



MPC Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2020

The MPC is following CDC guidance regarding COVID-19 while continuing to remain open for business.



Photo by Savannah Rohleder

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Plan 2040, our Comprehensive Plan, is a shared vision for the future of our community.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs establishes the standards and procedures for comprehensive planning by all local governments in Georgia (Chapter 110-12-1 Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning). In order to maintain qualified local government certification, and thereby remain eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs, each local government must prepare, adopt, maintain, and implement a comprehensive plan as specified in the State's standards. Each community's comprehensive plan must include specific plan elements, communities are also encouraged to go beyond these minimum required elements and supplement its comprehensive plan with other plan elements to make the overall plan a good fit for the community.

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be a guide for the short- and long-term growth, redevelopment, and preservation of a municipality that reflects the community's values and goals and lays out strategies to achieve them. It is designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the health and viability of the area. Plan 2040, our Comprehensive Plan, will function as our community's principal guiding document.



Follow us on social media to keep up with our progress & learn about upcoming meetings



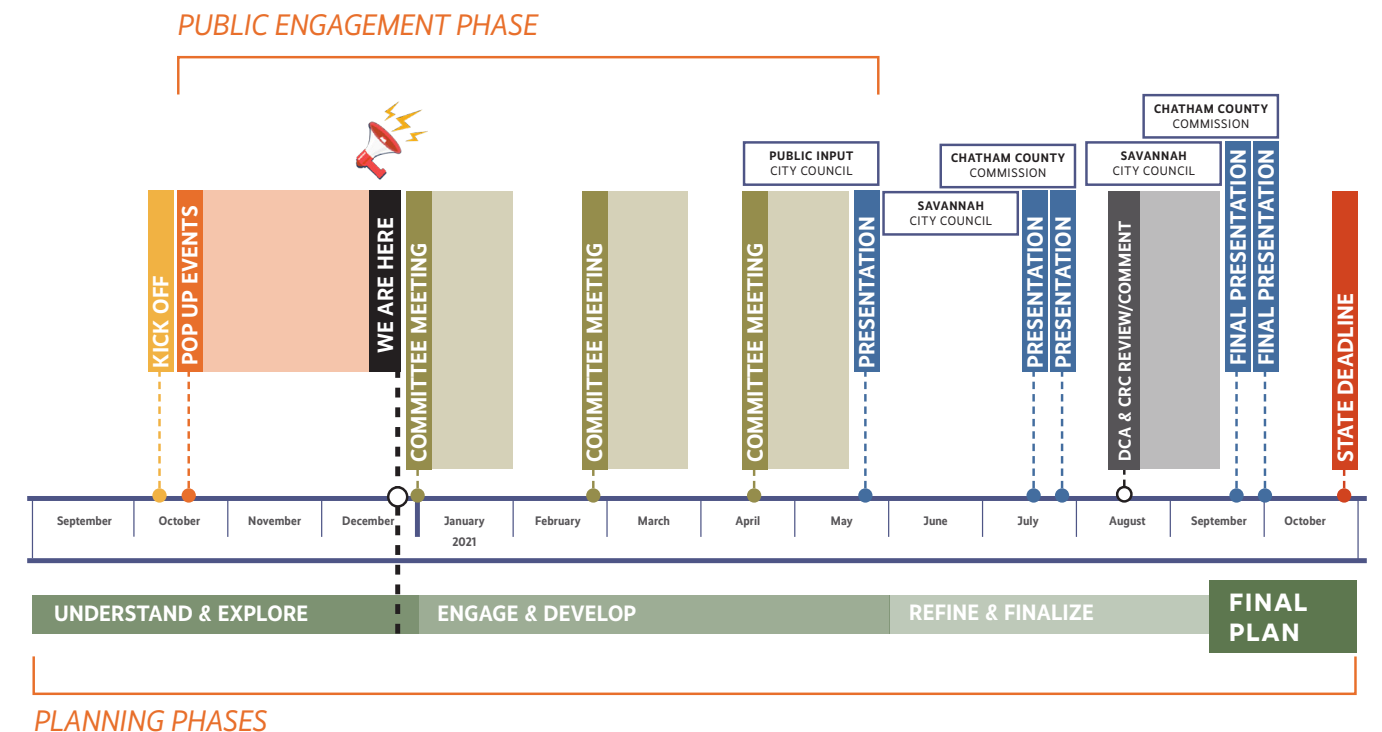
@Plan_2040



@MPCNatResources



@MPC Natural Resources



Plan 2040 timeline

The MPC is responsible for updating the Comprehensive Plan for unincorporated Chatham County and the City of Savannah, and this year Garden City and Pooler have engaged the MPC to update their Comprehensive Plans as well. Plan 2040 is a five-year update of the existing Comprehensive Plan that will be used by local officials as a guide to help make policy decisions regarding the community's growth and development for the next twenty years.

