



# MPC Headlines

A Quarterly Publication of the Metropolitan Planning Commission

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FALL 2007

[www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Maridon 2

LEED Training 2

Neighborhood Associations 2

Regional Transportation 3

SAGIS 3

Downtown Master Plan 4

Historic Review 4

New MPC Officers!! 4

## Welcome to the MPC Headlines

The Metropolitan Planning Commission is responsible for a range of functions. Most relate to providing recommendations for zoning and approvals for development. Other activities include anticipating and planning for the future growth and infrastructure needs of unincorporated Chatham County and Savannah. From assigning addresses to new buildings to investigating where our future drinking water will come from, the MPC is working with you to make sure our community will be best prepared and best served.

Much of the MPC's work, however, goes on behind the scenes, unknown to the gen-

eral public. The goal of this newsletter is to bridge that information gap: to engage the public by providing



**Executive Director  
Tom Thomson**

timely updates of MPC activities. We think you will be interested and pleased to see the MPC at work!

Each quarter we will provide newsletter subscribers with project-oriented articles written by MPC staff. These first-hand accounts of the work that we do will raise awareness of what the MPC does and what that means to you. We will also use this forum as a means to update you on specific topics of interest, important news, and the MPC in general.

Thank you for your time and we hope you enjoy our publication.

Tom Thomson,  
Executive Director

## Rivers Alive

Join us during Georgia's 16<sup>th</sup> annual *River's Alive*, statewide campaign to clean and preserve our rivers and streams. Our local sponsors include the City of Savannah and the Chatham County Adopt-A-Stream/Adopt-A-Wetland Program (staffed by the MPC Water Resources Program and UGA MAREX). Bring boots, wear comfortable clothes, and be prepared to

have fun while getting a little wet. There will also be pizza and t-shirts for all those that volunteer!

### Cleanup Dates:

**Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**8:00am - 12:00pm:** Boats and kayaks will be the mode of transportation for the day. Bring your own or borrow one of ours. Meet at the end boat ramp on Vernon River/

Hayner's Creek.

**Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**9:00am-12:00pm:** Join us at the public boat ramp on Richardson Creek just off Islands Expressway. Most of this cleanup will be on foot, but feel free to bring your own boat.

For more information call 651-1456 or 651-1454.

Rivers Alive 2006





Maridon

LEED  
NC-2.2  
Training- Thursday Sep-  
tember 27, 2007



*"folks used to sit on the front porch, slap mosquitoes, and complain about the government."*

## Maridon Listed on Chatham Co. Historic Registry

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners listed another historic property on the Chatham County Register of Historic Places at its September 7, 2007 meeting, upon the recommendation of the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission.

Maridon, a raised coastal cottage on the southern tip of Wilmington Island, was built in 1891 as the Eureka Club House for the Wilmington Island Pleasure and

Improvement Company. By the 1940s it had been transformed into a residence, and has been in the same family since 1945. The property is significant in the area of architecture, as an excellent and intact example of a raised coastal cottage with full porch on two façades, unique cedar post foundations, and original details throughout the interior and exterior of the building. As there is some evidence that the property

may have served as a battery during the Civil War, the property is also significant in the area of historic archaeology. In the area of commerce, the property represents the transition of Wilmington Island from a purely agricultural economy to a recreational one. And finally in the area of exploration and settlement, the property has a historical place in the settlement of the Island.

(See Maridon on page 3)

## MPC and USGBC Sponsor LEED Training

The MPC, in Association with the U.S. Green Building Council sponsored LEED NC-2.2 Training for Inspections Staff on Thursday, September 27, 2007 at the Coastal Georgia Center. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program is the nationally ac-

cepted benchmark for the design, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED focuses and promotes five key areas: *sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.* LEED gives building owners and operators the

tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance.

## Air Conditioning is Ruining Our Neighborhood! Neighborhood Associations Formed to Address Community Needs

At a public meeting at the Montgomery Presbyterian Church on August 21, 2007, Charlie Milmine of the Southeast Chatham Neighborhood Association announced that air conditioning was ruining old-fashioned neighborhoods. According to Mr. Milmine, folks used to sit on the front porch, slap mosquitoes, and complain about the government. But now, the last thing anybody wants to do on an August evening is sit on the front porch, and although most

have continued to complain about the government, they do it in private.

The problem with complaining about the government in private is that it may *feel* good but it does not *do* good. Mr. Milmine said that the best way to complain about the government is for everybody to get together and complain at one time. Surprisingly enough, Helen Stone, Chatham County Commissioner from the District 1, agreed. She said that given the prevalence of air conditioning and the

unlikelihood that it would be outlawed anytime soon, neighbors needed to find air conditioned places to hold formal meetings where they could not only complain about the government, but where elected officials could come and actually listen to what their constituents were commenting about.

The MPC is pursuing this radical idea by spearheading an effort to organize neighborhoods in unincor-

Continued on page 3

# Regional Transportation Discussion Hosted by CUTS/MPO



*Luncheon on August 22, 2007*

On Wednesday, August 22, 2007 the Chatham Urban Transportation Study, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (CUTS/MPO) for the Savannah area, held a luncheon to allow the leadership from Chatham County and surrounding counties to discuss regional transportation opportunities. Staff from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and a representative from the State Transportation Board also attended.

