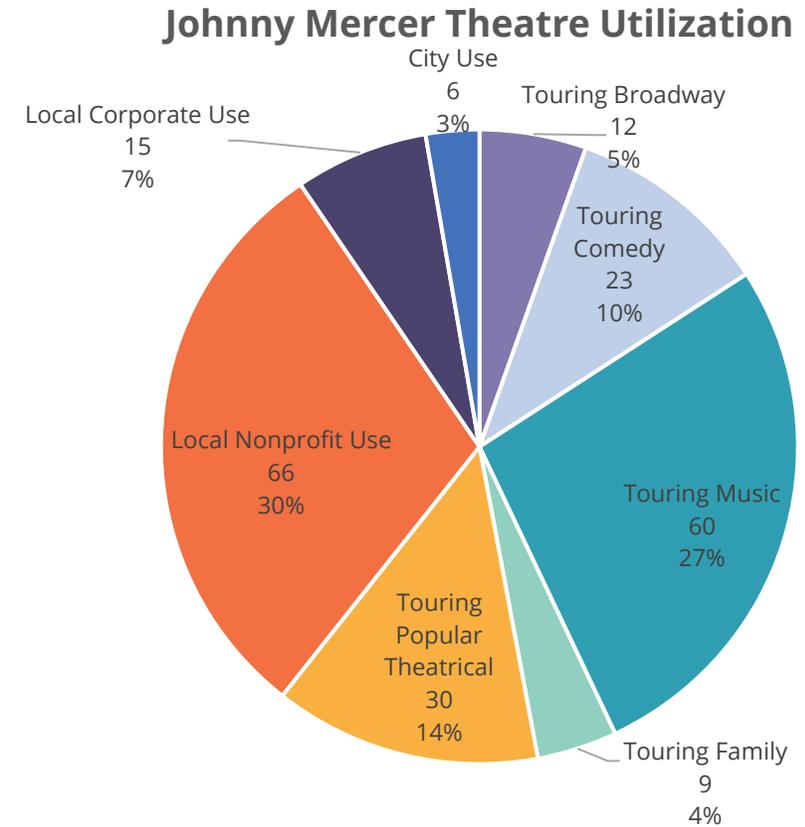
ACTIVITY

SCHEDULE 5: UTILIZATION	Arts Event Days	Non-arts Event Days	Load-In / Rehearsal / Tech Days	TOTAL
Johnny Mercer Theatre				
Touring Broadway	6	0	6	12
Touring Comedy	23	0	0	23
Touring Music	60	0	0	60
Touring Family	9	0	0	9
Touring Popular Theatrical	20	0	10	30
Local Nonprofit Use	25	4	37	66
Local Corporate Use	0	15	0	15
City Use	0	6	0	6
<i>Subtotal, Johnny Mercer Theatre</i>	143	25	53	221
Multi-purpose Expo Hall				
Local Nonprofit Performance Use (Black Bo	92			92
Community Use		141		141
City Use	0	36	5	41
<i>Subtotal, Multi-purpose Expo Hall</i>	92	177	5	274
Ballroom				
Local Nonprofit Use	12	9	30	51
Local Corporate Use	0	25	0	25
City Use	0	65	5	70
<i>Subtotal, Ballroom</i>	12	99	35	146
Rehearsal Room A & B				
Local Nonprofit Use	0	0	342	342
City Use	0	0	204	204
<i>Subtotal, Rehearsal Room A & B</i>	0	0	546	546
Meeting Rooms / Classrooms				
Local Nonprofit Use	0	171	0	171
City Use	0	312	0	312
<i>Subtotal, Meeting Rooms / Classrooms</i>	0	483	0	483
TOTAL UTILIZATION	247	1075	639	1670

JMT will have 118 performance days of touring content

JMT bookings are projected to be nearly doubled from current levels

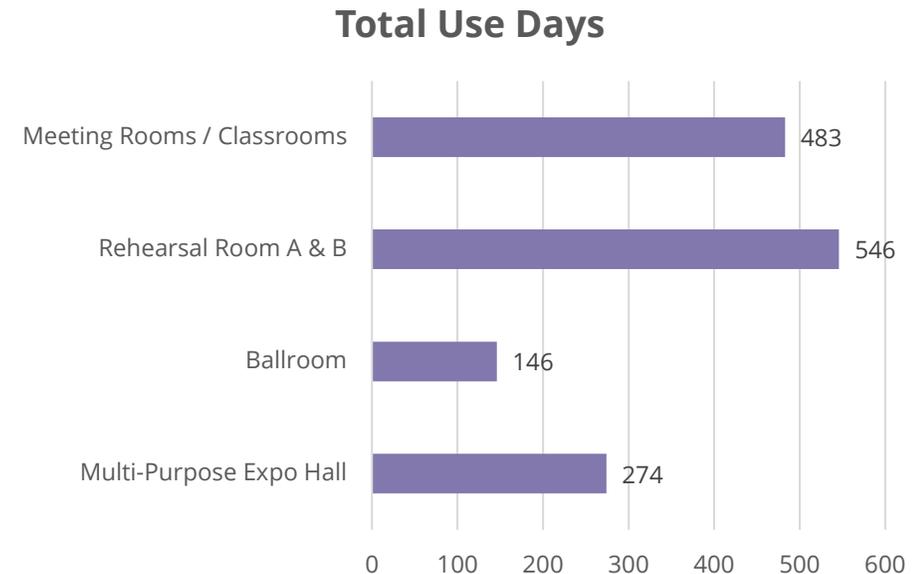
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Touring Family	9	0	0	9
Touring Popular Theatrical	20	0	10	30
Local Nonprofit Use	25	4	37	66
Local Corporate Use	0	15	0	15
City Use	0	6	0	6
<i>Subtotal, Johnny Mercer Theatre</i>	143	25	53	221