For Chatham County to remain a desirable place to live and work, our communities must follow a strategic approach in dealing with future development that balances economic development, natural resources, transportation options, and a high quality of life for all our residents. With your help, Plan 2040 will establish such a framework that will be used by local officials as a guide to help make policy decisions regarding the community's growth and development for the next twenty years.

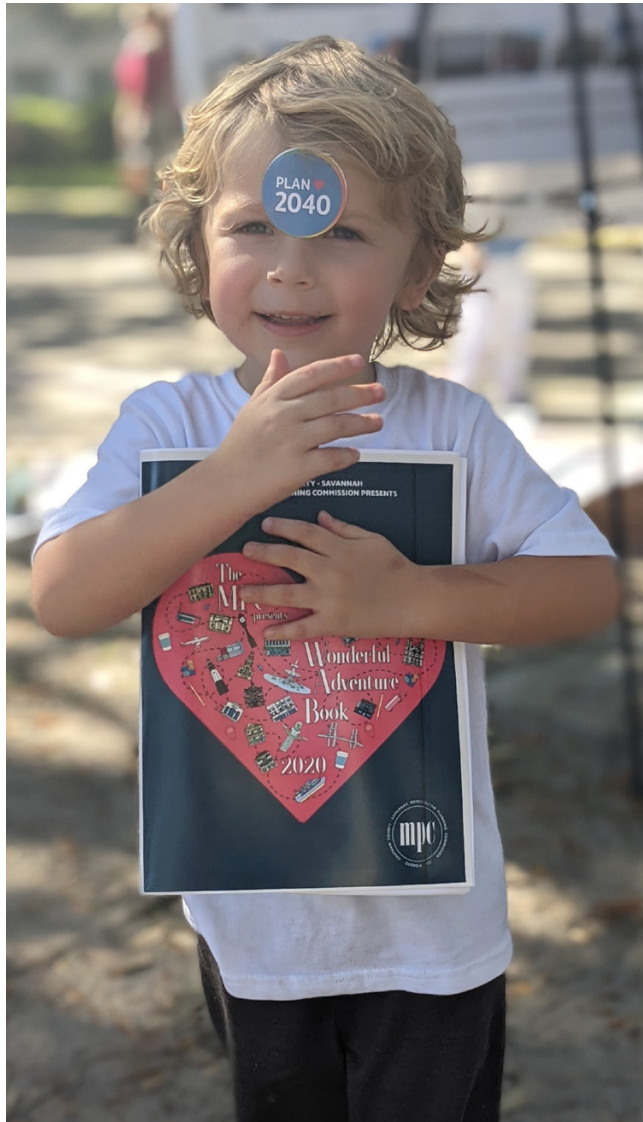
Public outreach for Plan 2040 has already begun! We kicked off our official community engagement in October with a pop-up event at the Starland Yard mini-market. Since then, we have continued to meet with Chatham County residents to ask for their thoughts and feedback on the future of our community. Public engagement events will be ongoing through 2021 so that residents can share their ideas and inform the content of Plan 2040.

For more information on how to get involved, please visit <https://mpc.com-pplan2040.org/Home/GetInvolved>. There, you'll find a schedule of our upcoming events, including several virtual public meetings scheduled for January 19th & 20th, and links to our public survey and comment map.



Did you know?

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by projecting how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved.



Photos on this page were taken during the Plan 2040 public engagement event at the Forsyth Farmers' Market on November 21, 2020.

Top: the Plan 2040 banner and tent, which were located near the front of the market; Above: Executive Director Melanie Wilson taking a selfie with Advance Planning staff (L to R) Asia Hernton, Director Jackie Jackson, and Kait Morano at the Plan 2040 booth; Left: a child with the MPC's Wonderful Adventure Book and Plan 2040 sticker.

Right: Kait Morano discussing amenities a boy would like to see in his neighborhood and helping him place his ideas on the map at the Plan 2040 Garden City Public Meeting on December 9, 2020; Bottom: Jackie Jackson asking a group of Garden City residents about conservation of open space during the Plan 2040 event at the Garden City Senior Center on November 24, 2020; Below: cards showing people's responses to the question "what makes a city great?" at the Plan 2040 pop-up event on October 28, 2020 at the Starland Yard Mini-Market .



Coastal Empire Resilience Network

Photo by Nikita Fox

MPC awarded grant to form network focused on making the region more resilient to the effects of climate change.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (GA DNR CRD) has awarded the MPC a grant to aid in the formation of the Coastal Empire Resilience Network (CERN). This project will ultimately benefit local jurisdictions within the coastal empire by actively improving the resilience of the area.

