



DOWNTOWN SAVANNAH OUTREACH FACILITY STRATEGY

GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

NOAA'S OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES



FACILITY PROGRAMMING AND CONSULTING

FINAL - JANUARY 2011

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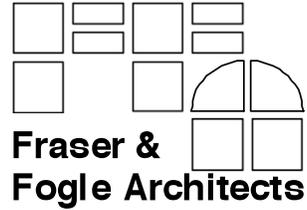
FOREWORD

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has engaged Facility Programming and Consulting to prepare a Facility Strategy for the Savannah Downtown Outreach project.

The strategy serves as a guide for Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary to establish a presence in downtown Savannah.

This document summarizes the background investigation that has been accomplished to date. It presents a recommended strategy for moving forward over a multi-year time frame, and includes several examples of specific sites to illustrate possible "real world" solutions.

FOREWORD



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Recommendations and Costs	3
Factors that Influence the Planning.....	4
Market Study Summary.....	5
Potential Partnerships and Locations	6

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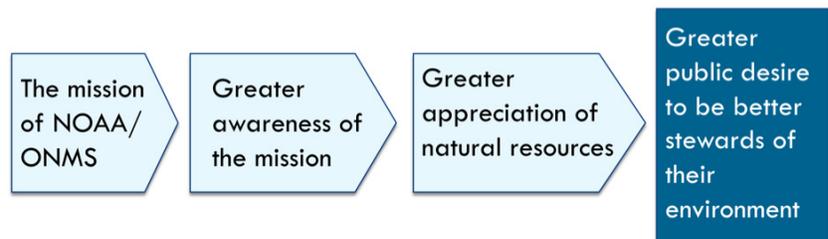
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Background 1

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS), located in Savannah, GA, is currently examining opportunities to expand facilities and exhibits into the downtown Savannah area. The current facility, located approximately 20 miles away from the city at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography campus on Skidaway Island, is primarily administrative and does not provide significant opportunities for outreach to the public. The distance to the current facility from Savannah and the distance to the actual sanctuary waters, does not make GRNMS readily accessible to residents or tourists. An additional satellite location closer to the heart of Savannah is being considered to compliment the current facility. Specifically, a site in the downtown historic district of Savannah, which is the economic hub of the region and a vital economic engine for the city, would be preferred because it has the greatest potential to reach out to large numbers of both local residents and tourists.

Purpose

The purpose of this document, The Downtown Savannah Outreach Facility Strategy, or simply "the facility strategy," is to help GRNMS and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) make important decisions related to establishing a physical presence for GRNMS in downtown Savannah. This facility strategy also reflects the broader objective of increasing visibility and raising awareness pertaining to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), GRNMS, and ONMS among the area's residents and visitors.



"Great content drives action"

It is important to note that resources are not currently available for a project, but this document sets the stage and presents options for the ultimate goal of implementing a physical presence in downtown Savannah.

ONMS Mission

GRNMS is one of 14 marine protected areas that make up the National Marine Sanctuary System which encompass more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from

BACKGROUND

Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. It is also one of three marine sanctuaries that make up the Southeast Region. GRNMS is governed by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and managed by NOAA.

The mission of the ONMS is to serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas; to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy.

Sanctuary Management Plan

GRNMS is governed by its management plan. Management plans are site-specific documents that ONMS uses to manage individual sanctuaries. In general, sanctuary management plans consist of the following:

- Summarize existing programs and regulations
- Guide preparation of annual operating plans
- Articulate visions, goals, objectives and priorities
- Guide management decision-making
- Guide future project planning
- Ensure public involvement in management processes
- Contribute to the attainment of system goals and objectives

In its 2006 GRNMS Management Plan, the sanctuary outlined the need to increase public awareness in Savannah. Strategies for education and outreach contained in the Education and Outreach Action Plan section of the management plan include the following:

- Conduct public awareness programs
- Create and provide scholastic programs in ocean science education
- Maintain existing and develop new sanctuary exhibits
- Increase outreach to minority communities
- Develop volunteer programs to support GRNMS

The management plan is examined more closely in Chapter Four of this document.

The Market Study

In April 2010, the Savannah Downtown Outreach Market Study, “the market study,” was prepared to provide supporting information for the facility strategy (this document). This recently completed market study delineated the need and community support for a more significant downtown presence for NOAA and GRNMS. The market study gathered a range of information

relating to the current sanctuary facilities, local perception of the sanctuary, tourism, and data related to visitors of GRNMS and the Savannah area. As a part of the market study, detailed interviews were undertaken with more than 70 contacts in the Savannah tourism industry. These interviews indicated that community support for a Savannah presence for GRNMS was overwhelmingly positive, even though current knowledge of GRNMS and its role were limited. Both the recent market study and the sanctuary management plan have established a resounding community interest in additional outreach efforts by GRNMS in the downtown area. Residents were particularly interested in more educational experiences in Savannah pertaining to the ocean, conservation, weather, and sustainability. The market study identified educational and outreach opportunities to both adults and children. The findings contained in the market study have been summarized in Chapter Five of this document.

The Facility Strategy (this document)

The facility strategy outlines steps needed to transition from the goal of increasing awareness of GRNMS in downtown Savannah, to establishing an actual physical presence. The facility strategy will also support the following functions:

- Prioritizes limited existing resources to establish the best “bang for your buck” in the Savannah area.
- Provides a framework for decision-making related to facilities and exhibits with recommendations for the short, medium, and long term.
- Encourages a strategic view on priorities and a clear understanding of how opportunities presented through partnerships can meet identified needs.
- Creates a menu of facility options to supplement the current GRNMS location with a location, or multiple locations, in downtown Savannah.

The ultimate goal of GRNMS is to implement a visitor center in downtown Savannah. While the facility strategy does not preclude any opportunity or combination of opportunities, the recommendation encourages GRNMS to implement a phased plan that responds to the community, rather than jumping to a solution that does not gain proven community support. This plan will likely involve development of a network of exhibits, signs, kiosks, and ultimately a facility, in the downtown area to widen opportunities for participation and information over a broad range of areas. Because resources for a dedicated GRNMS visitor center are not immediately available, the plan recommends a phased approach in order to provide time for GRNMS to position and promote its programs, while using the success of each step

BACKGROUND

to ensure success in the subsequent steps. The goal is to create a meaningful downtown presence, through a variety of activities and locations, as well as test if there is overwhelming public support for a future GRNMS visitor center, either as a stand alone center or in conjunction with partners.

A phased approach will also provide adequate time for thoughtful planning related to a potential visitor center. This planning will compare a menu of facility options that support the vision of GRNMS and ensure a smooth and successful implementation when the time is right.

Goals for a Downtown Location

The following goals were developed by the project team utilizing input from the community.

- To present the overarching conservation message of the National Marine Sanctuary System
- To raise awareness of the GRNMS mission and its resources
- To present a story of why the sanctuary exists and why it should be protected
- To increase support of GRNMS and ocean stewardship
- To create an opportunity for the community to become more familiar with NOAA through the “One NOAA” concept
- To examine all options and locations for downtown outreach opportunities
- To develop messages that reach out to different subgroup(s), i.e. ocean science, research, conservation, education, etc.
- To respond to both primary markets, tourists and residents, making the sanctuary experience available to everyone
- To plan facilities and exhibits that are interesting to all
- To use interactive exhibits that link people to the oceans
- To make the National Marine Sanctuary System available to everyone by providing virtual access to all of the sanctuaries
- To involve a broad spectrum of the community, including educational, volunteer and local business groups

Options

This document presents available opportunities, potential issues, and potential solutions. It also assesses the range of costs associated with the most probable alternatives.

- No Action/continue as is - the sanctuary will continue to operate out of the current facilities.

- Improve or expand facilities and/or adding more programs or exhibits at the current location.
- Provide a “virtual” presence by implementing a comprehensive web presence along with placing multiple interactive kiosks, signs or brochures throughout Savannah.
- Implement multiple mini-facilities and/or exhibits with partners.
- Construct or lease a new facility or storefront with or without partners. This option is the preferred end goal of the sanctuary.

These options are not mutually exclusive. GRNMS may consider a combination of options and/or use a phased approach in order to obtain the most effective solution.

Project Process

The process for the facility strategy is outlined below:

Market Study. In April 2010, the Savannah Downtown Outreach Project Market Study gathered information about the current sanctuary facilities and community perception of GRNMS. This market study includes demographic data for the tourist and resident populations, with a focus on determining market demand for a satellite GRNMS facility downtown. The market study also assessed community interest in GRNMS and the potential for additional outreach in the area. It determined the level of community support, partnering opportunities, and other factors to be considered when planning a satellite facility in the downtown area.

Preliminary Information Collection. The preliminary information collection phase of the project used the contacts and information gathered in the market study to identify potential locations and partners for a possible GRNMS satellite facility. This task was combined with a first set of on-site interviews and tours with potential partners and subject matter experts. This provided the opportunity to discuss big picture issues and potential synergies.

This phase led to a preliminary draft document that explored and evaluated a range of possible alternatives (physical locations, types of facility/exhibit/kiosk/signs and technology).

Facility Strategy and Recommendations. The intent of this document, specifically the facility strategy, is to develop a “road map” and a menu of alternatives that will support GRNMS in developing a downtown presence. The facility strategy is intended to be a dynamic report, as it is able to “flex” up or down to reflect resources or partnerships as they become available. It provides a

BACKGROUND

framework that defines what is to be done, and provides a sequence for decision making. The facility strategy addresses the following:

- A summary of the need and opportunities
- A summary of the available market data
- A description of potential partnerships (if any)
- An analysis of the initial and long term costs, including staffing
- A milestone schedule for moving forward
- A menu of possible alternatives in the downtown area

Project Location

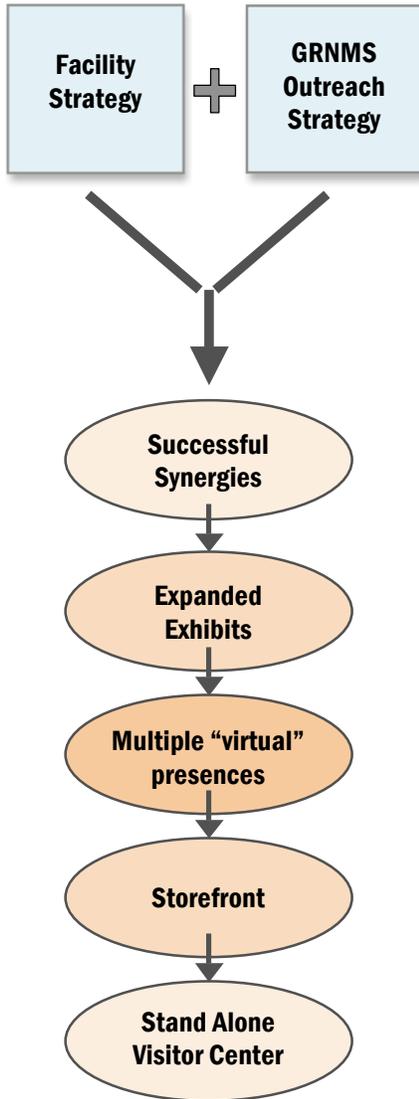
The proposed location for the Savannah outreach project is in the downtown historic district. While the original preferred location was in the River Street area, a popular tourist destination near the Savannah River, several other downtown areas have been identified as equally viable locations and/or partnerships. The boundaries of the potential project area are outlined below.



This diagram illustrates the boundaries of what is considered downtown Savannah.

Executive Summary 2

The purpose of this facility strategy is to assist Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) in making sound decisions as it moves forward with the planning to establish a physical presence in downtown Savannah. Additionally, this strategy is guided by the broader objective of increasing visibility and raising awareness amongst the population about the importance of the sanctuary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS).



The current GRNMS facilities are located on Skidaway Island, approximately 20 miles from downtown Savannah. The distance to the current facility and the distance to the actual sanctuary waters do not make GRNMS readily accessible. An additional satellite location closer to the heart of Savannah is being considered to complement the current facility (whose function is primarily administrative and not "visitor friendly.") A site in the downtown historic district of Savannah would be preferred because of its accessibility to both local residents and tourists. This document is a master plan for GRNMS. It outlines the steps the sanctuary should take to increase public awareness as well as attain a physical presence in downtown Savannah when resources become available.

Market Study

The initial step of this master plan consisted of a market research study, which determined the level of community interest for the project, market demographics, potential partners, and potential desirable locations/areas in the downtown area. With nearly seven million tourists annually and a growing resident population, the demand for more educational "attractions" is warranted. Overall, the community is supportive of Gray's Reef and would welcome a downtown location.