Other functional spaces support a variety of demands

Reaffirming the Center as a gathering place for community and civic life

Multi-purpose Expo Hall				
Local Nonprofit Performance Use (Black Bo	92			92
Community Use		141		141
City Use	0	36	5	41
<i>Subtotal, Multi-purpose Expo Hall</i>	92	177	5	274
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Local Corporate Use	0	25	0	25
City Use	0	65	5	70
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City Use	0	0	204	204
<i>Subtotal, Rehearsal Room A & B</i>	0	0	546	546
Meeting Rooms / Classrooms				
Local Nonprofit Use	0	171	0	171
City Use	0	312	0	312
<i>Subtotal, Meeting Rooms / Classrooms</i>	0	483	0	483



The rental policy is assumed to follow current practices

Incentive rebates are structured to attract promoter activity and content bookings

	Nonprofit Rate	Commercial Rate	City Rate
Johnny Mercer Theatre	\$3,000	\$18,000	\$3,000
Promoter Rebate		45%	

	Nonprofit Rate	Commercial Rate	City Rate
Ballroom	\$2,250	\$3,000	\$1,250
Black Box Theatre	\$300	\$500	\$300
Multi-Purpose Expo Hall	\$450	\$750	-
Rehearsal Rooms	\$150	\$250	-
Meeting Rooms / Classrooms	\$100	\$200	-



Rental Base Revenue (Gross)

\$2,198,200

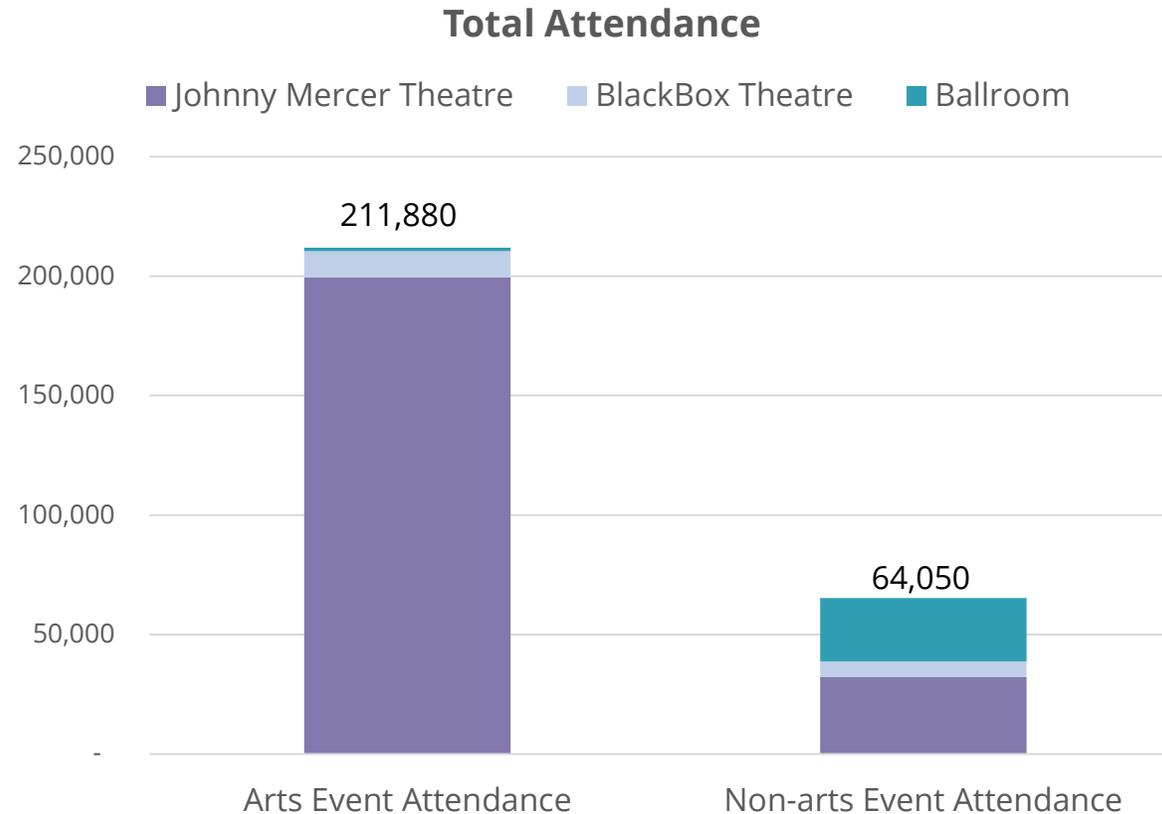


Rental Chargebacks Net

\$149,400

Civic Center is projected to welcome 276k attendees annually

~77% of total attendance is generated by arts & entertainment



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

SCHEDULE 2: SUMMARY

BASE PRO FORMA

Earned Revenues	Base Year
Rentals	\$2,198,200
Chargeback Revenue (net)	\$149,400
Ancillary	\$1,418,800
<i>Subtotal, Earned Revenues</i>	<i>\$3,766,400</i>
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES	\$3,766,400
Operating Expenses	
Personnel	\$1,090,800
Overhead	\$186,000
Occupancy	\$1,753,100
<i>Subtotal, Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$3,029,900</i>
<i>Management Fee</i>	<i>\$252,000</i>
<i>Incentive Fee</i>	<i>\$184,125</i>
Expense Contingency (5%)	\$151,000
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$3,617,025
TOTAL ANNUAL RESULT	\$149,375