CERN is meant to engage regional community partners, municipal staff, and policymakers in discussions around the environmental threats facing the coastal region and opportunities to improve the resilience of our communities, critical infrastructure, and vulnerable populations. The network will offer an opportunity to share resources and coordinate strategies to address the physical, economic, and social challenges Chatham County and the rest of the coastal region faces due to climate change. Additionally, CERN will strengthen the ability of the region to be more resilient, allowing the community to prepare, adapt, and respond to both short-term and long-term complex climate- and weather-related challenges.

MPC staff will be supported on the project by our new intern, Sonia Olivia Muhammad.

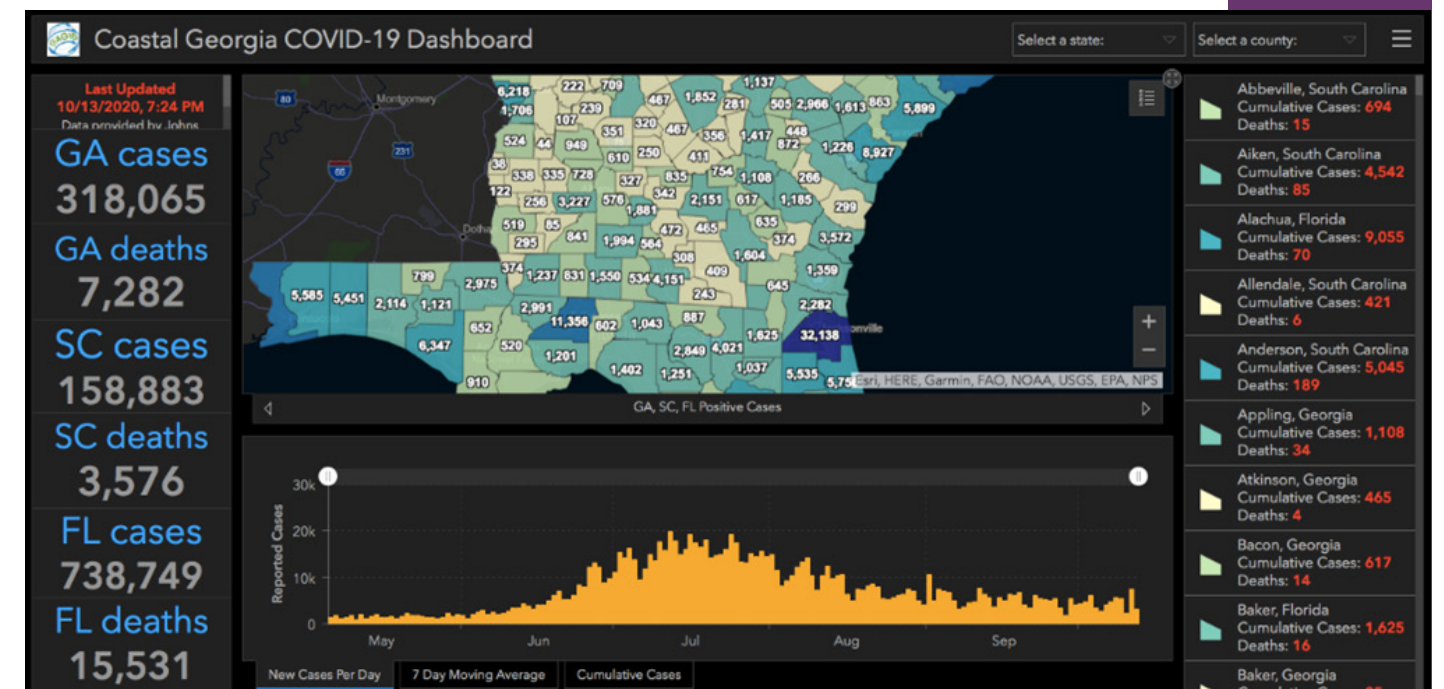


Photo by Mick Haupt

SAGIS

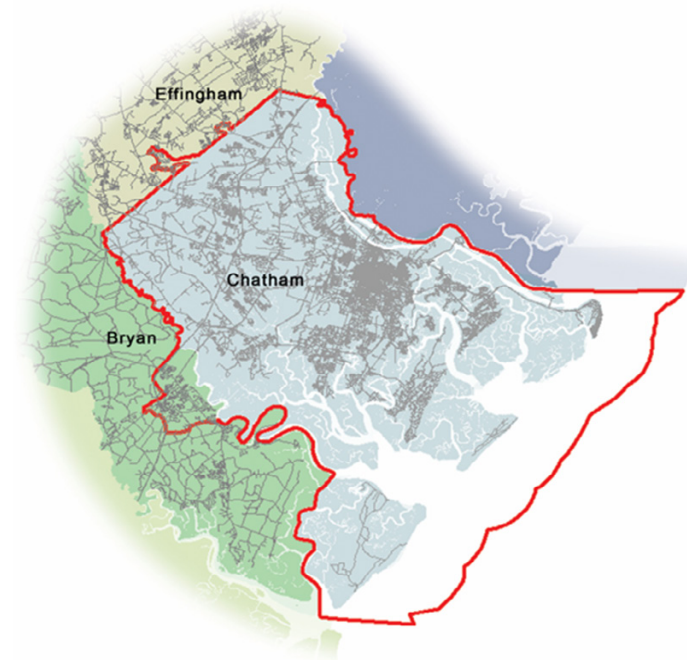
Celebrating GIS Day, Virtually

November 18th was GIS Day, an annual event to explore, celebrate, and showcase the uses and benefits of GIS. Although GIS Day looked quite different this year, volunteers were still able to connect virtually with local students and educate them on how GIS is used in their day-to-day jobs. SAGIS's Anna Stamatogiannakis joined Mrs. Lewis-Jackson's 8th grade class from the Hesse K-8 School, who sent in a list of thought-provoking questions beforehand. Anna talked about the basics of GIS, showed some example maps, and performed a demonstration of the software SAGIS staff uses each day. While we missed seeing the students in person the virtual event was a great alternative to our traditional GIS Day event.



The CORE MPO Participation Plan is Getting an Update

The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) provides a forum for local decision-making regarding federal transportation funds that come to the urbanized area. The CORE MPO Board sets regional, long-term transportation policy; prioritizes projects; and approves the long-range plan, short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other required documents.



CORE MPO serves Chatham, Bryan, and Effingham counties.

The MPO is composed of the following committees:

- CORE MPO Board
- Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT)
- Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC)

Each of these groups meets once every even numbered month (February, April, June, etc.). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings took place in-person at the MPC. Currently, for safety reasons, all meetings are now being held virtually. For most of the committees, this switch to meeting online has led to an increase in attendance in recent months. This outcome demonstrates an important benefit of virtual meetings: by removing some of the barriers—like commuting—that may have previously made it difficult for people to participate, online meetings can improve engagement across the community.

The Participation Plan is a document that details how public outreach is conducted by the CORE MPO. Since the usual in-person meetings and public outreach events were not an option, online outreach became the safest method to keep people informed. The Title VI