The Master Plan

The ultimate goal of GRNMS is to establish a visitor center or storefront in downtown Savannah, but resources are currently not available. A three-part planning strategy is recommended because it will allow the sanctuary to begin quickly and at a minimal cost at a time when the resources to establish a visitor center are not available. Each stage in the master plan will build on the previous stage, helping to ensure the successful launch of a downtown presence. The short-term phase is a time for the sanctuary to do more with what already exists. The mid-term is an opportunity to branch out, possibly developing multiple locations for exhibits, kiosks, and signs. The long-term phase may be a refinement of the mid-term solution, or it *may* involve building or

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

leasing a dedicated GRNMS location. Partnerships with other like-minded organizations that can help GRNMS are important in all three stages of planning. This recommended three-stage master plan is intended to be a living document, one that is flexible and is easily modified as specific actions are undertaken.



Short-Term Planning

During the short-term plan, GRNMS will:

- Organize a team of stakeholders for decision making
- Explore potential partnerships and look for opportunities to use partners to spread the word about the sanctuary.
- Develop a list of specific short-term projects that can be accomplished quickly and at minimal cost—"quick victories."
- Expand the current public awareness programs to increase public awareness of GRNMS to broader segments of the public.
- Develop a "strategic marketing plan" that identifies the transitional steps required to move from a written vision in the management plan to actually establishing a downtown presence, and perhaps ultimately, the creation of a new visitor center or storefront(s).

Mid-Term Planning

The mid-term plan will encourage a more concrete stake in the downtown area, such as:

- Begin to implement, as funds become available, several visible projects, including exhibits, signs, kiosks, and possibly more capital-intensive projects that will help propagate the message of the sanctuary to the public.

- Look to partners at every opportunity to enable GRNMS to “do more with less.”
- Develop a preliminary program of requirements for a potential storefront (or possibly a visitor center) to confirm which spaces and facilities are needed.
- Prepare a preliminary business plan for the proposed actions, to confirm the capital and long-term costs associated with a physical downtown location.

Long Term Planning

The long-term planning phase will test the effectiveness of the steps that would have been implemented during the short and mid-term stages, to decide if there is a reason to continue “doing more of the same” or if it is more advantageous to own or lease a downtown facility. Criteria for this process of evaluation will consist of the following:

- Evaluate the effectiveness and costs of each project previously implemented (as a result of the short and mid-term planning).
- Develop a range of the most plausible future alternatives for a downtown location, including the best site(s) and/or partner(s).
- Carefully evaluate and rank each future alternative according to clearly established criteria. Use the program of requirements to evaluate each of the available solutions and determine which solution is the best fit for GRNMS.
- Select the most appropriate solutions. (Several possible locations and partners were identified when this report was initially prepared, and these have been included subsequently in this document for reference.)
- Develop a budget for moving forward that includes long-term maintenance and operational costs, staffing required supporting the project, and possible funding sources. If a partner is involved, it should also calculate their level of financial participation.
- Develop a phasing strategy and milestone schedule.

Immediate Steps

GRNMS can begin immediately, by taking several small steps at little or no cost to pave the way for the short-term planning phase. These include:

- Explore relationships with current partners and examine possible new partnerships.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Brainstorm to identify the subgroups that make up your potential audience and agree which potential solutions will be most successful in reaching out to each subgroup.
- Recognize that your message is multi-faceted. Agree on what messages will appeal to each subgroup.
- Maintain and improve existing exhibits as well as trying to establish new exhibits, signs and kiosks at partner facilities.
- Seek out opportunities for “quick victories” that do not require substantial funding, such as providing more sanctuary programming or exposure at community events, etc.
- Benchmark with other sites that have developed or attempted to develop similar satellite locations.

The effort and staff time required to reach short and mid-term goals will likely affect momentum toward the long-term goal of a stand-alone visitor center. This overlap should be taken into consideration when planning resources toward this endeavor. Because the community and potential partners are ready to move on the planning effort, work on short, mid, and long term goals should be simultaneous to avoid delays or distractions and to ensure that the planning team does not lose sight of the ultimate goal of a visitor center in downtown Savannah.

Recommendations and Costs 3

This chapter presents recommendations for developing a sanctuary presence in the downtown Savannah area. The intent of this chapter is to identify the steps to be taken and the challenges to be addressed in order to successfully achieve this goal. This guidance is presented in the form of the following master plan.

This master plan identifies short, medium, and long-term action items and provides a list of specific steps that will lead to a physical presence in the downtown area. A phased master plan is the best approach for GRNMS because it provides the sanctuary with a strategy that is built on a series of small successes, instead of requiring an immediate, and costly, commitment to a particular solution.

A Three-Stage Master Plan

A three-part planning strategy is recommended because each stage will build on the previous stage, helping to ensure the successful launch of a downtown presence. The short-term strategy aims toward doing more with what you have. The mid-term strategy presents an opportunity to branch out, possibly developing multiple locations for exhibits, kiosks, and signs. The long-term strategy is flexible in its scope and can be either a refinement of the mid-term solution, or it *may* involve a dedicated GRNMS location. This recommended three-stage master plan is intended to be a living document, one that is flexible and adept to change as specific actions are undertaken.



Example:

To help explain the logic behind this three-stage master plan, consider the hypothetical scenario outlined below. The following milestones illustrate one logical sequence for implementing the master plan with short, mid, and long-term components. (This is

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

only one example to show the three-stage master plan. Other scenarios are possible).

Short Term

1. Begin by implementing a strategy for signs, kiosks and exhibits throughout downtown Savannah with help from partners.
2. Develop a thorough plan of future actions that will be carried out in the mid-term and long-term stages of the master plan.

Mid Term

3. Design and install multiple “mini” exhibits at various partner locations.
4. Create a comprehensive plan and budget for what would be involved in acquiring a small satellite space or storefront downtown; two scenarios are possible, with a partner versus without a partner.

Long Term

5. Finally, consider constructing or leasing a new facility at a new site, and determine if it can be built and operated economically.

The following pages present the “road map” to a GRNMS presence downtown in greater detail. This road map focuses on the opportunities and options available, weighs the pros and cons of each alternative, and challenges their long-term practicability, including the associated expenditures.

Short-Term Plan

Purpose:

The short-term plan lays a foundation for future successes. It identifies the steps that should be taken to begin the planning for a new downtown presence. It will help ensure that the right partners are involved and that current partnerships and current locations are fully utilized. Short-term planning requires no lead-time and actions can begin almost immediately. This stage should require little capital investment from GRNMS and ONMS. Short-term planning encourages visioning, community involvement, strategic planning and partnerships. Many of the following steps are on-going and build upon programming and outreach that the sanctuary has already undertaken.

Build a Team: Stakeholders and Decision Making

The visioning workshops and site tours that were a part of this project have identified many individuals and groups who are interested in GRNMS establishing a presence downtown. These individuals can help create a nucleus of energy that is needed for any project to get underway. However, harnessing this energy and converting it into action requires planning, cooperation and organization.

Action Items:

- Create an “external working group” that includes partners, peer organizations, and community leaders who can contribute to the success of any effort “from the outside.”
- Create an “internal working group” to provide information, suggest programs, filter opportunities, etc. The internal group should be made up of GRNMS staff, staff from headquarters, and perhaps one or two partners.
- Establish a “leadership group” of individuals from the sanctuary and headquarters who will take charge and make decisions.

Potential Partnerships

Regardless of the ultimate solution, it is very likely, and recommended, that one or more partner agencies or organizations participate. Partners will probably be legally committed to the proposed solution, exhibits, potential facilities, etc. This commitment may involve financial support, partial ownership, and a lease or Memorandum of Agreement.

Although some discussions related to partnerships and synergies have already begun, further discussions are required to determine which potential partnerships can be, or should be, nurtured and sustained.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

Action Items:

- Prepare a list of potential partners who might be willing to participate in either short, mid, or long-term plans for a downtown presence.
- Vet the possible partners and develop a short list of those who are willing to contribute to the project.
- Enter into meaningful discussions with each short-listed partner about potential synergies and opportunities.

Recommended Short-term Projects

The recommended master plan is a collection of individual steps and/or projects that will lead to the goal of establishing a presence and increasing opportunities for outreach in the downtown area.

Action items:

- Develop an outline that subdivides each potential short-term outreach effort into a set of tasks and projects. Determine what steps to take and in which order.
- Define the requirements for each step and assign a target start date and finish date for each activity.
- Assign a person responsible for accomplishing each step.
- Continue to coordinate sign opportunities along Riverfront with the Savannah Waterfront Association and develop a story line for the signs. (This step has already begun.)

The following list of tasks is included as a catalyst for getting started. Edit and update the following list of tasks. Remove the ones that are not appropriate:

- Contact and schedule meetings with existing partners and potential partners that have not as of yet been approached.
- Investigate and implement access to the Savannah Tourist Access Point (TAP) Kiosks for ONMS messaging and links. The kiosks could also be used to highlight existing exhibits, signs, and events. When a downtown presence is implemented, the TAP Kiosk could direct tourists to this location.
- Install a family of signs aimed at informing recreational boaters and other users of sanctuary waters about GRNMS and its importance. (Similar signs may already be in use at other sanctuaries.)
- Examine any current exhibits and signs at partner facilities to determine if they need to be updated and/or refreshed.
- Encourage current partnerships to help spread your message when they host future exhibits, conduct their own community outreach, etc.
- Enact a training initiative to train docents, teachers and staff of partner facilities about GRNMS and ONMS. (Developing and



Because Savannah is the birthplace of the founder of the Girl Scouts, Girls Scouts and many girls in that organization take trips to Savannah.

informing those who are already directly involved in outreach and educational activities for other organizations could increase outreach significantly).

- Place informative brochures that detail the proposed GRNMS message at tourist locations. Topics could include, this sanctuary and the National Marine Sanctuary System, issues affecting the ocean and how the public can help, as well as general information about NOAA.
- Explore which current upcoming events provide an opportunity for GRNMS to participate and spread your message. Plan to participate in appropriate new events.
- Develop mobile displays that can be used at conventions, trade shows, educational seminars and other events.
- Develop learning carts for partner facilities, (similar to those used by the California Academy of Sciences).
- Implement web links to NOAA and GRNMS on partner websites.
- Consider use of auditoriums, such as at the Coastal Heritage Society, for GRNMS/NOAA films.
- Consider developing a Girl Scout merit badge related to the mission of GRNMS. There may be strong support for such a badge because Savannah is the birthplace of the founder of the Girl Scouts, and many Girl Scouts come to visit.

Conduct Public Awareness Programs

This measure was instituted as part of the sanctuary management plan and is ongoing at GRNMS. The aim of this step is to increase public awareness of GRNMS to broader segments of the public, and encourage the community to metaphorically “take ownership” of this natural resource in its own backyard.

Action Items

- Use a public perception survey to determine how the public views the sanctuary and the effectiveness of current programs. Target under-represented user groups and audiences who have not typically participated in sanctuary programs.
- Continue to develop a communication strategy to raise public and media awareness of GRNMS, why it is important, and what is involved in protecting it. This can be accomplished through press releases, media advisories, web sites and links, print ads, brochures, and email blasts.
- Develop and maintain signs that get the word out to the public.
- Continue to sponsor and expand the GRNMS festival; consider new partners to “expand your reach.”

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

- Maintain and enhance public awareness partnerships, and reach out to new partners.

Strategic Marketing Plan

Just as if it were a for-profit venture, GRNMS should develop a “strategic marketing plan” that identifies the transitional steps required to move from the vision that is expressed in the management plan to establishing a downtown presence, and ultimately, the creation of a possible new visitor center or storefront(s). A clear marketing plan is a necessary tool for building support for what you want to do.

Action items:

- Develop and publish a strategic marketing plan, with help from the external working group, that clearly states the following:
 - ✓ Role and mission of GRNMS
 - ✓ Vision of the downtown presence (and potential visitor center or storefront(s))
 - ✓ Target audiences and messages
 - ✓ Core values
 - ✓ Strengths
 - ✓ Weaknesses
 - ✓ Challenges
 - ✓ Priorities
 - ✓ Preliminary budget that addresses needed expenditures for capital costs and operating costs
- Circulate the strategic marketing plan to the community and potential partners.

Short-Term Costs

The costs associated with any action in the strategic marketing plan, and/or short term planning will likely be funded by the site’s operating budget.

Mid-Term Plan

Purpose:

The mid-term planning phase starts to develop an actual physical presence by working to implement projects that will provide a foothold for GRNMS in the downtown area.