Operating Forecast

Summary of Operating Results

- The total earned revenue is projected at \$3.76 million.
- Management and incentive fees are currently based on the current third-party operating agreement, which could change.
- Under these assumptions, the facility is projected to operate at essentially a break-even operating proposition, with a net operating revenue of approximately \$150,000.
- All figures are presented in current dollars; as the project advances, the budget will need to be adjusted to account for inflation and other cost escalations.



Governance & Management Recommendations

Management & Operations Recommendations

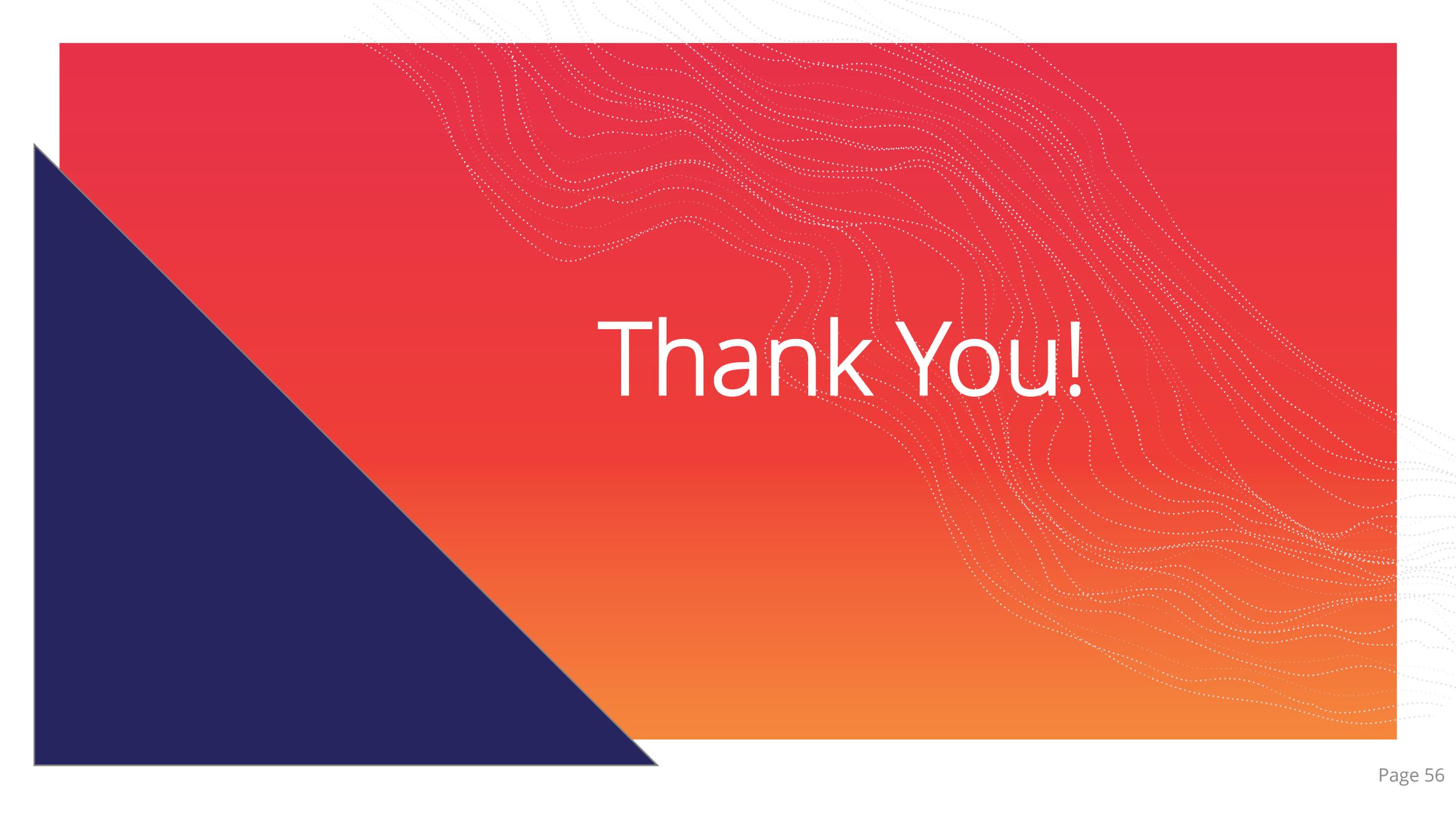
Operational implications of running a renovated Civic Center

