



# MPC Headlines

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## Coastal Commuters: Three Months In

*Jane Love*  
*Transportation Planner*

The Chatham Urban Transportation Study/Metropolitan Planning Organization (CUTS/MPO) launched the Coastal Commuters program in mid-April. Coastal Commuters promotes carpooling, mass transit, bicycling and walking in the greater Savannah area. If you are interested in reducing your transportation costs, you can use the [Coastal Commuters online ride-matching system](http://www.coastalcommuters.org) to find one or more carpool partners. Mass transit, bicycling and walking are also economical

alternatives. Use any of these transportation methods and log your trips or telecommutes in the Commute Calendar within the ride-matching system to see not only how much money you are saving compared to driving alone, but also how much you have reduced your emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Current trip loggers are already making a difference (see charts below), but we need your help to make this program a true success. To learn more, go to [www.coastalcommuters.org](http://www.coastalcommuters.org)

Total Positive Impacts Compared to Driving Alone (April 18-July 31)	
Gas use reduction	117 gal.
CO <sub>2</sub> reduction	2334 lbs.
Parking spots saved	148 spots
Non-SOV mileage	2917 mi.
Money saved	\$1284

Number of "alternative mode" trips logged (from April 18 through June 11)	
Carpool	57
Mass Transit	20
Bicycle	80
Walk	17
Telecommute	0
<b>TOTAL trips</b>	<b>174</b>

## Director's Corner



This issue of *MPC Headlines* is all about Olive,

Gavin, Annabelle, Griffin, Emily, Nathan, Madeline, Cameron, Zoe, Hal, Jackson, Charlie, Katie, Kevin, Finn, Jamie, Madison, and Christian. Again we describe a few of the efforts that are underway to contribute to protection or more efficient use of our resources. The Planning Commission believes that small changes in the way each of us uses our resources will result in major benefits over the long run with little change in our lifestyle.

At the MPC we have started a sustainability initiative for our internal operations, including a recycling effort, flextime and telecommuting, paperless agendas process and various efforts to reduce our electrical use. Our "Green Team" continues to think of other ways to make us more conscience of our use of resources.

For the community, our Coastal Commuters rideshare program offers a way to match riders with others to share-a-ride. Participants can also create a log of their walking, biking, carpooling or bus trips to calculate savings as well as any reduction in carbon emissions.

Our joint effort with Chatham County to protect our natural resources was recently enhanced (continued on page 4)



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

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

*'This ordinance recognizes the rich natural and cultural heritage of Chatham County to be among its most valued and important assets'*



## Natural and Cultural Resource Preservation:

### What Do You Love?

*Bethany Jewell  
Water Resources Planner*

Pause and reflect for a moment on three things you love about Chatham County. Perhaps it is drinking in a fiery sunset off a dock or crabbing on the Lazaretto Creek. Perhaps it is wandering downtown underneath an oak canopy or biking through the historic Isle of Hope area. Think to yourself, how many of these reflect one of the many historic, cultural or natural resources of our County?

As Coastal Georgia experiences unprecedented pressure from growth and development, proactive planning is

needed to protect the world class natural and cultural resources that enrich and inspire our lives, drawing us to visit and live on the coast.

Since 2004, the MPC has been working with a diverse group of community members to identify the most significant areas in Chatham County for their protection and preservation. In April, this effort culminated with a response by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners when they passed the Chatham County Resource Protection Ordinance. This ordinance recognizes the rich natural and cultural heritage of Chatham County to be among its most valued and important assets, and formally addresses a means for their pro-

tection. Through the creation of a Resource Protection Commission, tasked with identifying and protecting areas across the County, we are taking another step in becoming true stewards of the gifts of our coastal community. Protecting these areas in perpetuity ensures that just as we have inherited treasures from our ancestors, future generations will inherit those treasures from us.

If you would like more information on how you can become involved contact Bethany Jewell, Natural Resources Planner at 651-1456 or [jewellb@thempc.org](mailto:jewellb@thempc.org) or Ellen Harris, Preservation Planner at 651-1482, [harries@thempc.org](mailto:harries@thempc.org).

Hidden amongst us, awaiting protection lay our treasures.

## Summer Reading: Staff Picks

*Marilyn Gignilliat  
Assistant to the Executive Director*

As you may have come to realize from this newsletter, planning professionals are interested in all aspects of community life. Our reading taste is just as diverse. Here we share several of our recent favorite books. We hope that these recommendations will spark your curiosity to learn more about the world around us.

Intern Brittany Cantrell is currently reading *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World* by Paul Hawken. The author connects generations of people, some famous, and others less so, who are committed to making the world a better place. Hawken offers a look at what is right with our planet.

*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv, is a recommendation from Jackie Jackson Teel, Water Resources Planner. Louv presents a thought provoking look at a society that has prompted our children to develop into a generation without a connection to nature. Unstructured outdoor play time offered previous generations a chance to work off excess physical and creative energy. Louv also clearly demonstrates the role that exposure to nature and the environment contributes toward a healthy childhood.