The mid-term plan will likely involve some level of investment on the part of the ONMS. Execution of all possible projects will be contingent upon available resources.

Messages, Signs, Exhibits, and Kiosks

The mid-term plan will encourage a more concrete stake in the downtown area by implementing several visible projects, many with partners, including exhibits, signs, kiosks, and possibly more capital projects to get the message out to the public. In addition to any past efforts, there are opportunities to implement entirely new exhibits downtown. GRNMS may also use this phase to improve and/or update existing exhibits and signs, where needed, at partner facilities.

Action items:

Some of the following items were started during the short-term planning. For those items, the mid-term stage is the time to move forward.

- Create a “sign, exhibit and kiosk plan” that lists possible locations and identifies the appropriate message(s) that are needed at each potential location, based on the target audience.
- Enter into discussions with partners to determine how they can assist in implement the sign, exhibit and kiosk plan. (This may involve cost sharing opportunities and contractual agreements).
- Work with the Savannah Convention and Visitors Bureau to evaluate the effectiveness of the GRNMS messages on the Savannah TAP kiosks downtown. (This applies to all messages and projects that were implemented during the short-term stage).
- Follow through with the sign, exhibit and kiosk plan, and actually place new signs, exhibits, and/or kiosks at several locations across downtown, with or without partners.
- Retain an exhibit designer to develop preliminary concepts for messages that could be used at potential future locations. (These will be refined when a particular location(s) is selected).
- Meet with the Coastal Heritage Society in order to have some influence over the message presented in the GRNMS exhibit being planned for the Children’s Museum (including



The Savannah TAP kiosk is an available option to reach tourists in the downtown area.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

opportunities for logos and signs). Consider funding and /or developing concepts for the Children's Museum.

- Follow through after each project and evaluate its success and problems. Use this self-evaluation to improve the next project.

Facility Programming and Business Planning

The mid-term stage provides a good opportunity for GRNMS to begin visioning and planning for a hypothetical physical address downtown. It is too soon to decide if a visitor center or other such facility is appropriate or not, but some advance planning will help when the time to make a decision arrives.

Action items:

- Develop a preliminary program of requirements for a potential storefront (or possibly a visitor center). This preliminary program will translate the overall vision and goals into a document that measures the potential size and scope for the facility. These requirements will provide ONMS, the sanctuary, and potential partners with a consistent description of what a potential facility will include. The preliminary program will outline:
 - ✓ Vision, philosophy and goals
 - ✓ Analysis of potential uses
 - ✓ Description of proposed activities and target audiences
 - ✓ List of space needs (to house the planned activities)
- Prepare a preliminary business plan for the proposed facility that builds a strong business case for the proposed action(s). The business plan should include at a minimum:
 - ✓ Current level of activity (if any)
 - ✓ Anticipated audience composition and projected attendance
 - ✓ Any anticipated community support
 - ✓ Analysis of the affect a new facility would have on the GRNMS organization as a whole.
 - ✓ Capital costs
 - ✓ Ongoing operational and maintenance costs
 - ✓ Staffing requirements
 - ✓ A transition plan to move to the next level
- Ask the external working group to critique the preliminary program and business plan. Modify each document based on the feedback received.

Mid-Term Costs

Mid term solutions will have significant costs. There will be costs associated with planning, costs to get each recommended project up and running, and operating costs associated with each project. These will vary based on the particular solutions that are selected.

In order to visually illustrate the affect various capital and operating costs can have on a project, a listing of costs from other similar projects is shown below. Nonetheless, this is not a complete list of costs, and these examples are presented only to help GRNMS begin thinking about developing a budget for moving forward.

Savannah Waterfront Association - River Street Sign Costs

River Street presents a variety of opportunities for outreach. Several discussions took place over the course of the project to implement and construct NOAA/ONMS signs along the River Street boardwalk. The following cost breakdown is based on historical sign costs found by ONMS staff in California and applied to the Savannah River Street project. This cost analysis is meant to give an idea of what placing signs along River Street would be, based on historic costs incurred by ONMS.

Table 3.1: River Street Sign Cost Analysis¹

Location	Mount	Jurisdiction	Number of Signs	Cost Per Sign	Total Cost
			6	\$3,000	\$18,000
River Street boardwalk/pier	Pier railing; existing style	Georgia Dept. of Transportation, Savannah Waterfront Association	12	\$3,000	\$36,000
			16	\$3,000	\$48,000

The cost per sign totals approximately \$3,000. The cost breakdown for design, fabrication, and installation is as follows:

- \$800 per sign for design
- \$300 per sign for reimbursable expenses (associated with design)
- \$300 per sign for installation
- \$1,500 per sign for fabrication (including the base)
- \$100 per sign for miscellaneous costs and/or escalation

¹ Costs are based on the ONMS California Signage Plan completed in 2009

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

These figures do not include costs for ONMS personnel.

Savannah TAP Costs

The Savannah TAP kiosks are similar to ONMS interactive kiosks and display content on an easy-to-use 42-inch touch-screen display. To provide maximum exposure, the initial distribution of TAP systems includes five high-traffic visitor hubs both in the downtown area and other visitor center locations. Additional TAP sites will follow as recognition grows and visitor volume dictates.

- I-95 Welcome Center (SC/GA border)
- Fort at Forsyth Park
- River Street Visitor’s Center
- Ellis Square Visitor’s Center
- MLK Jr. Blvd. Visitor’s Center

The costs associated with a TAP 12-month contract include the following:

Table 3.2: Savannah 2010 TAP Costs

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Business name, address, phone number, thumbnail photo/graphic and website	Business name, address, phone number, website, logo, large photo and map with walking directions*	Business name, address, phone number, website, logo, photo, map with walking directions AND choose any three* of the following button options: ✓ Business Info ✓ Calendar ✓ Demo ✓ History ✓ Menu ✓ News and Press ✓ Photo Gallery ✓ Services ✓ Special Events ✓ Special Offers ✓ Video
\$49 per month	\$149 per month	\$299 per month

Other options are available in Levels Two and Three, including advertisement links to your featured landing page.

ONMS would need evaluate the TAP system with the Savannah Convention and Visitors Bureau to develop a program that could suit the needs of Gray’s Reef since there is not currently a downtown location to direct visitors to and people cannot easily access the sanctuary.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

ONMS Interactive Kiosk Costs

The following table illustrates a hypothetical cost model developed for the ONMS Facilities and Exhibits Master Plan (2010). The table assumes that two kiosks would be placed initially, and an additional kiosk would be installed every three years. The life span is assumed to be eight years, with major maintenance such as the replacement of a hard drive or screen every four years. While this is not a real case, it is being included to provide an idea of the costs associated with kiosks and to help GRNMS plan for more interactive kiosks in the future.

Table 3.3: Lifecycle Cost Analysis for Kiosks (Hypothetical Example)²

Kiosk Lifetime Operations Cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Program, Design, and Install Kiosks (2)	\$60,000							
Yearly Programming and Maintenance Fee (3% escalation per year)	\$850	\$876	\$902	\$929	\$957	\$985	\$1,015	\$1,045
Annual Update (1 update per year x \$150 per hour x 8 hours x 2)		\$2,400	\$2,400	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$4,800	\$4,800
Unplanned Maintenance (example: replace monitor x 2)				\$3,000			\$3,000	
Place New Additional Kiosk (Indoor)			\$5,000			\$5,000		
Subtotal	\$60,850.00	\$3,276	\$8,302	\$7,529	\$4,556.68	\$9,585	\$8,815	\$5,845
							Total	\$108,758

Benchmark Exhibit Costs

If exhibits are planned as part of the GRNMS strategy, the associated design and development costs are always a major consideration. The cost for exhibits includes exhibit planning and design, fabrication and installation. The historical cost ranges from \$350 to \$650 per square foot of the space to be occupied, and is derived by the level of complexity of the design, which ranges from static exhibits, to displays with increasing levels of media and technology, to live exhibits. As a general rule of thumb, about 40 percent of the total construction budget available for a visitor center project should be dedicated to exhibit planning, design, and installation.

Table 3.4: Exhibit Cost Ranges²

Exhibit Cost Range *	
Static Exhibits	Approx. \$350 per SF
Interactive Exhibit	Approx. \$500-\$550 per SF
Living or High-tech Exhibit	Approx. \$600-\$650 per SF

* Seruto & Company

² Costs based on the 2010 ONMS Facilities and Exhibits Master Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

Coastal Heritage Society Exhibit Costs

The following summarizes the preliminary estimate for the new children’s museum, based on what is planned for the two exhibits of interest. It is included for informational purposes only.

Table 3.5: Costs Associated with CHS Children’s Museum Exhibits³

The Children's Museum of Savannah

Interior Build Out & Exhibit Estimate

J. Fullam

Great Explorations: Underwater Archaeology	
Description	Total Estimated Cost
Phase I Exhibit Design Costs	\$ 50,000.00
Estimated Building Costs	\$ 169,528.41
Estimated Exhibit Costs	\$ 509,826.25
ESTIMATED BUILD OUT & EXHIBIT FAB COSTS	\$ 729,354.66

Grey's Reef: Underwater Environment	
Description	Total Estimated Cost
Phase I Exhibit Design Costs	\$ 50,000.00
Estimated Building Costs	\$ 81,432.96
Estimated Exhibit Costs	\$ 774,190.00
TOTAL BUILD OUT & EXHIBIT FAB COSTS	\$ 905,622.96

Life Cycle Costs

Another cost to be considered that is not presented in these examples is the life cycle cost of operating, maintaining and repairing exhibits. Much like buildings, exhibits must be maintained and repaired throughout their lifespan and the cost of this ongoing maintenance is dependent upon the type of exhibit. Generally speaking, the more complicated or technology used in an exhibit, the more it will take to operate and maintain.

³ Cost analysis provided in 2010 by the Coastal Heritage Society

Long-Term Plan

Purpose:

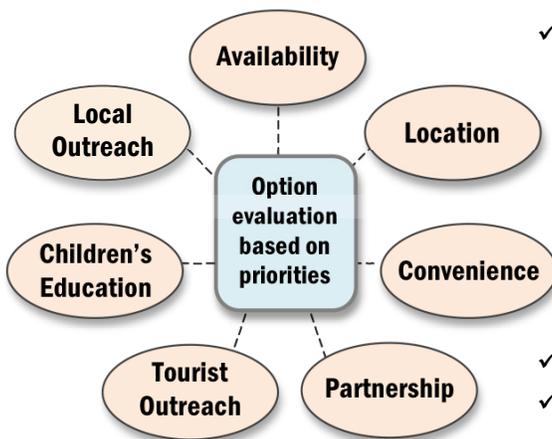
The purpose of long-term planning is to answer the question, “What is ultimately the best solution?” and then following through to transform that idea into a reality. (Because of the costs involved, the long-term plan may or may not lead to the development of an actual physical visitor center or storefront in downtown Savannah).

Making the Best Choice

By now the short-term and mid-term planning have probably put one or more solutions related to establishing a downtown presence in place. GRNMS should evaluate how effective each solution has been up until now, and ask if there is a reason to continue “doing more of the same” or if it is time to take the bigger step of owning or leasing a dedicated downtown facility.

Action items:

- The internal working group should evaluate from a historic perspective the effectiveness and costs associated with other completed projects where a downtown presence was involved.
- The internal working group should develop a range of the most plausible future alternatives for a downtown location, including the best site(s) and/or partner(s).
- Each future alternative should be carefully evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria (additional criteria may be added):
 - ✓ Will it achieve the definition of success for GRNMS?
 - ✓ How does the solution score on each of the following?
 - Availability
 - Location
 - Convenient access and parking
 - Cost efficiency (initial costs and long term costs)
 - Local outreach
 - Tourist outreach
 - Partnership opportunities
 - ✓ How will the cost be justified and funded?
 - ✓ Is there a thorough understanding of how opportunities presented can meet identified needs (e.g. through education, museum, or university partnerships).
 - ✓ Is the solution achievable?
- The internal working group should next compare each potential alternative with each project that has already been put in place.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

Evaluating the options against a set of criteria, such as those listed above, will determine if an alternative meets the long-term needs of the sanctuary, is efficient, and is cost effective. It will give GRNMS a defensible plan for moving forward and taking the next steps.

Budget

Before GRNMS can move forward with any project, there must be a budget. This budget can be refined as more decisions are made, but it is unrealistic to move forward without a preliminary estimate of costs and a strategy for funding the project.