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center as a Brand
 - **Recommendation:** *Rebrand the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center and integrate the Johnny Mercer Theatre into the Civic Center identity.*
- 3rd Party Management & Incentive Fee Structure
 - **Recommendation:** *Revisit the management and incentive fee structure as activity levels and revenues scale.*
- Concessions / Ticketing Services
 - **Recommendation:** *Evaluate opportunities to renegotiate or restructure concessions and ticketing.*
- Promoter Rebate Assumptions
 - **Recommendation:** *Regularly validate promoter rebate rates against actual deal terms.*

Management & Operations Recommendations

Operational implications of running a renovated Civic Center

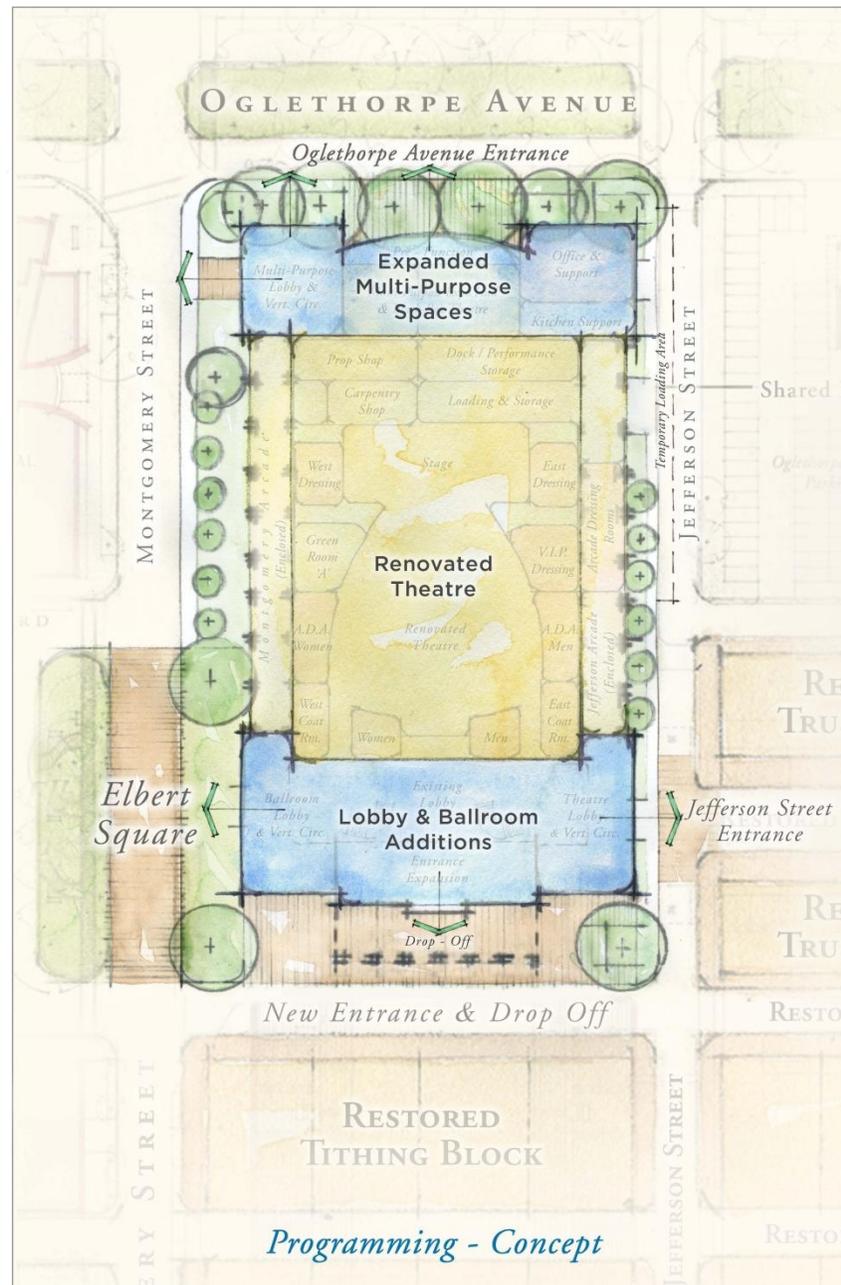
- Staffing Model & Organizational Capacity
 - **Recommendation:** *Add 6 full-time positions to support projected growth in activity and events, focused on responsibilities outside of third-party operator's scope.*
- Catering Strategy
 - **Recommendation:** *Evaluate in-house or hybrid catering models to capture incremental earned revenue and improve financial performance.*
- Rentals, City Use, and City Support
 - **Recommendation:** *Formalize a new City-use policy granting free access; Use ticket fee rebate and other benefits from increased commercial touring revenue to strategically invest in the building and the sector.*



Thank You!

Bringing it Together...

