

Green Infrastructure to Green Jobs



*Growing our urban forest
Enhancing workforce skills
Engaging community residents & youth*

2018 grant project



Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund invests \$1.5M across six Southeast communities. Communities will use the grants to implement equitable solutions to local climate change challenges.

[LEARN MORE](#)

ssdn  **THE KENDEDA FUND**

A partnership between The Kendeda Fund and the Southeast Sustainability Directors Network

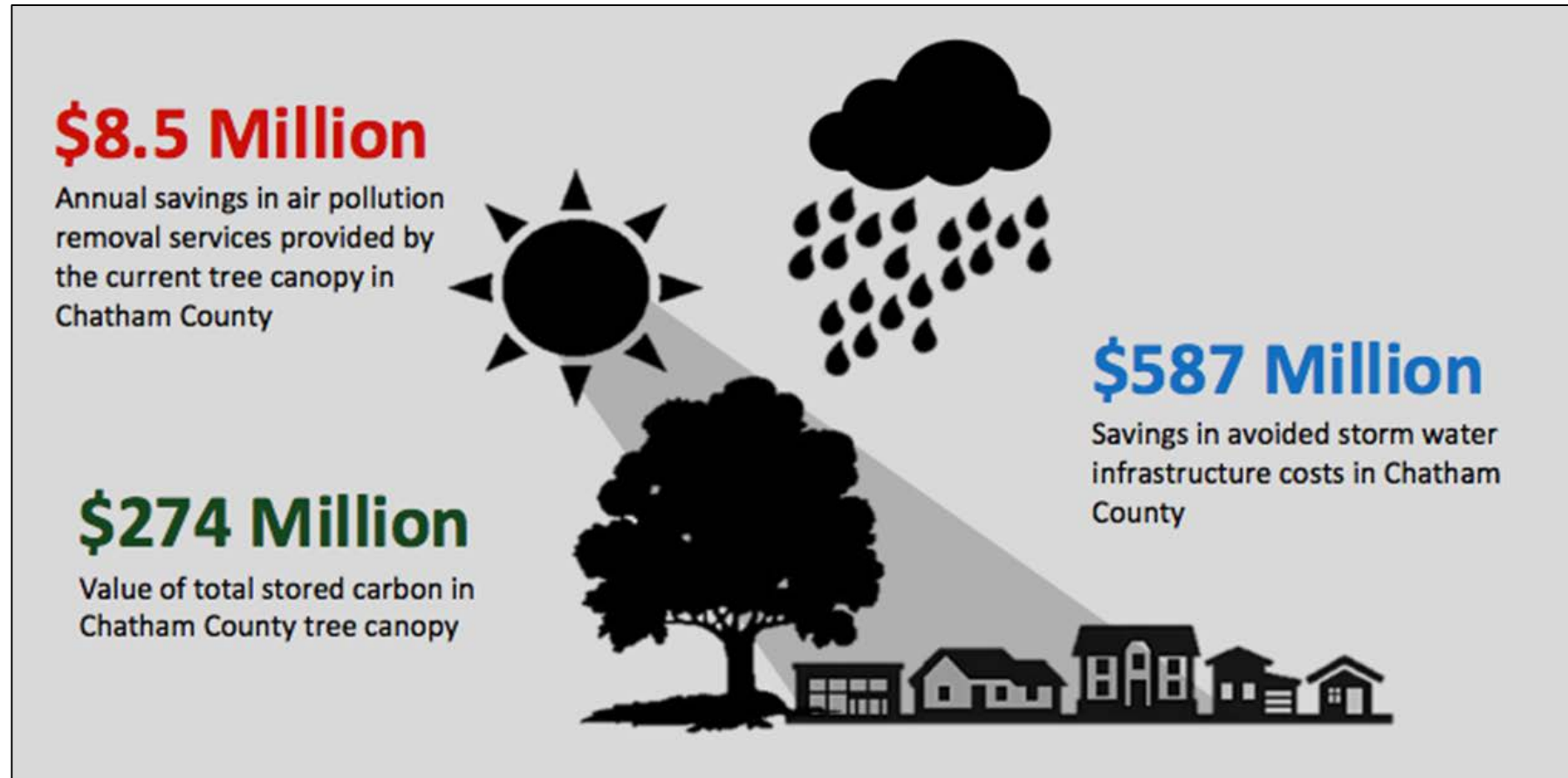
Grant Description

- 2 year grant supporting sustainable and equitable communities
 - ✓ Mitigate and/or adapt to climate change through sustainable energy or water initiatives
 - ✓ Foster equity and inclusiveness
 - ✓ Leverage community partnerships
 - ✓ Strengthen and support government priorities and policies
 - ✓ Demonstrate scalability
- Selected from over 45 applications throughout the SE, \$230K award

What we knew going in

- Savannah and Chatham County are experiencing increasing flood events from inland storms, king tides and storm surge
- Critical role that trees play to offset flooding impacts and absorb water naturally
- The City has over 350 underutilized FEMA properties that repeatedly flood
- The City has been steadily losing tree canopy over the last few decades
- There is a knowledge and skills gap in our rising workforce specifically around tree care and maintenance, especially for a City known for its trees

Local value of trees



*An Assessment of Urban Tree Canopy in Chatham County, Georgia
Savannah Tree Foundation, February 2015*

Our first idea...