Action items:

- Prepare a broad-based cost estimate for the preferred alternative, including long-term maintenance and operational costs.
- Identify the staffing required to support the project.
- Identify possible funding sources for each project.
- If a partner is involved, calculate their level of financial participation.

Site and / or Building

If the long term preferred solution is a physical location for GRNMS, then it is time to update the preliminary programming that was developed during the mid-term stage. The programming will help determine which specific site or building most closely matches the sanctuary's needs. The budget will also provide guidance on which locations will or will not work financially. At the time this report was prepared, there were several potential sites that could accommodate the long-term downtown needs of the sanctuary. These potential sites have been included for reference chapter six.

Action items:

- Using the preliminary programming previously developed, write a detailed building program enumerating space requirements for the proposed facility. Keep the program and budget in equilibrium.
- Use the programming requirements to evaluate each of the available solutions and determine which solution is the best fit for GRNMS.
- Evaluate how partner facilities can contribute the mission objectives. For example, meeting, training and classroom spaces could be shared by two similar organizations.
- An exhibit designer should develop a detailed preliminary exhibit design that meets the vision and theme of the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

- An architect, with appropriate engineering sub-consultants, should be engaged to plan and design improvements to the new building/existing space/proposed site.
- Update and refine the preliminary cost estimate for the project, and update the preliminary business plan.
- Research applicable federal, state, county, and municipal laws, ordinances, standards and regulations. (This is especially important when dealing with a historic property and environmentally sensitive sites).

Developing a Phasing Strategy and Schedule

It is unlikely that all steps will occur simultaneously. The working group should develop a phasing strategy that addresses the following:

Action items:

- Prioritize each component of the project.
- Establish a milestone schedule that illustrates the approximate durations for each segment and the sequence of events.
- Identify elements that could be accelerated if funds become available.

Long Term Costs

The following costs are presented to aid in developing a budget for a potential downtown facility.

Rentable Rates in the River Street Area

Rentable rates on River Street range from \$35 to \$40 per sq. ft. at the time of this document. The following chart applies these costs to a variety of space sizes.

Table 3.6 River Street Cost Analysis⁴

Square Feet	Average Lease Rates	
	\$35	\$40
500	\$17,500	\$20,000
800	\$28,000	\$32,000
1,000	\$35,000	\$40,000
1,500	\$52,500	\$60,000
2,000	\$70,000	\$80,000
5,000	\$175,000	\$200,000

⁴ Rentable rates are ranges provided by Savannah Waterfront Association in 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

Downtown Commercial Properties

The most common size range of storefront properties in Ellis Square and Broughton Street is 1,500 to 2,200 sq. ft. with rental rates at approximately \$20 to \$22 per sq. ft.

Table 3.7: Downtown Commercial Properties Cost Analysis⁵

Square Feet	Average Lease Rates	
	\$20	\$22
500	\$10,000	\$11,000
800	\$16,000	\$17,600
1,000	\$20,000	\$22,000
1,500	\$30,000	\$33,000
2,000	\$40,000	\$44,000
5,000	\$100,000	\$110,000

Hypothetical Test Case

The following cost summary is presented to illustrate the costs, projected over a ten-year period, for a hypothetical visitor center project in downtown Savannah. The test case assumes a rented space in the downtown area at approximately 1,500 sq. ft. with interactive exhibits. The illustration gives an example of the initial cost and recurring costs for an ONMS visitor center.

Table 3.8: Baseline Cost Analysis

Baseline Costs of a Visitor Center - 1,500 SF										
Cost Considerations*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
One-Time Cost										
Interactive Kiosk @ \$30,000 base price	\$30,000									
Exhibits @ \$450 / SF for Interactive Exhibits (1,000 SF)	\$450,000									
Interior Renovation (assumed @ \$125 per SF)	\$187,500									
Recurring Costs										
Rent @ \$21.00 / SF / Year	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500	\$31,500
O&M @ \$17.10 / SF / Year (2% escalation per year)	\$25,650	\$26,163	\$26,686	\$27,220	\$27,764	\$28,320	\$28,886	\$29,464	\$30,053	\$30,654
Salary @ 2 FT @ 50,000 (3% yearly raise)	\$100,000	\$103,000	\$106,090	\$109,273	\$112,551	\$115,927	\$119,405	\$122,987	\$126,677	\$130,477
Kiosk Yearly O&M (3% escalation per year)	\$2,050	\$2,112	\$2,175	\$2,240	\$2,307	\$2,377	\$2,448	\$2,521	\$2,597	\$2,675
Total	\$826,700	\$162,775	\$166,451	\$170,233	\$174,123	\$178,124	\$182,239	\$186,472	\$190,827	\$195,306

* does not include furniture, fixtures, and equipment, or unforeseen costs or repairs

In this simple example, one-time costs include interior renovation and finish out, as well as exhibit fabrication. Nothing has been included for building construction, major mid-life repairs, or replacement.

Recurring costs, include lease costs, long-term operations and maintenance of the facility, maintenance and upkeep of kiosks

5 Ranges provided by Palmer Cay Properties in 2010

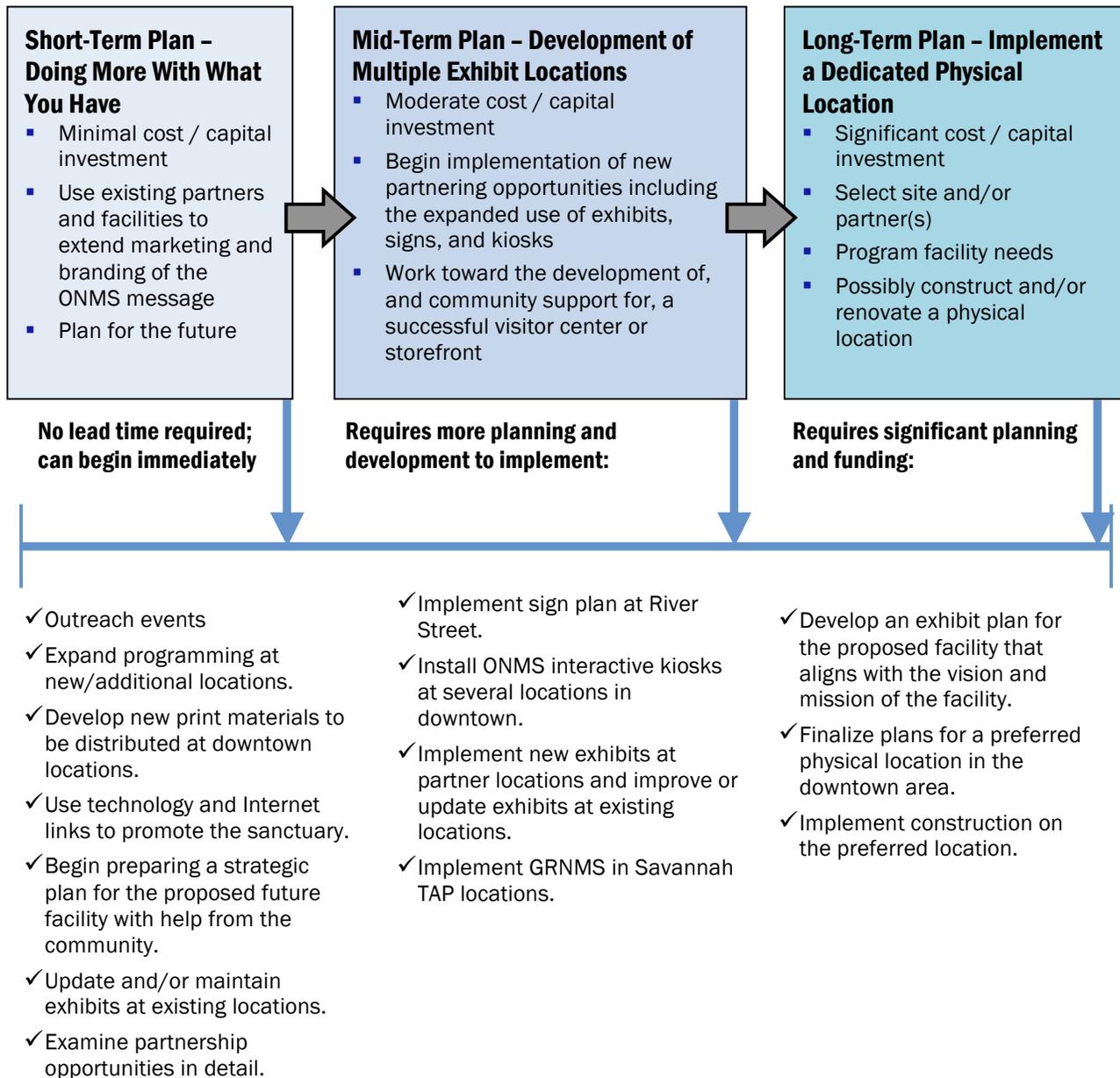
RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

and other technology, replacing, repairing or updating exhibits and/or signs, and staffing of the facility.

While the above test case illustrates an example or baseline case, the costs at each potential location will vary greatly depending on location, size, degree of partner involvement, and construction costs.

Recap and Timeline

The three-stage master plan recommended on the previous pages can vary in length depending on several factors, including how long it takes to move through the various stages as well as the availability of funds.



Summary of Costs

The following chart consolidates many of the costs associated with the short-term, mid-term, and long-term planning recommendations. The ranges of cost are significant, pointing to the need for more planning. The costs listed below are high-level estimates based on what is known at the time of this document and have not been escalated.

Table 3.9: Cost Summary

Strategy	Estimated Cost		
	Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term
Participate in outreach events			
Develop and implement outreach programs with stakeholder groups to increase sanctuary visibility and promote the mission.	The GRNMS 2006 Management Plan established a budget of \$10,000 to \$60,000 annually for outreach activities.		
Distribute brochures or other print materials across downtown			
Update or maintain existing exhibits			
Implement new ONMS signs to reach more people in the downtown area		\$18,000-\$48,000	
Install ONMS interactive kiosks at several locations throughout downtown Savannah		\$30,000-\$100,000	
Implement additional GRNMS exhibits in partner facilities to increase presence in downtown		Up to \$750,000	
Savannah TAP kiosk		\$588-\$3,588	
Implement a storefront or visitor center in the downtown area through a lease*			Approximately \$31,500
	Cost Totals	\$10,000-\$60,000	\$600 - \$750,000
			At least \$31,500 annually

* Only includes lease rates. Based on hypothetical case in Table 3.8

Immediate Steps

Before attempting to act on even the short-term aspects of the master plan, GRNMS needs to begin by taking some immediate steps. These steps will lay the groundwork for a successful implementation of a downtown presence.

Action items:

Have open and frank discussions about each of the following topics in order to give the sanctuary leadership a clear understanding of the journey they are about to undertake.

- Recognize that your potential audience is actually several subgroups. A “one size fits all” approach will probably not be successful. Brainstorm to identify these subgroups and which potential solutions will be most successful in reaching out to each subgroup.
- Recognize that your message is also multi-faceted. For example, although they are naturally linked, ocean science is not the same as education and outreach. Agree on what messages will appeal to each subgroup. If done correctly, a stand-alone visitor center can reach all subgroups about sanctuary science and management that can educate and reach all subgroups.
- Explore relationships with current partners, examine possible new partnerships, and evaluate which partners offer the greatest potential to become “facility partners.” Being a partner in a proposed facility is relatively new to GRNMS, and the sanctuary should have discussions with all current and potential partners to discuss the “universe of possibilities.”
- Aggressively maintain your existing exhibits, signs and kiosks and “test the water” with small improvements and/or new applications. These small steps will force you to take an active role developing a downtown presence without having to spend a lot of money or commit staff resources.
- Seek out opportunities for “quick victories” that are inexpensive. For example, GRNMS could casually re-evaluate some of the ideas that have been tossed about during this project to see if they have any merit. Can they be implemented at low cost, i.e., providing more sanctuary programming or exposure at community events?
- Benchmark with other ONMS sanctuaries that have tried to develop similar satellite locations. Contact your peers and ask the hard questions. Learn what went well and what problems were encountered.

Developing more opportunities to get your message in front of the community and potential partners will give the sanctuary the

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

exposure it needs in the downtown area. By leveraging a variety of existing and new partnerships, GRNMS will likely discover new possibilities to display, promote, and interpret its programs and “products” before embarking on specific, and costly, “facility based” solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COSTS

Factors that Influence the Planning 4

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PLANNING

There are at least four factors that will influence the short, mid, and long-term planning phases discussed in the previous chapter. These include, 1) the GRNMS management plan, including the mission and vision of the sanctuary, 2) defining an enhanced role for GRNMS, 3) developing measurable objectives for a GRNMS presence in downtown Savannah, and 4) identifying what makes a successful ONMS visitor center.