Programming Studies



Scale: 1" = 50'-0"
 Information contained herein is conceptual. Information has been compiled from various sources and does not constitute a complete survey or guarantee of any type of development approval. It is intended to provide an overview and analysis of urban conditions and strategies for revitalization. Smith & Switz, 2024

PROGRAMMING STUDY
 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center



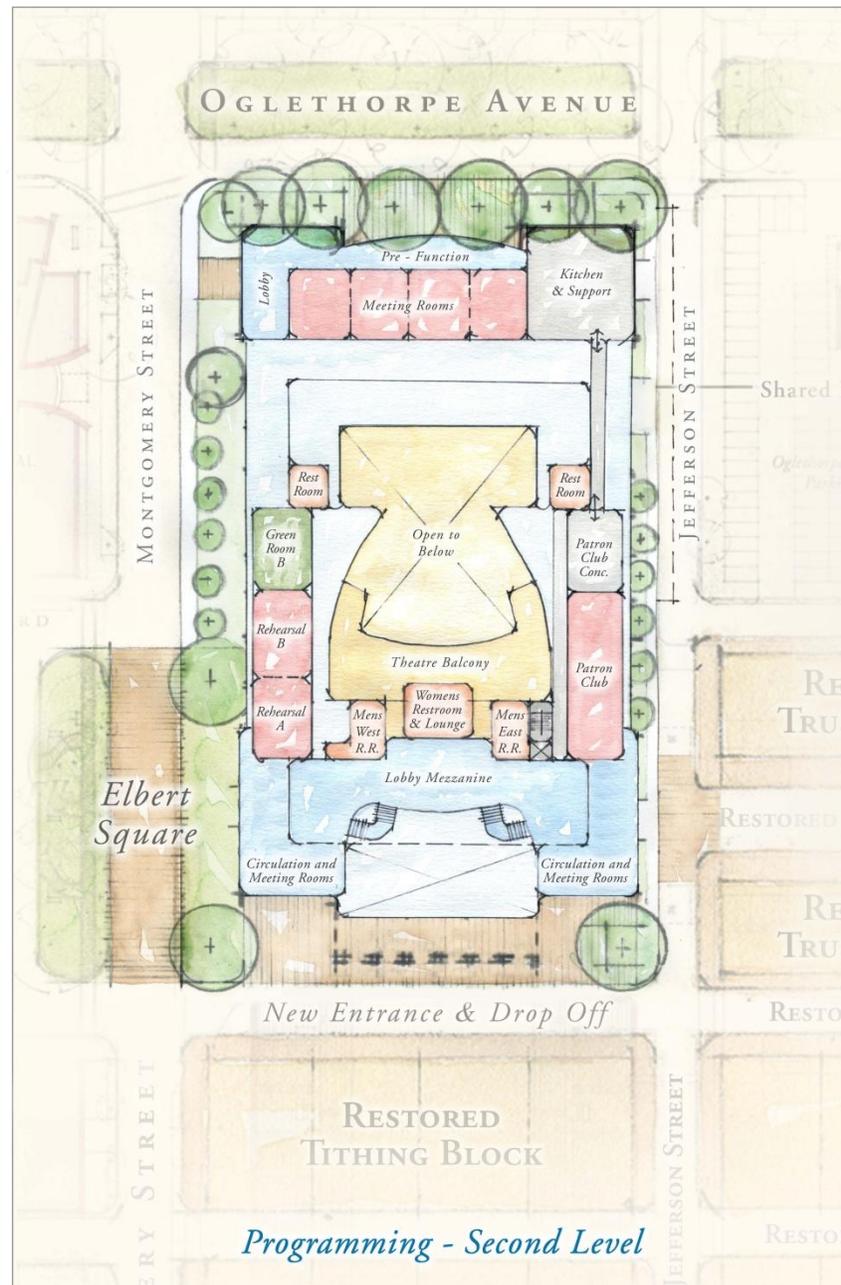
Programming - First Level

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"

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PROGRAMMING STUDY
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

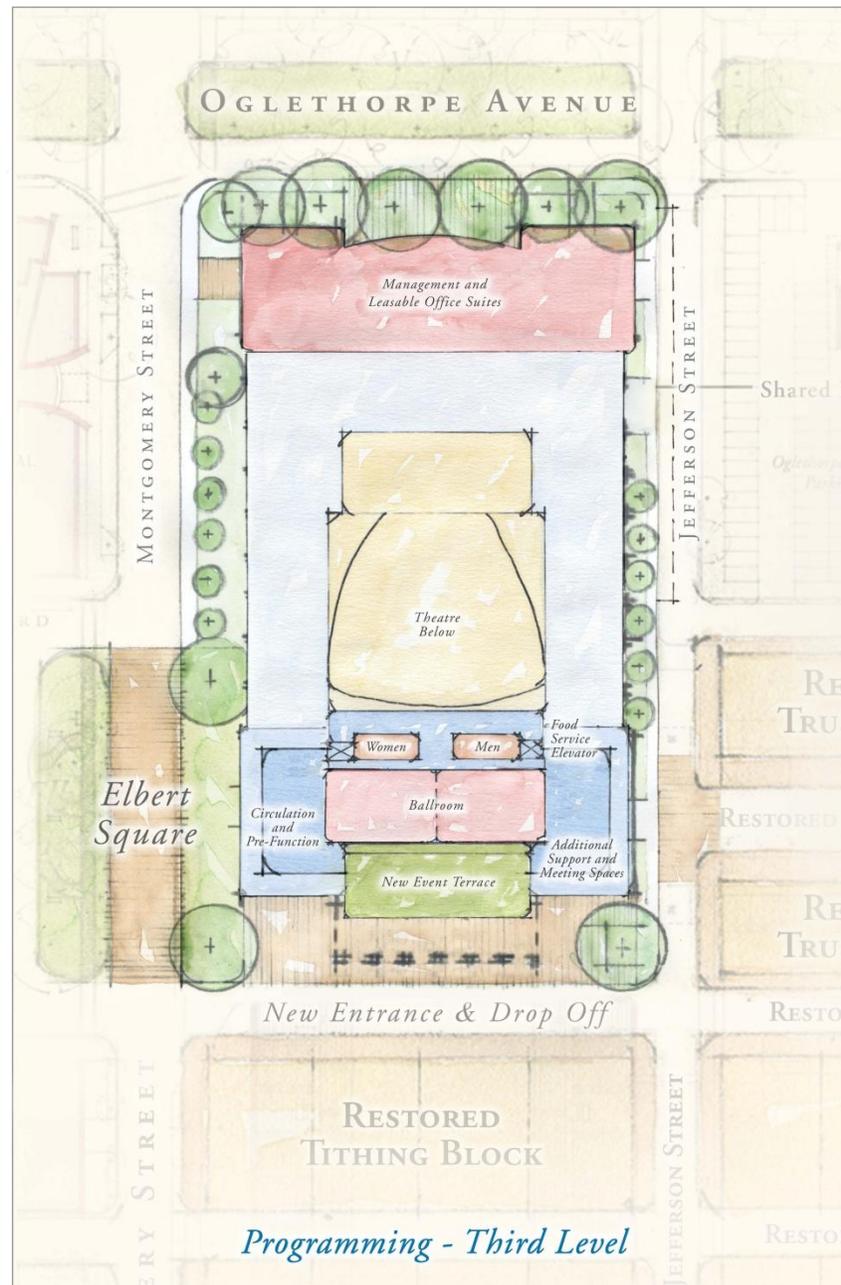
Civic Master Plan for the
 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
 National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