Concerns the counties share are the increasing lack of funding for transportation projects, public safety, and economic

development. Although the counties will certainly continue to have some competing interests, attendees agreed that the region's leadership has a better chance of gaining the attention of state legislators if they speak with one voice about their common issues.

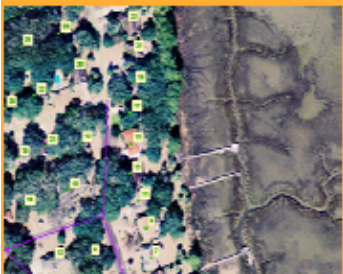
Representatives from Chatham Area Transit reminded the region's leaders to ensure that new developments are designed to accommodate transit. Local activists, observing the discussion, urged the group to support transit, rather than road widenings, as a solution for regional congestion and pollution,

as well as for local neighborhood preservation.

Roy Herrington, the District 1 Representative on the State Transportation Board, commended CUTS/MPO for initiating the discussion and advised the group to continue this dialogue. A second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 24, 2007, at 11:30 a.m. in the MPC Mendonsa Hearing Room.

CUTS/MPO is the decision-making body guiding the expenditure of Federal transportation funds in the Savannah urbanized area.

# SAGIS: Streamlining Savannah GIS



*Detailed photo with digital road network on Wilmington Island*

The SAGIS (Savannah Area Geographic Information System) Board, began a new chapter in its history, hiring a new Director, Noel Perkins and two new staff, Jason Lee and David Petrillo. SAGIS, which is staffed by the Chatham County MPC, is currently working to transform the GIS cooperative model of Chatham County and Savannah municipal departments and private stakeholders into a more streamlined system that will better serve the public.

Redesigning the database that county and city departments (such as Emergency Services) use to access geographic infor-

mation (such as directions to an address) is the first order of business. The new database model will foster much quicker communication, more accurate data, less routine maintenance, and less duplication of work across departments.

In addition, SAGIS is leading an effort to repair incorrect data layers, so that Chatham County citizens have the best possible datasets for the best possible services. For example, road maps and address locations are being corrected, and will eventually result in near 100% accuracy. This can mean the difference between life and death in

emergency response times. A critical long-term goal of SAGIS is to provide GIS solutions to departments that need them. Implementing cutting-edge technology for public service requires time and effort that individual departments don't always have resources for. SAGIS intends to insure that all GIS staff in each city and county department has and can operate the GIS technology they need to perform their work at their highest level.

### **Maridon** (continued)

The owner is also currently pursuing listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Maridon is the second property listed on the Chatham County Register of Historic Places, the first being New Ogeechee Missionary Baptist Church on Chevís Road.

### **A/C** (continued)

porated Chatham County. The neighborhoods in Southeast Chatham County will come first, followed by the neighborhoods on the Islands and then in West Chatham County. If you would like to help in this effort, contact Dennis Hutton at 651-1450.



*"This process will improve communication between plan reviewers and applicants"*

# MPC Partnering with SDRA on DMP

The Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA), in partnership with the MPC and the City of Savannah, is nearing completion of the Downtown Savannah Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan (DMP), which is scheduled for completion and adoption by the end of the year, will be a comprehensive guide for development and planning in the downtown area.

Over the past 18 months, dozens of public meetings

and work sessions have been held with community, neighborhood, civic and government organizations. Hundreds of citizens participated in these sessions interacting with the master plan consulting team, SDRA, City of Savannah and MPC staff to identify issues and work towards solutions to ensure a vibrant and economically diverse downtown.

A public work session was scheduled for Tuesday, September 11, 2007. The

purpose of the meeting was to address land-use and design issues related to large-scale development pressures in the National Landmark Historic District. The meeting included a presentation of findings and an interactive work session to discuss various strategies for ensuring quality design and a balance of uses within the historic district.

## Historic District Site & Design Review Process

Beginning September 1, the city of Savannah will begin implementing a new process for site and design review in the Historic District. This process will improve communication between plan reviewers and applicants by providing pertinent regulatory and procedural information to applicants before they spend thousands of dollars on engineering and design plans.

Highlights of the new process include: 1) a mandatory pre-application conference for projects that meet specified criteria (listed below); 2) review of a site development plan by the

various infrastructure departments, MPC and the Savannah Development and Renewal Authority before design review can occur; 3) the opportunity for the Historic Board of Review to comment on any requested variance before consideration by the Zoning Board of Appeals; and, 4) a requirement that any encroachment into a right-of-way be approved by City Council before a final site development plan can be approved.

Projects that meet at least one of the following criteria must have a pre-application conference: 1) new construction (including building

additions and accessory uses); 2) any proposed removal or pruning of any tree located within and right-of-way; and, 3) any proposed encroachment into a right-of-way (including but not limited to stoops, balconies, canopies, and signage). A pre-application conference may also be required when requested by any City infrastructure department or the MPC.

For more information on this process, please visit MPC's website at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) or call 651-1440.

## New MPC Officers



Jon N. Todd  
Chairman



Robert Ray  
Vice Chairman



Shedrick Coleman  
Secretary



Susan Myers  
Treasurer