1. GRNMS Management Plan

The management plan outlines priorities and strategies that guide the direction of the sanctuary. The strategies contained in the management plan, including gauging and increasing public awareness, developing new and expanded educational programs, and maintaining existing and developing new exhibits, provide a foundation for the recommendations made in this document. The education and outreach action plan within the GRNMS management plan includes the following:

Education and Outreach Action Plan						
Implementation with NOAA Funding		Implementation with Anticipated Alternative Funding		Scenario 1: Level Funding	Scenario 2: 5% per year Increase	Scenario 3: 10% per year Increase
● - High ⊙ - Medium ○ - Low		◆ - High ◇ - Medium ◇ - Low				
●		Strategy EO-1: Conduct public awareness programs		100	110	120
⊙	◆	Strategy EO-2: Create and provide scholastic programs in ocean science education		60	60	60
⊙	*	Strategy EO-3: Maintain existing and develop new sanctuary exhibits		*	*	*
⊙	◇	Strategy EO-4: Increase outreach to minority communities		30	30	30
○	◇	Strategy EO-5: Develop volunteer programs to support GRNMS		10	10	10
		Total		200	210	220

**Exhibit development is supported through construction funds appropriation.*

The focus of the management plan is the day-to-day operations of GRNMS and the sanctuary itself. In order to move into the downtown Savannah area, a more specific and directed “sub-plan” is necessary. This will ensure that each opportunity is aligned with a defined GRNMS mission statement and vision.

2. Defining an Enhanced Role for GRNMS

Developing a presence in downtown Savannah provides opportunities for GRNMS to look outward and re-define itself in the following areas:

- **Branding Strategy:** GRNMS could develop an enhanced branding strategy built upon the NOAA and ONMS brand.
- **City Tourism Products:** The city has many products that it uses to promote itself. GRNMS could seek a presence in all, or almost all, city tourism products.
- **Savannah's Rich Culture and History:** GRNMS could be promoted as a part of the rich natural history in the region, giving you an opportunity to share your message with broader audiences.
- **Meeting and Convention Destination:** GRNMS could develop an appropriate role in marketing to meetings and conventions, specifically peer or like-minded groups.
- **New Tourism Products:** GRNMS could work with Savannah Tourism leadership for developing new tourism products for the region.
- **Niche Marketing:** GRNMS could identify needs, wants and requirements that are related to its mission, but are poorly addressed (or not being addressed at all) by other entities. Then, goods and services to satisfy them could be developed and incorporated into your overall marketing strategy.
- **Other Sanctuaries:** Using technology, GRNMS could explore ways to give customers in Savannah virtual access to all of the national marine sanctuaries and monuments.

3. Measurable Objectives for GRNMS in Downtown Savannah

GRNMS should look to its mission and vision and develop a set of measurable objectives for its future presence in a downtown Savannah location.

GRNMS Mission:

To increase the number of residents and visitors who are knowledgeable about Gray's Reef and its importance in the coastal marine habitat.

GRNMS Vision:

To provide a compelling educational experience about the resources of our coastal marine habitat, including the live-bottom reef of Gray's Reef.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PLANNING

Objectives will make it easier to evaluate and ultimately select a specific solution and downtown location (or multiple solutions and locations) from many possibilities.

Objectives are directives that include a task to complete, a responsible party, a timeline for performance, and a definition of success.

Action Items:

Objectives should be developed for each of the following topics:

- **Ocean Science:** From its location on Skidaway Island, GRNMS is a leader in marine and coastal science and technology. A new downtown presence provides an outlet to share this research with the public. GRNMS is a facilitator of ocean science and will help the public understand management policies and why management and regulation is important and needed.
- **Conservation:** GRNMS can have a direct influence on the daily behavior of people who use the sanctuary for recreational as well as other purposes. A new downtown presence, along with other efforts “on the water,” will support GRNMS values in resource management and marine stewardship.
- **Education and Outreach:** Educational programs at GRNMS serve diverse populations and needs. The objectives should identify new and compelling hands-on and interactive programs that will engage both local residents and tourists.
- **Identity and Visibility:** Capitalizing on its signature strengths, GRNMS should develop objectives that clearly define its identity and enhance its visibility in the Savannah region. Higher visibility translates not just into increased educational outreach opportunities, but also into increased funding opportunities.
- **Collaborative and Inter-disciplinary Partnerships:** Collaboration between GRNMS with other agencies represents a way to translate the vision and mission into a new downtown presence more quickly than GRNMS could achieve by acting alone. There is great potential to further develop existing partnerships as well as look at creating additional partnerships with organizations that complement the activities of GRNMS.

4. What Makes a Successful ONMS Visitor Center?

As part of the planning for a GRNMS location in downtown Savannah, it is useful to examine the best practices across ONMS. Common themes in the development of all ONMS visitor centers include:

- Community visioning and participation
- Multiple partnerships with like-minded organizations and civic partners
- Extensive marketing efforts including programming, media and print materials about the region and sanctuary
- Maintaining and improving existing exhibits before attempting to install new ones
- Participation in outreach events
- Ongoing development of educational programs and materials
- Multiple satellite displays and exhibits prior to implementation
- Volunteer programs

ONMS currently operates visitor centers in a variety of formats. The traditional “stand alone” facility is but one of a range of possibilities to be considered. ONMS has been successful in leveraging opportunities from other sanctuary locations. Benchmarking against other ONMS sites can reduce questions and ultimately shape the planning process for downtown Savannah. Examples include:

- **Dedicated Visitor Center in a Tourist Destination:**

The Lahaina Visitor Orientation Facility for the Pacific Islands Region of ONMS

This center will be located in the heart of a tourist area in order to reach the target audience identified for that region. When complete, this center on Maui, Hawai‘i, will provide indoor exhibits and outdoor community use areas in a tourist location. The concept was developed in partnership with community stakeholders.

The Mokupāpapa Discovery Center for Hawai‘i’s Remote Coral Reefs

Located in the downtown tourist area of Hilo, Hawai‘i, this center is an interactive educational facility that utilizes a variety of learning tools to teach visitors and school children of all ages about Hawai‘i’s oldest islands and atolls. The Center emphasizes marine life, and the natural and cultural resources contained within the nation’s largest conservation area.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PLANNING

- **Cooperative Storefront:** *Outdoor Santa Barbara Visitor Center, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS)*

The current small visitor center was created in partnership with Channel Islands National Park, Los Padres National Forest, the City of Santa Barbara, and the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. CINMS is currently constructing an administrative headquarters and educational visitor center with the University of California at Santa Barbara.

- **Virtual Visitor Centers Through Partner Sites:** Multiple locations, *Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS)*

While SBNMS does not have a dedicated visitor center, they have a presence in a variety of locations. When a visitor goes to their website, they are provided with links to various places where they can find more information and/or visit their area of interest, along with the location and hours of operation. It is important to note that although none of these locations are owned or dedicated to SBNMS, the sanctuary takes ownership of each partner's visitor center as if it were its own.

Many of these themes have already been integrated into the planning for a possible visitor center in downtown Savannah.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PLANNING

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Market Study Summary 5

The first phase of the facility strategy involved a market study of Savannah and the surrounding areas. The market study informs the facility strategy by establishing:

- The marketing position of the GRNMS in Savannah
- A description of the area
- A current market analysis of both local residents and tourists
- Competition and peer offerings in the area
- Potential partnerships
- Anticipated future market potential

The intent of a downtown presence is to educate the public on the message of ocean science, conservation, GRNMS, NOAA, and the National Marine Sanctuary System. Reconciling the mission of GRNMS with the market in Savannah is at the heart of effective planning for a satellite location in the downtown area. The market study identified the level of community interest in a downtown presence, the target market demographics, desirable possibilities for a location in the downtown area, and potential partners. This chapter summarizes the findings from that report.

During the market study, two sectors were identified as key audience segments for outreach: local residents and tourists. Data from both markets were examined in detail to determine the level of interest in learning about GRNMS and NOAA at a downtown location, and to then target potential opportunities.

Resident Market Overview

Savannah is growing; the population is increasing and tourist traffic to the area is strong. The following information applies to the City of Savannah and Chatham County demographics.

- 2008 estimated population: 334,353 with an average growth rate of 1.5 percent per year.
- Square miles: 74.74
- Population per square mile: 1,759
- The fastest growing census bracket is children less than five years old.
- There are 18 colleges and universities within a 45-minute drive and four colleges or universities within the city limits.

MARKET STUDY SUMMARY

- Total number of households is 127,807 with a majority being families with children.
- More than 100 distinct neighborhoods can be identified in six principal areas of the city.
- The downtown area has a diverse population (including residents living in the historic district, college students, and tourists). Increased development in recent years in the downtown area has boosted demand for offerings.
- Much of the local resident culture is linked to the ocean. Discussions with local residents determined that many families own boats or know someone who owns a boat and avail themselves of the opportunity to take boating and beach trips regularly.

Tourist Market Overview

Savannah is Georgia's leading tourism market destination. Many visitors come to Savannah for sightseeing and to explore its historic district. Both Conde Nast Traveler as well as Travel and Leisure Magazine have named the city a "Top Ten Tourist Destination". Each year, the city attracts approximately 6.6 million visitors from around the world to visit its many museums, beautiful buildings, and historic landmarks (including 22 historic squares in 2.2 miles), shops and beaches.

Savannah Tourism Profile

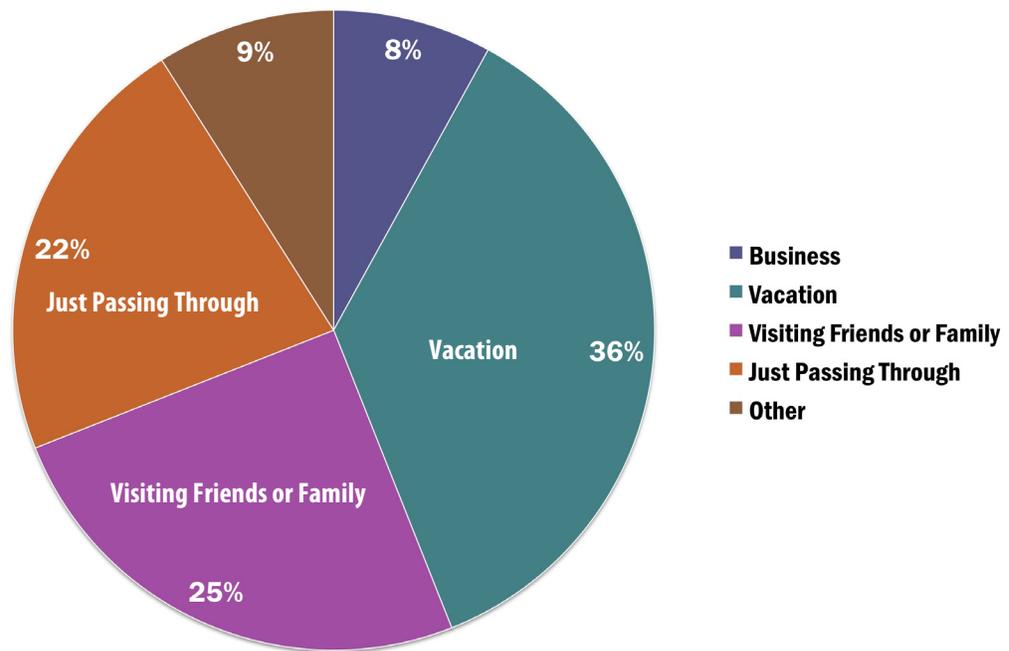
The following information was collected from the Savannah Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the Georgia Visitor Information Centers Survey of 2008:

- Direct spending from tourism totals nearly \$1.9 billion annually.
- Percentage of expenditures from business or convention travelers: 27.8 percent.
- The majority of tourists are on vacation and spend between \$200 and \$300 total per day.
- Savannah is situated along the I-95 corridor, and therefore, sees a lot of traffic from drivers traveling along that route.
- Savannah is one of only three places along the Georgia coast to stay overnight.
- The busiest months for tourism are March through June (primarily because of milder temperatures).
- Visitors to Savannah are loyal; 60 percent return, half of who return four or more times.
 - The reasons tourists return include value for the price point, the authenticity and uniqueness of the city, and its offerings.