A brief review in the Wall Street Journal prompted Marilyn Gignilliat to borrow *Last Harvest: How a Cornfield Became New Daleville*, Witold Rybczynski, from the library. The author, an architect and professor of Urban Design at the University of Pennsylvania takes us on a five year journey through the process as a 90-acre field is sold to a developer wishing to build a residential subdivision in rural Pennsylvania. If you think that our planning process moves at a 'glacial pace', or our ordinances are confusing, then this is the book for you!



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## Intern-to-Intern:

### One MPC Intern Interviews Another

By Britt Cantrell  
*Natural Resources Intern*

As the newest MPC intern, fresh off the college boat, my social life here revolves around first impressions. My first impressions of Cassie Byrd are this: a seemingly shy, yet sassy graphics design guru, ranging from cutsey to very professional. I followed her around with my spy camera, and confronted her Tuesday after lunch.

Britt: How did you end up at the MPC?

Cassie: It's actually a long story. I interned with Mr.

(Pat) Monahan from the county, I needed a summer job, he thought this would be a good place for me and that's that. It's actually pretty cool.

Britt: What flair do you bring to the job?

Cassie: Basically, I do any graphics design work. That is what I'm going to school for, so...I know a lot of programs.

Britt: What projects have you been working on lately?

Cassie: Well right now I'm working on the transportation module for Carry. It's going to say "Global Warming or Sustainability: You Choose." Here's my little hippie guy. (Turns the computer monitor)

Britt: What moment at the MPC really sticks out?

Cassie: They told me I was going to be digging through the trash. My momma's like, you have to what?

*Editor's note— No, we don't normally dig through trash here at the MPC. Only when we have interns. Seriously, sorting trash is a prime example of our staff's dedication to our recycling program— the results were compiled and shared with staff as encouragement. And yes, we (at least some of us) got our hands dirty too.*

## SAGIS Reaches a Milestone

Jason Lee  
*Sr. GIS Analyst*

Its been a year since SAGIS director Noel Perkins filled his post. What has SAGIS been up to? Here are a few highlights from our list of accomplishments.

**Training-** So far, SAGIS has trained 38 county employees, 53 city employees and 14 MPC employees in SAGIS training classes. Sign up yourself at <http://mike.sagis.local/training/>

SAGIS has created and/or adopted technical standards for addressing , imagery and lidar. These standards will insure that Savannah and Chatham County will always be working with the best available GIS data.

SAGIS worked with the city and county and acquired imagery for 2008; the first 6 inch resolution orthoimagery for Chatham County and the City of Savannah. Some new and updated layers (structures and pavement for example) will also be created from the new imagery. The new imagery will be available August 22, 2008.

**Centerlines-** SAGIS completely overhauled the centerline layer for Chatham County. This layer is the basis for Emergency Service response, yet was full of both spatial and attribute errors. SAGIS first edited all road segments to be truly on the 'centerline' of the road, then named or 'attributed' all roads correctly. The new layer is now in use by Emergency Services.

SAGIS created a damage assessment tool for CEMA. This is a GIS based tool that CEMA can

use to efficiently and accurately do damage assessments post-disaster, streamlining their federal aid process.

Organized Savannah's first GIS Day, which was a huge success by all accounts! Over 350 people participated in 2007's event!

The Master Address Database (MAD) addressing tool is now in production use. The tool drastically cuts down on processing time for the addition of new address points as well as new road names.

**Data Ownership** – all SAGIS Layers now have an owner and an update frequency. This information is vital for knowing when updates to a particular dataset will be coming as well as which entity (department or bureau) is responsible for the updates. The list is available at <http://mike.sagis.local>.



Imagery for Chatham County

# Progress Continues on Unified Zoning Ordinance

## Director's Corner

(continued from cover)

by the creation of the Chatham County Resource Protection Commission, whose focus will be to recommend important land for purchase to safeguard our ecosystems and the quality of our water supply far into the future.

One of the main goals of the rewrite of our zoning ordinance is to include the opportunity for application of sustainable and smart growth concepts. A main challenge of this is to create, within the ordinance, flexibility to permit community plans that use non-traditional methods to address green development and to easily adapt to changes as more innovation is proposed by builders.

In June, I attended the mid-year meeting of the Transportation Research Board (part of the National Academy of Sciences), which typically covers the topics that transportation planners usually talk about, but this one was different. A theme running through the conference was the need to address climate change. Many communities throughout the United States have already developed plans to reduce carbon emissions by 80% or more by 2050. I was surprised how far some communities have gone in their planning to reach these goals.

Where are these efforts leading? It is clear climate change needs to be addressed in Savannah and Chatham County, not just to comply with federal mandates, but to ensure the future quality of life for our children such as Olive, Gavin, Annabelle, Griffin, Emily, Nathan, Madeline, Cameron, Zoe, Hal, Jackson, Charlie, Katie, Kevin, Finn, Jamie, Madison, and Christian, among others. They are the young children or grandchildren of our planning staff. In 2050 they will be nearing their retirement – hopefully looking back at us and saying how well we managed our resources today.