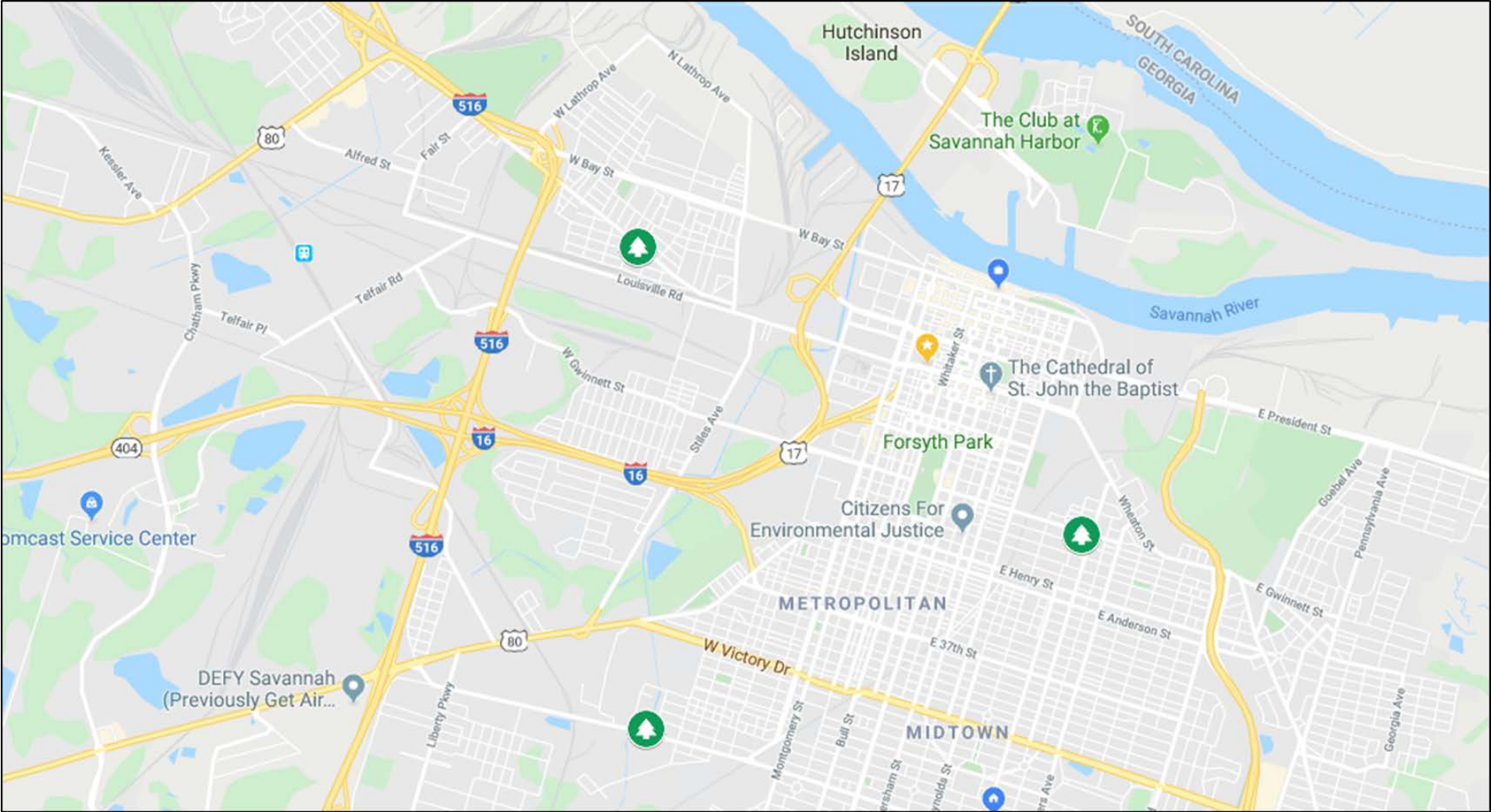
Create urban tree nurseries and green infrastructure pilot projects on underutilized FEMA lots located in low-income neighborhoods

- Plant native species of 3-5 gallon trees, nursery style on FEMA lots
- Transplant a majority of the trees in 2-4 years to permanent locations throughout the City, and supplement annual plantings
- Leave a portion of the trees permanently on FEMA lots to mature
- Increasing stormwater absorption and reducing neighborhood flooding over time

What we actually did...

- Identified 3 vacant City-owned properties in low-income neighborhoods that need some TLC
- Planted over 550 native tree species in 15 gallon pots, nursery style with drip irrigation
- Developed a paid workforce training program with residents from the neighborhoods we were working in, curriculum from UGA
- Engaged neighborhood elementary-age youth in the project
- In 1-3 years the trees will be planted permanently in FEMA lots and private properties that lack tree canopy

Nursery Locations



Tree Species

All native, water tolerant and some saltwater tolerant.