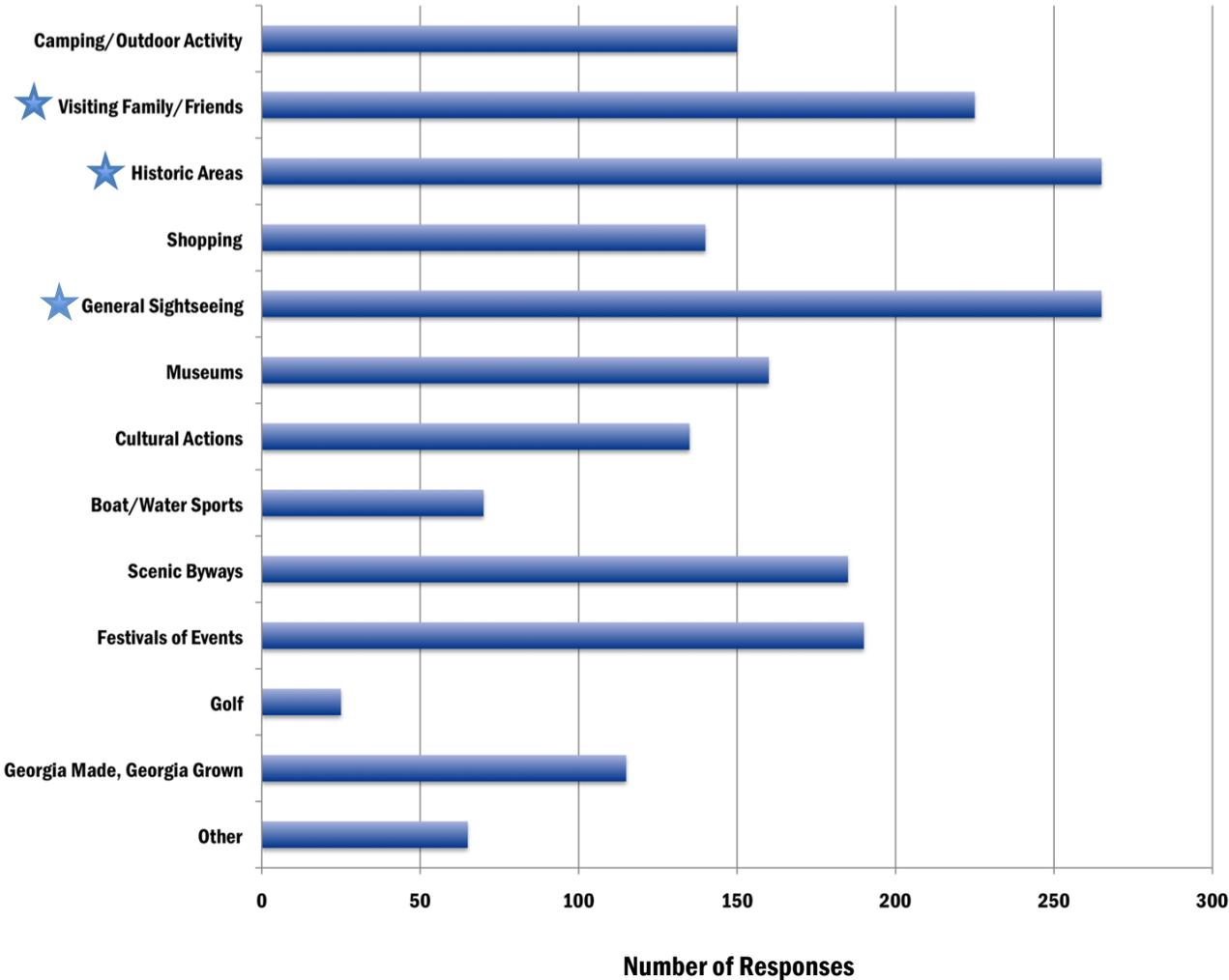
- There are approximately 14,745 rooms in Savannah and of these about 4,000 are in the historic district.
- Visitors to Savannah are interested in “learning something.”
- Most people are not there for a “Disney or theme park” experience.
- The average stay for tourists is two days.
- There is potential to “squeeze an extra afternoon out of their visit.”
- Savannah is disproportionately successful at drawing a national and international audience.
- The size of the average tourist group is two people. Consequently, a majority of Georgia’s visitors are married couples traveling without children who come to visit some of the historical sites around the state.
- In the past, Savannah was not marketed to families, and its visitor profile was skewed toward older visitors and couples as a romantic getaway destination. However, Savannah is increasingly looking to its family offerings.

The tourism industry continues to be one of the largest economic drivers of Savannah. With millions of tourists per year, downtown Savannah is a prime location to reach a large number of people.

Primary Reason for Visit



Primary Interests



Touch screen interactive kiosks placed by the Savannah Area Convention and Visitors Bureau have been averaging approximately 15,000-16,000 taps per month.

The state visitors center in Savannah saw an increase of 11.79 percent in visitors from 2008 to 2009.

MARKET STUDY SUMMARY

Table 5.1: State Run Visitor Center Traffic

Center	2008 Visitors	2009 Visitors	% Change
Augusta	850,944	740,994	-12.92%
Columbus	544,838	473,672	-13.06%
Kingsland	1,630,241	1,674,152	2.69%
Lavonia	1,175,888	1,049,348	-10.76%
Plains	52,151	50,776	-2.64%
Ringgold	2,109,637	1,818,530	-13.80%
Savannah	1,487,435	1,662,806	11.79%
Sylvania	63,987	59,816	-6.52%
Tallapoosa	1,392,552	1,310,276	-5.91%
Valdosta	1,583,820	1,880,366	18.72%
West Point	643,831	646,069	0.35%
Total	11,535,324	11,366,805	-1.46%

Source: Georgia Tourism Board

Market Interviews

As part of the study, more than 100 tourism peers in the Savannah-Chatham County area were contacted. Peers included museums and cultural offerings, tours, charters, environmental agencies and various Savannah visitor centers. Of the 100+ people contacted, 70 elected to participate in market research interviews. Participants were asked questions regarding the GRNMS and its current location on the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography campus, along with their thoughts on a potential satellite location downtown.

- 77 percent were aware of GRNMS, but only 15 percent had visited the current facility and/or Skidaway Island.
- 80 percent of those interviewed thought that GRNMS would be better served with a satellite location downtown. This supports the momentum for a stand-alone visitor center in downtown Savannah.

In addition to the 70 phone interviews, a visioning workshop was held with civic, business and tourism representatives from the City of Savannah. The workshop introduced people to GRNMS and the potential outreach facility strategy, and it encouraged participants to provide feedback on opportunities, roadblocks, and experiences. Participants were supportive and offered encouragement for a GRNMS outreach project in the downtown area.

MARKET STUDY SUMMARY

The following statements summarize overarching themes that were expressed by workshop participants about the GRNMS' current facility:

- The trip was an enjoyable experience, but it was time consuming to travel to Skidaway Island.
- Not a destination; must have reason for going that direction.
- Not a destination for repeat visits.
- Signs are not welcoming for a facility that is open to the public.
- The current location is ideal for ocean access and scientific networking, but not for community or tourist outreach.

Applying the Market Study Results

Planning Parameters

The market study also discussed planning parameters that could affect a presence in downtown Savannah. The following parameters will help determine what options will work best for GRNMS:

- **Availability** – Is the option readily available and can it be implemented by ONMS? Any possible location, whether it is a storefront, exhibit, sign, or kiosk must be available in the appropriate timeframe. For example, River Street is a popular location for many businesses, but because of high demand for space in that area, some wait for years to acquire the right space to fit their functional needs.
- **Location** – Location is the most critical component and it will influence many of the other parameters. When trying to reach two completely different market sectors (tourists and locals) the location must be accessible to both groups of people. The market study determined that some local residents perceive downtown to be “hard to get to”, and “hard to find a place to park.”
- **Convenience and Accessibility** – Is the option convenient and accessible to everyone? Locals need easy vehicular access and nearby parking while tourists often walk to a site or use public transportation to reach attractions.
- **Local Outreach** – Does the option meet the needs of the local resident population? Locals are perhaps more likely to go to areas that are away from the hustle of the tourist area because they have accessible parking. Access for school buses is a consideration as well as space for training, seminars or classes.
- **Tourist Outreach** – Is this option likely to reach a large number of tourists? Tourists have limited time during their visit

to Savannah and they are more likely to visit a GNRMS location if it can be “piggybacked” onto another activity.

- **Partnership Opportunity** – Does the option present an opportunity to build or expand an existing or new partnership? Sharing costs with partners is often a cost effective solution and allows the ONMS to tap into partner resources (such as a captive group of existing visitors, etc.).
- **Children’s Education** – Children’s venues are an emerging market in Savannah and the community is supportive of child-focused venues. Is there an opportunity to provide opportunities that are interesting to children?
- **Cost Efficiency** – Is the option a cost effective way to reach the public? Cost efficiency is a broad topic that covers many categories, such as construction, staffing, long-term operations, maintenance and rent. ONMS operates on limited funding, and therefore must choose facility options that make sense within operational capabilities at each sanctuary.

Overall, the community is supportive of the GRNMS outreach project. Visitors and residents in Savannah are looking for educational and cultural experiences. With nearly seven million tourists annually and a growing resident population, the demand for additional attractions and educational components in the area is warranted. A downtown presence for GRNMS could fill a niche market in the areas of ocean science, conservation, climate change, weather, and reflect the maritime and shipping industry in Savannah. It would also provide an opportunity to convey information about NOAA as well as the other national marine sanctuaries.

A more detailed analysis of the downtown Savannah market is available in the full Downtown Savannah Outreach Market Study prepared by Facility Programming and Consulting, April 2010 report.

MARKET STUDY SUMMARY

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There are numerous options available for GRNMS to establish a downtown presence that will increase the visibility of GRNMS and NOAA. Some involve “bricks and mortar”; some rely on partners, while others create a more “virtual” presence. None of the opportunities presented in this chapter are recommended or endorsed. They are presented here only to illustrate the range of possibilities available to GRNMS. The sanctuary, with guidance from ONMS headquarters, should decide which of the alternatives make the most sense for the site.

Connecting with your Audience

The following strategies are examples of the many different ways that GRNMS can promote itself:

- Kiosks/displays/educational signs can be placed in strategic locations downtown. For example:
 - Savannah TAP Kiosks feature touch-screen technology to promote local businesses and events. They are located throughout downtown.
 - The Broughton Street Kiosk Program uses informational kiosks that feature information pertaining downtown parking and upcoming events. (These kiosks provide an opportunity for civic groups and downtown partners to promote programs and events occurring in downtown).
- Technology including live research, telepresence, and live feeds that can be viewed by schools and at other venues.
- Local events, festivals and parades, provide exposure for GRNMS, whether hosted by the sanctuary or not.
- Educational seminars and workshops can be offered at schools, colleges/universities, community and senior centers. (GRNMS already offers an array of educational programs at various locations).
- Videos and films are played at existing museum auditoriums, such as the Morris Center or the Coastal Heritage Society. NOAA has existing videos that could be featured at partner facilities and events.
- Brochures, flyers, and maps are prevalent throughout Savannah at many hotels, visitor centers, restaurants and attractions. These locations could easily feature Gray’s Reef.
- Training offered to volunteers and/or employees at existing locations such as museums about NOAA and GRNMS will encourage them to share the message.
- Activities with existing organizations and clubs (e.g. the Girl Scouts) that have a significant presence in Savannah can help reach other populations.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

- Local “edutainment” tours, charters and adventure trips are popular and well utilized in this area. Savannah offers many local tours of popular Savannah locations, including walking tours of downtown, bus and trolley tours, wilderness adventures, and boat and fishing charters. Tour guides could be easily educated on GRNMS and its importance.
- Internet links with businesses around Georgia (e.g. tourist sites, museums, eco-tourism venues, businesses, visitor centers and restaurants) are an easy way to guide people to GRNMS.

Potential Partnerships

Partnerships are one way that the sanctuary can do more with less by sharing risk, responsibility, resources and knowledge. Partnerships are a valuable tool utilized by ONMS in outreach and education activities. By partnering with organizations that have a complementary mission, ONMS gains more contacts, visitors, and/or financial support than would have been achieved alone.

Support from partners and the community can be very beneficial to the success of any new undertaking. GRNMS can use the synergies derived from partnering, whether through the sharing of facilities or sharing of knowledge and resources to get its message to a wider audience, GRNMS can work closely with current and potential partners to explore ways to promote the important role played by the sanctuary and the greater message of ocean stewardship through a presence in wildlife downtown Savannah. While GRNMS currently has many partners in Savannah and throughout Georgia, some possible new partnering ideas were discussed during the workshops and interviews that can help promote the outreach initiative in downtown Savannah.