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PROGRAMMING STUDY
 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

Civic Master Plan for the
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
 National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



Programming - Third Level

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"
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Civic Architecture...

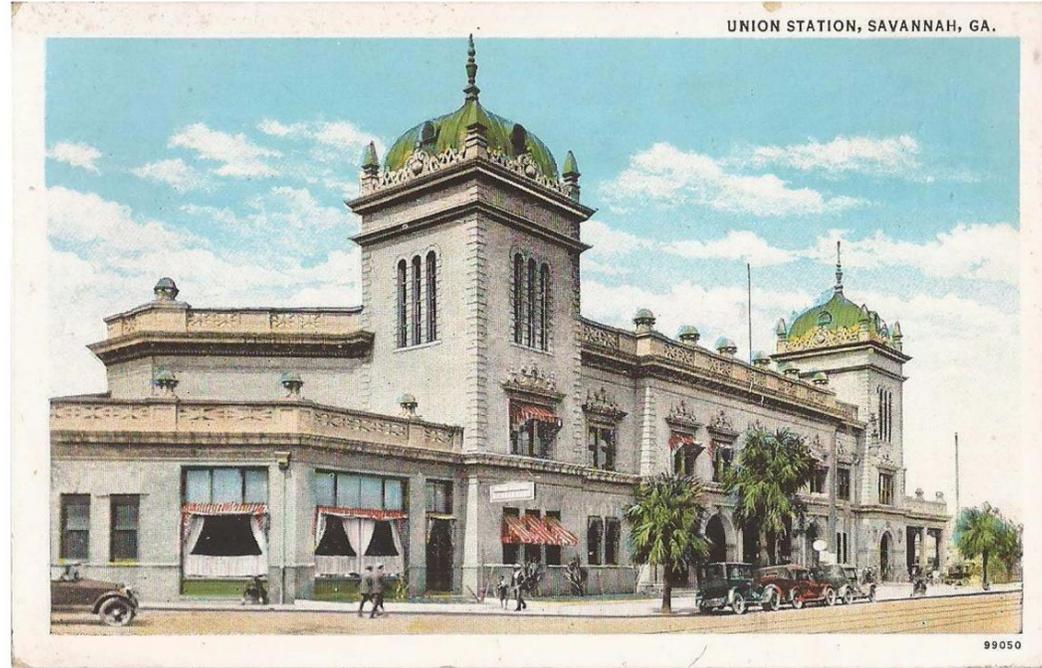
SAVANNAH



Austin's auditorium's presents symmetrical massing and enduring materials.



The Roman Museum's repetition of arches creates a memorable rhythm.



UNION STATION, SAVANNAH, GA.

Two landmark towers frame the central mass of Savannah's former Union Station.



The Schemerhorn Symphony Center's classical portico clearly marks the front entrance for visitors.



Tiered steps invite the public to the entrance at Savannah's central Library.



Brick and stone details work in harmony with arches on this facade.



Savannah's Merchants National Bank by William Jay.

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CIVIC ARCHITECTURE PRECEDENTS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

Civic Master Plan for the
 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
 National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



The Bulloch-Habersham house once occupied the site of the old Municipal Auditorium.



Savannah's Municipal Auditorium's grand portico fronted Orleans Square and greeted visitors.



Rome, Georgia's Auditorium is a source of civic pride.



Sculptural details add variety to the large expanses of glass on this facade.



The addition of glass softens this masonry facade, while details draw the eye upward.



The transformation of the Gaillard Center created a solution that was more contextual to central Charleston.



Arches are used to relate the openings to the overall mass of the structure.

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The balanced massing of Savannah's Lucas Theater is elevated by decorative sculpted details.