- Eastern Red Cedar
- Black Gum
- Magnolia
- Bald Cypress
- Live Oak
- River Birch

Our Partners

VICTORY
gardens



Loop It Up Savannah

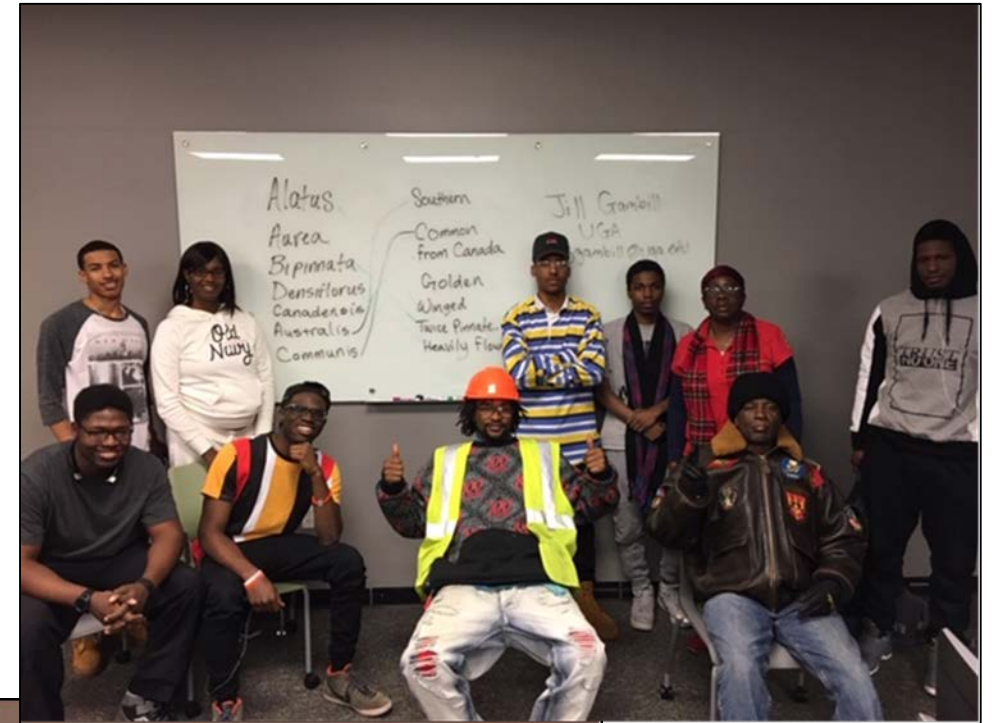
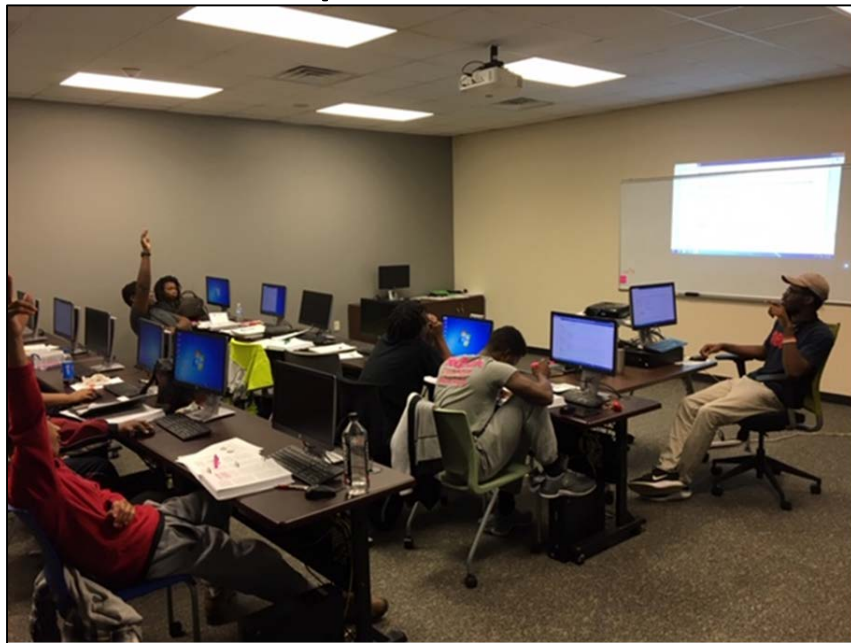


SAVANNAH



Workforce Training

- Nineteen apprentices, age 18 - 55
- 32 hours of classroom training
- Working towards GA Certified Landscape Professional



Workforce Training

- Over 300 hours of boots on the ground, building out the nurseries
- Paid \$13/hour



The work begins



The work continues



The kids



E. Gwinnett



Augusta Ave.



Mills B Lane



Recognition



Next steps

- Ongoing maintenance of tree nurseries
- Neighborhood beautification
- Permanently plant trees on flood-prone FEMA lots and low-lying public/private properties
- GA Certified Landscape Professional exams for apprentices
- Employment connections
- Sites used as ongoing community engagement and education locations
- Develop long-term local partner model to continue the tree nurseries on existing sites and hopefully expand the number of sites
- Track our progress

www.savannahga.gov/urbantreenursery

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