For example, below are some of the organizations with a focus on nature and coastal ecology that GRNMS might consider as new partners or as ongoing partners with enhanced roles:

- Oatland Island Education Center
- Savannah-Ogeechee Canal Museum and Visitor Center
- Bamboo Farms
- Massie Heritage School
- Georgia Ports Authority
- Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Savannah Wildlife Refuge
- Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

Partners in established locations may be able to offer prime venues for exhibits and signs. ONMS may be able to bring new exhibit offerings to its partners while the sanctuary could profit from existing visitors and the financial advantages of shared operational costs and exhibit maintenance.

Other Opportunities

Venues, such as those listed below, also offer potential tie-ins for events and educational programming that could be used for mutual benefit.

- Visitor and tourist centers – There are at least five visitor centers in or near Savannah, three of which are located in the downtown area. These visitor centers are perfect locations for ONMS signage, exhibits or kiosks. Visitor centers will usually welcome additional exhibits or attractions.
- Civic partnerships such as the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and Retail Savannah can be a great source of support for ONMS.
- The many historic museums and buildings throughout the downtown area that highlight the maritime heritage and/or shipping industry in the area might provide an opportunity for GRNMS to offer complimentary messages.
- Beaches, parks, and highway turnouts are often good locations for signs. Potential locations include:
 - Tybee Island beach, lighthouse and museum, wildlife refuge and marine science center
 - Wassaw Island National Wildlife Refuge
 - Fort Pulaski National Monument
 - Bamboo Farm and Coastal Gardens
 - Marine Education Center and Aquarium
 - Skidaway Island State Park
 - Wormsloe Historic Site
- Retail locations such as Bass Pro Shops provide an opportunity to connect with local boaters and fishermen and help them learn about the importance of the sanctuary and embrace good ocean etiquette.
- U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. National Park Service have been partners with ONMS at other sanctuary sites.

Range of Possible Downtown Locations

Several potential partners with facilities in the downtown area have expressed interest in working with GRNMS. The examples that follow represent a range of possibilities available to GRNMS. None of these examples are recommended over any other, and this is not an all-inclusive list. These examples do, however, illustrate that it is not necessary for GRNMS to act alone. There are organizations and venues that are willing to support GRNMS in developing a presence in downtown Savannah. The pros and cons for each example have been included as a first layer of evaluation.

The examples are presented alphabetically:

- Coastal Heritage Society
- Downtown Commercial Properties – Broughton Street and Ellis Square
- Georgia Power Building
- Savannah International Trade and Convention Center
- Savannah Waterfront Association – River Street
- Trustees Garden / Morris Center

Coastal Heritage Society

The Coastal Heritage Society (CHS) is devoted to preserving the history of Georgia and the coastal region. Founded as a maritime history organization in 1975, the Coastal Heritage Society currently manages more than \$30 million in public resources in Savannah.

The campus serves more than 150,000 people annually at three historic sites: Old Fort Jackson National Historic Landmark, the Savannah History Museum, and the Roundhouse Railroad Museum. A staff of 65 historic preservationists restored more than a dozen structures, and resident archaeologists have discovered traces of past battles and lifestyles.

The Coastal Heritage Society (CHS) has shown great interest in partnering with GRNMS on exhibits in their planned Children's Museum project that began preliminary site work and building restoration in 2010.

Children's Museum Project

The market study for the children's museum predicts approximately 67,500 people will visit this new museum annually (not including school groups). The museum will be developed in three phases. An exhibit on underwater archeology will be built in phase two and a Gray's Reef/Barrier Island exhibit is being planned for phase three. There may also be opportunities for educational programming related to Gray's Reef and the marine sanctuaries. ONMS has collaborated with similar partners to develop exhibits at the Maritime Museum in Newport News featuring the *USS Monitor*, and the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center at Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



A rendering of the planned Gray's Reef exhibit at the CHS Children's Museum. (Source: CHS)

Pros

- The three existing sites on this campus draw approximately 150,000 visitors annually.
- The museum will have a GRNMS exhibit (with or without participation on the part of the sanctuary).
- Museum operations and maintenance will be funded and maintained by the Coastal Heritage Society.
- CHS is a recognized and experienced community leader.
- Children's education is currently a community priority in Savannah and there are few existing children's venues in the downtown area. GRNMS could "piggyback" on this interest.
- Even though this is a children's museum, adults can be influenced by what their children are learning, and might become interested in learning more about GRNMS.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

Cons

- NOAA message may be lost in the “WOW” factor of the museum and within CHS-centric messages.
- The museum and its exhibits are not geared toward adults.
- There is the possibility that the children’s museum and its components will have too much of a “playground” theme, which may not align well with the serious mission of GRNMS and ONMS.
- ONMS will likely have to contribute funds to get NOAA and GRNMS messages and signs included in the museum.
- The campus has no connection to the water.

Downtown Commercial Properties

The pros and cons for Broughton Street and Ellis Square are presented together.

Broughton Street



A view of Broughton Street's retail venues.

Located in the downtown Historic District, Broughton Street is one of Savannah's main tourist thoroughfares with many shops and restaurants. Historically, Broughton Street has served as the main street for Savannah as well as the local and regional hub for economic, social and cultural activities. Following World War II, and intensified by the subsequent trend of suburbanization, Broughton Street began to decline in ways typical of urban centers across the country. To counter this decline and to encourage the revitalization of Broughton Street, the Broughton Street Urban Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1986 and updated in 2001. Since 2001, \$156 million in private investment has occurred along the corridor. Plans have also been developed for streetscape improvements along the 12 blocks of Broughton Street from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to East Broad Street. Improvements are intended to enhance the pedestrian experience while improving vehicular safety and providing traffic calming measures. Ultimately, the improvements are to serve as a catalyst for continued private investment along the corridor.

Broughton Street has many storefront spaces as well as opportunities for signs and banners.

Ellis Square



The Ellis Square fountain

Ellis Square located on Barnard Street, between Bryan and Congress Streets was also known as Marketplace Square. In 1954, the city signed a fifty-year lease with the Savannah Merchants Cooperative Parking Association, allowing the association to raze the existing structures and construct a parking garage to serve the City Market retail project. When the garage's lease expired in 2004, the city began plans to restore Ellis Square. The old parking garage was demolished in 2006 to make way for a new landscaped public square that features open spaces for public concerts, as well as an underground parking garage. Hotel, residential and commercial space on adjacent properties has been renovated concurrently with the Ellis Square revitalization project. The restoration of the square itself was completed in February 2010.

The most common size of storefronts for lease fronting on Ellis Square is approximately 1,500 to 2,200 sq. ft.

A United States Attorneys Office of the United States Department of Justice will be located in a six-floor building at one end of Ellis

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

Square. The projected move-in date is June 2012. The U.S. Attorneys would occupy the second through sixth floors only. The first floor would be available for retail or other use, and is a potential location for GRNMS.

Pros

- A properly placed venue in either of these areas will allow convenient access by tourists and locals.
- Both areas are well known in Savannah and both are “up and coming” downtown areas.
- The U.S. Attorneys will have a ten-year lease through GSA, which may create an opportunity to secure a preferential rate by teaming with another federal agency.
- Several storefront locations are currently available in both the Ellis Square and Broughton Street areas.

Cons

- The venues in this area are primarily retail and GRNMS may desire to be in a less commercial environment.
- Because many of the properties in downtown Savannah are older, reconfiguring a historic building may be challenging and expensive.
- GRNMS may have trouble finding the right space, i.e., space that fits their functional requirements in a required timeframe.
- Because Ellis Square is a new and popular location, available commercial sites may be in high demand and require quick decision-making on the part of the sanctuary.

Georgia Power Building and Surrounding Property

The former Georgia Power office building and property at 600 E. Bay Street was built in the early 1960s. The five-story building, located at the east end of Bay Street, marked an earlier renaissance of River Street. The 4.1-acre Georgia Power property includes a 50,000-square-foot, five-story, brick building and nearly three acres of parking.



The Georgia Power Building

Georgia Power decided the property had untapped potential and would be better utilized by the community. In the summer of 2010, a group of developers purchased the Georgia Power building and the surrounding 4.1 acres, including the land immediately west of the Marriott Hotel and the ferry landing. The development plan for the property includes the following:

- A boutique hotel attached to the Georgia Power Building with 100 to 130 rooms, and possibly a second hotel elsewhere on the property.
- The Georgia Power building will be redeveloped for mixed used office and retail space, with the possibility of a few restaurants.
- Several two-story buildings to be constructed along the river for restaurants and retail spaces.
- A six-story parking garage to contain approximately 200 spaces.
- An outdoor park and walking trail that will connect this property to the Trustee's Garden development, which may include a walking bridge over Bay Street.
- A "Green Concepts" outdoor pavilion sponsored by Georgia Power to showcase green technology which will include a geothermal loop to the river and the sustainable power upgrades that will be made to the Georgia Power building.

Pros

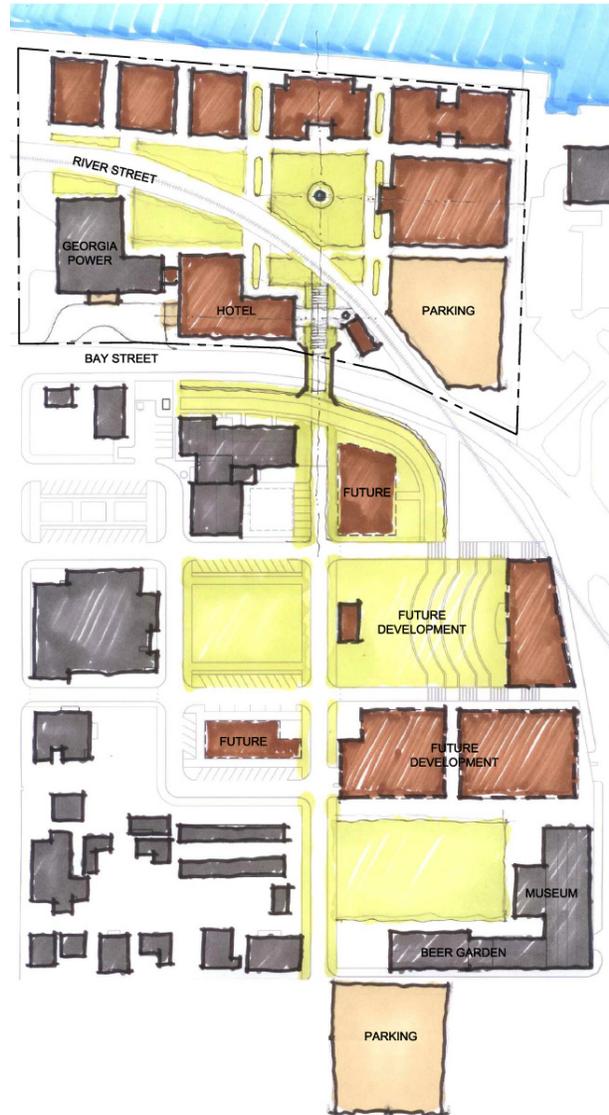
- The developer is working on forming a nonprofit that will provide the funding and/or donation(s) for 15-20,000 sq. ft. of space in the development for NOAA's use. They plan to guarantee a \$250,000 initial donation to kick-start the effort.
- The development is planned to be the new focal point of River Street.
- The site is accessible by trolley, streetcar and ferry.
- A properly placed venue in this development will allow easy access by tourists and locals because of the adequate parking nearby.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

- The development is planned to focus green energy initiatives.
- Entering into a partnership at an early stage of development may secure a lower rental rate.
- The site is adjacent to the Trustee's Garden development.

Cons

- It will take several years for the site to reach its full potential, and in the interim the site will be under construction, which is a deterrent to visitors.
- Due to its prime location, rent in the area may be high.
- If not located correctly, a GRNMS facility may lack visibility or get lost among other tenants.



A rendering of the preliminary master plan for the area surrounding the Georgia Power Building. (Source: Retail Savannah)

Savannah Trade and Convention Center

The Savannah International Trade and Convention Center, located on Hutchinson Island, directly across from River Street, includes a 330,000 sq. ft. waterfront complex on the Savannah River. Hutchinson Island is easily accessible by ferry from River Street and by car over the Talmadge Memorial Bridge. It features 100,000 sq. ft. of divisible exhibit space, 50,000 sq. ft. of prime meeting space, including 13 meeting rooms, four executive boardrooms, a 25,000 sq. ft. Grand Ballroom, and a state-of-the-art 367-seat auditorium.