The use of arched forms unite the facades of the former Academy of Music in New York City.



The Newark Symphony Hall's ionic columns and marquee enrich the street experience.



Savannah's City Hall presents an emblematic civic vision with timeless refined details, and elegant upper stories.



Colonades along the sides of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center create pedestrian-friendly gathering space.



The civic composition of Savannah's School Board Building draws the eye to the portico and pediment.



Savannah's C&S Bank on Liberty Street at Montgomery was a prime example of Beaux-Arts civic architecture.

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CIVIC ARCHITECTURE PRECEDENTS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

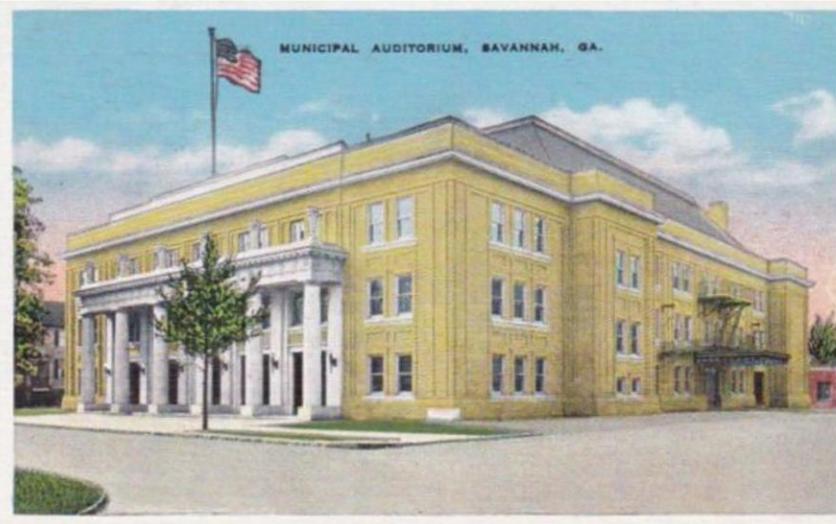
Civic Master Plan for the
 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



Arches and curved detailing punctuate the generous glazing in this iconic facade.



This rhythm of arches creates a memorable composition.



Savannah's Municipal Auditorium created an inviting entrance colonnade on Orleans Square.



The rich detailing of Savannah's Union Station enlivened the public experience.



Civic details lend a timeless and inviting feel to this public building.



Savannah's former YMCA building featured a rhythm of horizontal and vertical elements.

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Civic Master Plan for the
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 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



The massing and ornament of this theater is reminiscent of Savannah's former Union Station.



Clear massing and a central feature with an inviting entrance.



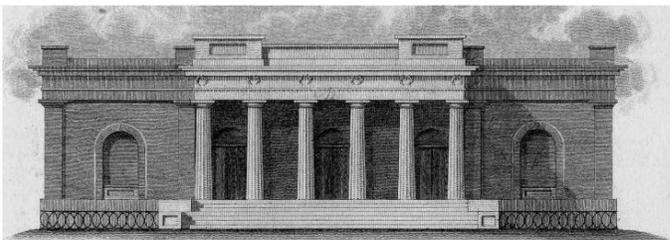
Balanced massing and the generous use of window glazing makes this conservatory an iconic and inviting space.



The Telfair Museum's sculptural embellishments and clear massing are emblematic of Savannah's Civic Architecture.



Savannah's C&S Bank Building, once located in Elbert Ward.



The entrance portico of Savannah's Merchants National Bank by William Jay.



The clear massing and elegant cap on the Brooklyn Academy of Music creates a clear civic image.