*Courtland Hyser,  
Land Use Planner*

MPC staff continues to make progress on writing a new zoning ordinance for Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County. The project, known as the Unified Zoning Ordinance, seeks to update and modernize zoning, with the ultimate goals of improving local zoning regulations and making the ordinance easier to use and understand.

The first component of the project, an assessment report that analyzed the current zoning ordinances for Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County, was completed in June of 2007. The second component, the administrative procedures section of the new ordinance, was completed in January of this year. The third component, currently underway, will be completed later this summer.

This third component is the heart and soul of the new zoning ordinance, because it is the component where the zoning districts themselves are being drafted. Understanding the nuances of zon-

ing districts can be complicated, but at their core they are primarily used to regulate two things: land use and development standards. Land use refers to the activities that are permitted within a zoning district, such as stores, factories, or houses. Development standards regulate dimensional characteristics within a district by setting minimum or maximum standards for things like lot size, building setbacks, development density, building height, and so on.

The current zoning ordinances for the City of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County have been in place since the early 1960s and have been amended extensively over time, resulting in a relatively complicated zoning system with 126 unique districts and use tables that span dozens of pages in length. As work on component three of the Unified Zoning Ordinance progresses, MPC staff members remain confident that the total number of zoning districts can be greatly reduced, and that the entire ordinance can be streamlined and enhanced to make it easier to use, understand, and enforce. A draft of the Unified Zoning Ordinance will be released for public comment next year, after all of the sections have been written.

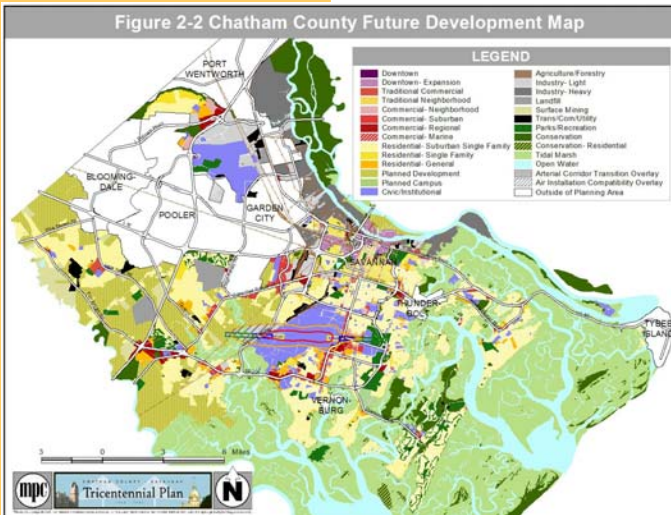
To learn more about the Unified Zoning Ordinance, please visit <http://www.thempc.org/UnifiedZoning/unifiedZoning.html> where you can download a copy of the Zoning Assessment Report, read answers to frequently asked questions, and more.



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

*'This third component is the heart and soul of the new zoning ordinance'*

Figure 2-2 Chatham County Future Development Map





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

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

Check out the Savannah Area Recycling Centers Map at:

[http://www.mpcnaturalresources.org/ecycling-as-sets/Sav\\_Area\\_Recycling.pdf](http://www.mpcnaturalresources.org/ecycling-as-sets/Sav_Area_Recycling.pdf)

*Soaker hose at work.*



*'Don't use your toilet as a trash can.'*

It's that time again - **water conservation** will be most critical for the next few months. Here are some tips to conserve water:

### **Kitchen & Laundry**

- Eliminate leaks by turning faucets off completely and, as needed, replace old gaskets. A single dripping faucet can waste as much as 3600 gallons a year.
- Use the "water-saver" setting or make sure your machine is set for the most efficient use.
- Only wash full loads of dishes or clothes.

### **Bathroom**

- If you hear running water in your toilet tank fix the leak by replacing the faulty hardware.
- Flush only when necessary. Install a water-filled plastic jug in your toilet tank to reduce the water used per flush.
- Don't use your toilet as a trash can.
- Take fewer and shorter showers.
- Don't leave the water running while rinsing, shaving, or brushing teeth.

### **Lawn & Garden**

- Hold your garden hose close to the roots of plants so that there's little waste and evaporative loss (soaker hoses are even more efficient).
- Water slowly so that the soil soaks up all the water you use. To avoid the possibility of disease (due to promotion of fungi growth), and minimize evaporation, the best time to water is very early morning hours (dawn to approximately 9 am).
- Avoid watering on windy days (which increases evaporation).
- Never let water run unnecessarily. Installing a spray handle helps. Allow your grass to grow to approximately 3 inches before cutting.
- Install a timer and a rain sensor on outdoor irrigation systems.
- Position sprinklers so that they do not water the pavement. Do not over water allowing water to run down the street. Note that turf grasses can survive on as little as a half inch of water per week.
- When washing the car, place the car on the grass and use soap and water from a bucket. Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle for the final rinse so that the water runs only when you need it.
- Don't use the hose to clean driveways and sidewalks; instead use a broom, which will provide more exercise.
- Mulch plants to reduce evaporation and help retain moisture. Mulch is available from Chatham County at no charge. For more information, please call 652-6858.

*Jackie Jackson Teel  
Natural Resources Administrator*