An aerial view of the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center. (Source: Savannah International Trade and Convention Center)

As part of the master plan for the convention center and Hutchinson Island, the Trade and Convention Center is interested in including a NOAA/maritime-focused project and/or exhibit as part of a planned development next to the convention center, tentatively called the National Maritime and Ocean Thermal Energy Center. The Savannah Ocean and Thermal Energy Consortium intends to use this opportunity to form a hub of marine biology, ocean, thermal energy, and environmental organizations.

The adjacent docking area in channel running along the convention center has a 200 ft. wide slip with 400 ft. of recreational docking. The space reportedly can accommodate a 140-foot vessel. The channel is to be dredged to a depth of 15-feet by the county.

Pros

- The site is on the water, which provides a visual connection to the ocean.
- There is convenient parking nearby.
- The site allows boat access, which would provide the opportunity for NOAA vessels to dock in view of downtown.
- This partnering opportunity could bring many like-minded organizations together.
- The adjacent marsh could provide demonstration and educational opportunities.
- ONMS participation could influence and encourage additional development in the area.

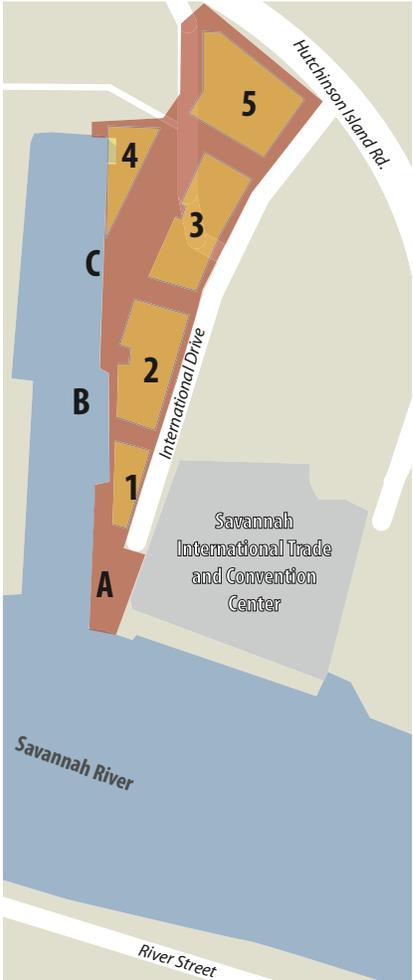
Cons

- Cost: The facility would need to be built, which will be both an expensive and time-consuming process. Potential partners would have to be brought onboard prior to inception.
- This is a former industrial site that will need further environmental and engineering studies to determine clean up and other issues related to the site. Because of the possibility

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

of environmental factors, this site may require additional time to complete needed planning studies.

- The number of visitors to Hutchinson Island is currently limited due to lack of attractions because a convention center is not a typical draw for visitors. Additionally, there is not a lot of drive-by traffic to Hutchinson Island or to the convention center, which is only open to the public for events.
- The long-term development and master plan of the convention center and the Hutchinson Island area may take many years.



The Hutchinson Island development plan calls for the development of several parcels of land adjacent to the International Trade and Convention Center. Plot Four is envisioned as the NOAA location.

Savannah Waterfront Association - River Street

River Street is a historic cobblestone street lined on one side with storefronts and bordered by the Savannah River on the other. River Street is one of Savannah's most popular tourist attractions, with numerous shops, restaurants, bars, hotels and historic buildings. Visitors can walk along the river boardwalk, enjoy the many historic venues, board a riverboat for a harbor tour, or catch the ferry across the river to Hutchinson Island. River Street is also adjacent to many historic points of interest in the downtown area. There is an existing city visitor center on River Street.



River Street

At the inception of this facility strategy project, River Street was the location favored by GRNMS due to its heavy tourist traffic. However, further interviews with residents found that River Street is not as convenient to locals who find the tourist traffic and parking issues to be a hassle. River Street also sometimes attracts a “T-shirt and flip flop crowd,” attracted to the party atmosphere created by its many bars and restaurants. While these observations may not hinder the success of this location, it may not reach the desired target audience or meet the stated mission of the sanctuary.

There are several significant developments planned along River Street including the following:

- The Georgia Power building is vacant and is currently for sale. (Refer to the previous discussion of this location).

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

- Moran Savannah provides ship-docking services in the Port of Savannah and plans to build on its property at the far end of River Street near the market place (west end). Preliminary plans call for three freestanding buildings that are at least three to four stories with restaurants and retail space.
- Georgia Power is currently dismantling its Riverside electric plant on River Street. The brick building on the property, which dates to 1912, is being preserved. Georgia Power officials have yet to determine the future use of the facility and will evaluate the options with that property when the work is completed.
- The Savannah River Landing project plans for mixed-use residential, commercial, and retail development and has a total estimated price tag of \$800 million. It pledges to redefine more than 40 acres of the waterfront just east of the Marriott Savannah Riverfront hotel.

Pros

- River Street is one of the downtown area's most popular attractions. There is a great deal of visitor and tourist traffic.
- Many sponsored events occur in this area as well.
- The Savannah River provides a physical connection to the ocean and shipping with local barges and ships moving back and forth. Marine wildlife such as birds and dolphins are also visible from this location.
- There are opportunities to place signs and kiosks along River Street.
- Various buildings and hotels are located along River Street and commercial properties of various sizes are usually available for rent in the area.
- Several new developments that are pending in the River Street area include the Georgia Power building, the riverside electric plant, the River Landing project, and the Moran buildings.

Cons

- Accessibility to River Street is an issue for locals who dislike the tourist crowds and parking issues.
- Even though there are storefronts for lease, it may take time to find the right fit for GRNMS, or when the right space becomes available, GRNMS may not be able to act quickly enough to obtain it.
- Rent is often higher in this location than in other parts of the historic downtown district.
- The more casual bar and restaurant crowd that frequents this area, along with events like the St. Patrick's Day Parade, (one

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

of the biggest in the country), may not be the right target audience.

- Many of the new developments on River Street are many years away, which may work for or against sanctuary planning goals. The timeline for developments is ongoing.
- Renovating historic buildings is often costly and time consuming.

Trustee's Garden and Morris Center

Mr. Charles H. Morris, a Savannah civic leader, is redeveloping The Trustee's Garden and the Charles H. Morris Center as part of the rejuvenation of the east River Street area.

From its earliest history in the 1700s, Trustee's Garden has been an integral part of the city. Mr. Morris plans to develop the center and its' surroundings to create a cultural center to be enjoyed by the entire community. Trustees' Garden is the last large parcel of land in the Historic District. Charles Morris has completed Phase I which is the Charles H. Morris Center (the former Hillyer building) and has plans to restore several other historic buildings on the site that include the Three Gables Building and Keyhoe Iron Works. Goals for the development include the ability to:

- Experience a vibrant community of creative businesses.
- Enjoy art, history, music, food, cultural activities, festivals, and special events.
- Relax in a place where you can sit, stroll and play in the common areas.
- Shop in an urban farmer's market.
- Learn about sustainability, health, and wellness through educational opportunities.



*The Morris Center at Trustee's Garden, a popular new event space.
(Source: FPC)*

Mr. Morris has an exciting and enthusiastic vision for the site to become the downtown center of activity that embraces preservation, sustainability, green energy and environmental sensitivity. Several attributes include:

- The 9.2-acre site will be a media/educational model to attract a local and national audience to Savannah.
- The site will be open seven days a week.
- The owner of the property is considering several development ideas for the property that will make it an event-friendly venue with many public facilities including a walking trail around the site and an amphitheater.
- Mr. Morris would like to see the use of technology to connect people to the ocean resource. He feels there may be many opportunities for broadcasting about Gray's Reef in Savannah. (Mr. Morris has contacts in the media world to facilitate this

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

broadcasting tie-in with NOAA's telepresence and expressed an interest in establishing this capability in Savannah).

Pros

- There is a definite opportunity for events and programming at Trustee's Garden. Mr. Morris also plans for media-friendly events at the site.
- Trustee's Garden is a popular tourist destination because of its colorful history and adjacent Pirate's House restaurant. Many local tours and trolleys stop near the site.
- The right tenants could help master plan this site and determine its future development.
- Charles Morris is a great contact for media and is a supporter of many NOAA and GRNMS missions.
- The site has a possible future connection to the Savannah River Landing to the east of Trustee's Garden and the cruise ship terminal.

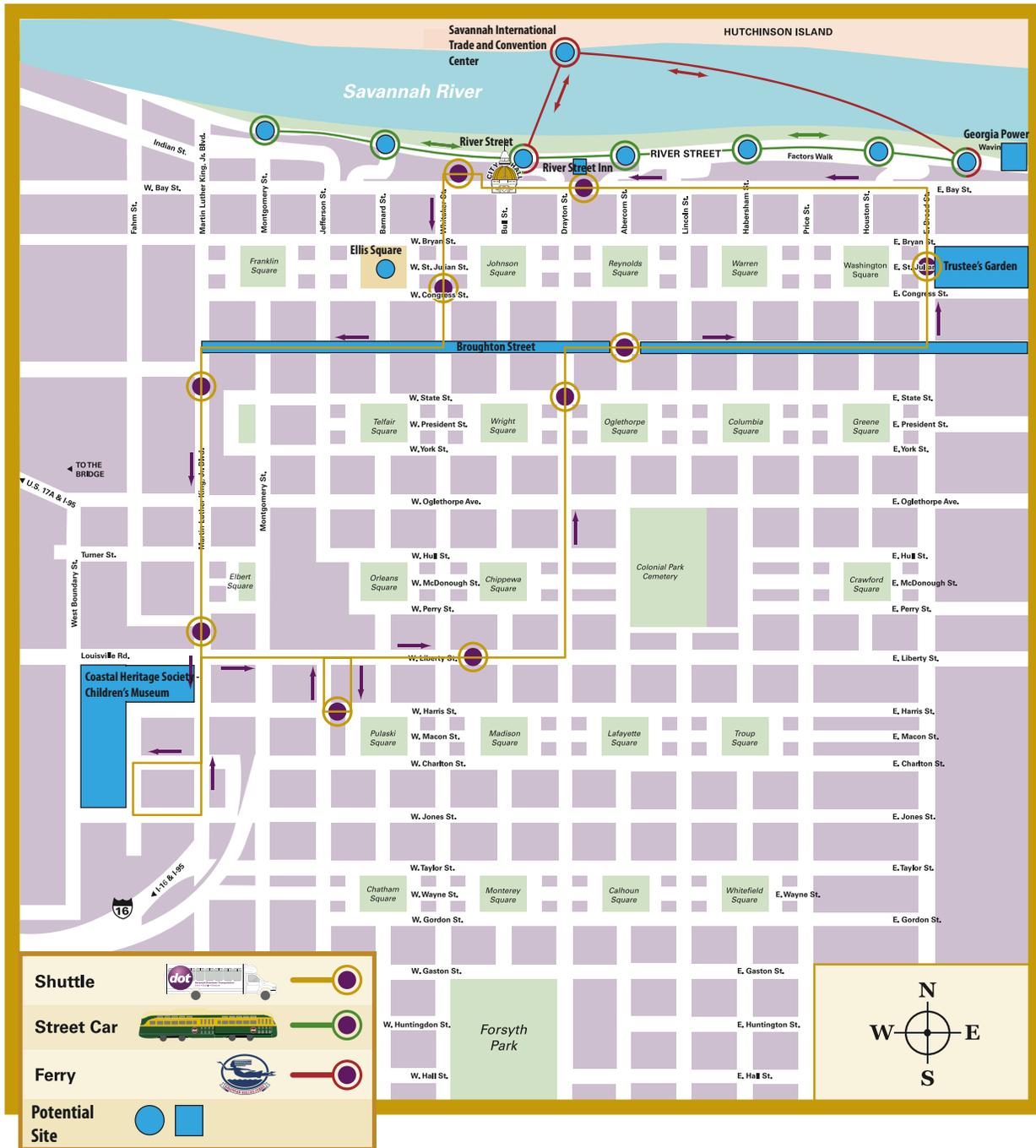
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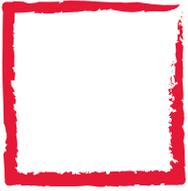
- There is no defined master plan for the site so the opportunities at this site remain vague. Currently, plans do not indicate what physical space or exhibit opportunities would be available in the future.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCATIONS

Downtown Transportation Map

The following map details potential locations in relation to public transportation.





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AND CONSULTING

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Laboratory Planning
Healthcare Planning
Strategic Facilities Planning
Needs Assessment
Space Utilization Analysis

SAN ANTONIO | HOUSTON