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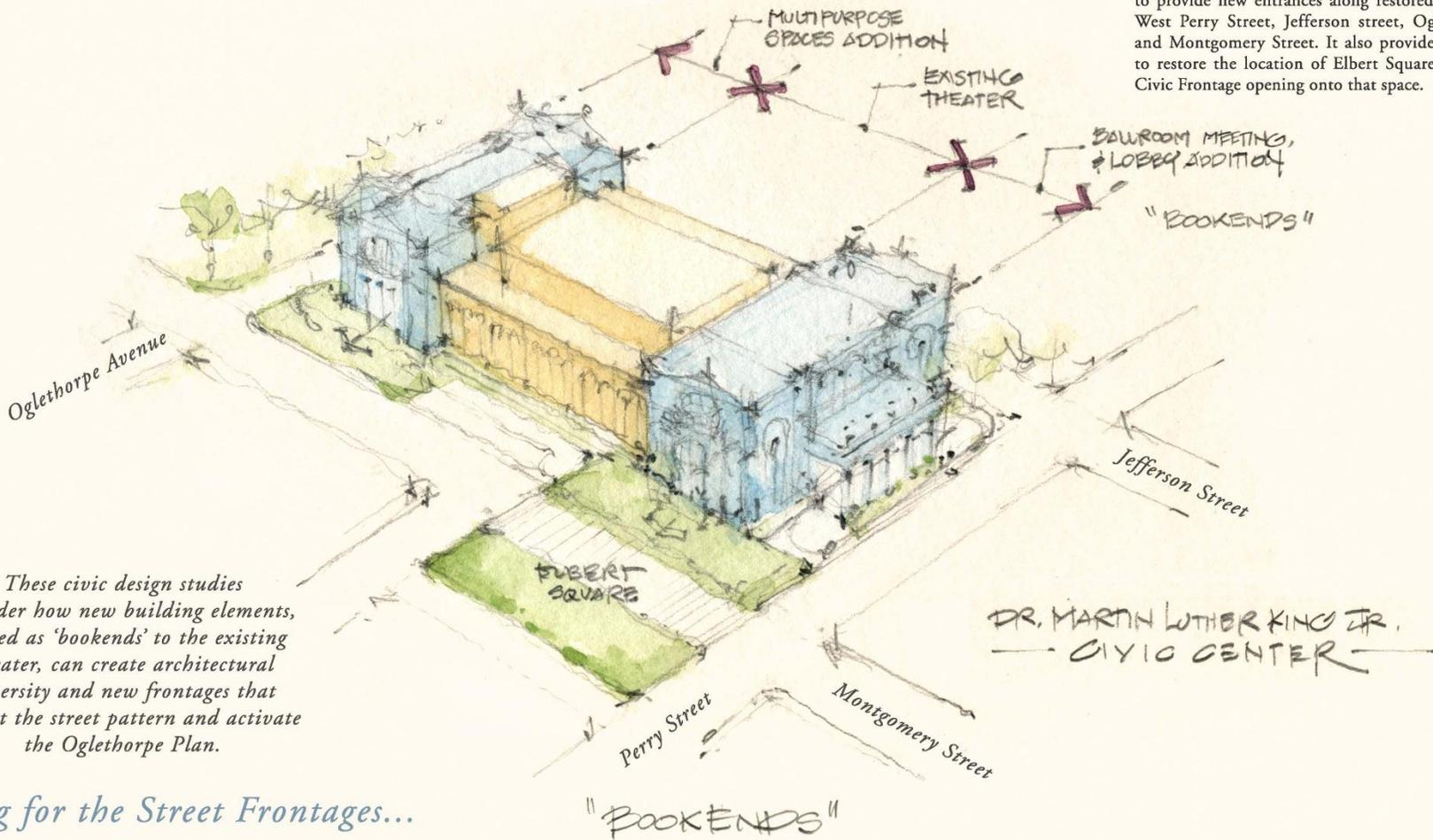
CIVIC ARCHITECTURE PRECEDENTS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center

Civic Massing Plan for the
 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER
 National Historic Landmark District
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CIVIC CENTER

The renovation provides the opportunity to bring the buildings to the street, working within the pattern of the Oglethorpe Plan street grid, the building has the opportunity to provide new entrances along restored streets, including West Perry Street, Jefferson street, Oglethorpe Avenue, and Montgomery Street. It also provides the opportunity to restore the location of Elbert Square, and have a new Civic Frontage opening onto that space.



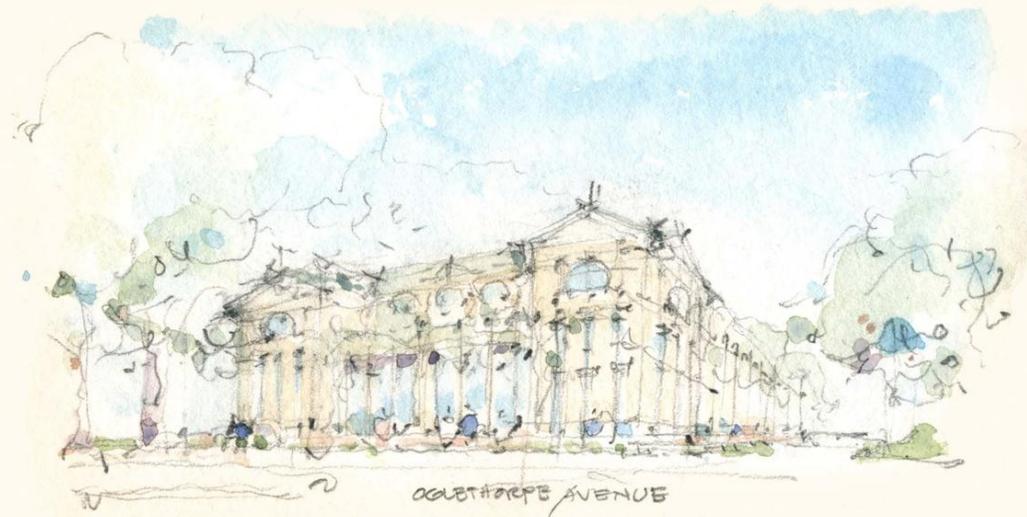
These civic design studies consider how new building elements, placed as 'bookends' to the existing theater, can create architectural diversity and new frontages that respect the street pattern and activate the Oglethorpe Plan.

Designing for the Street Frontages...

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CIVIC DESIGN STUDIES

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center



This civic block allows for a new entrance on Oglethorpe Avenue, a new entrance on the restored segments of West Perry Street and Jefferson Street, and a new civic frontage on Elbert Square.

DESIGNING FOR STREET FRONTAGES...

Two new additions at each end of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center, provide the opportunity to add on to the building with 'Civic Bookends'.

This allows the renovated Civic Center to fully address surrounding street frontages, provide new entrances for diverse interior uses and relate to the surrounding City plan.



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Next Steps

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Engagement & Feedback

Develop Programming

Civic and Architectural Design