Plan details how the CORE MPO remains inclusive and fair to people of all races, genders, income levels, disabilities and languages.

Below are several public outreach ideas that the CORE MPO wishes to implement:

- Livestreaming meetings on social media so people have more opportunities to tune in.
- Hosting live Q&A's to have a dialogue with residents.
- Creating soundbite videos that summarize meetings.
- Using infographics and informational sheets to put technical topics into more understandable terms.
- Creating a survey to ensure that no demographic is underrepresented in meetings.

The CORE MPO also wants to remain inclusive and realizes that some of these outreach methods may be inaccessible to citizens who are blind or low vision, citizens who are deaf or low hearing, those without internet access, and non-English speakers. Therefore, the MPO is also strategizing on ways to make information more accessible. For example, at the last ACAT meeting, live interpreters translated the meeting into American Sign Language. This was a step in the right direction, but we know we need to do more. This includes collaborating with the Georgia Radio Reading Service to read important information over the radio for blind and low vision individuals, giving printed infographics to those without internet, and creating Spanish-language materials for those who do not speak English.

The ideas listed above were developed through collaboration with CORE MPO members, many of whom brought diverse perspectives to accessibility issues regarding

outreach for individuals with disabilities. Still, we need public input on the best way to stay informed. The CORE MPO will be holding a 45-day public comment period, beginning in January, during which individuals can provide their thoughts on which types of outreach they prefer. If you are interested, you can email Asia Hernton at herntona@thempc.org for more information.

Lastly, the CORE MPO is undergoing a certification review and want your input! The certification review process is a procedure in which MPO's with a population of over 200,000 are reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This review is conducted to assess the planning process of the CORE MPO. **We want your input on how this process is managed.** For more information, go to <https://www.thempc.org/Core> and look for the "CORE MPO TMA Certification Review" post in the "Latest News" section. There, you will find links to a comment card and survey—completed responses can be submitted via email to ann-marie.day@dot.gov by Tuesday, January 19, 2021. The next big event within this certification review is a public hearing hosted by FHWA and FTA on **January 19, 2021**. This virtual meeting is open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend. To register for the meeting, click [here](https://www.thempc.org/Core) or follow the link provided under "Latest News" on the CORE MPO homepage <https://www.thempc.org/Core>.



Above: Tybee Coast after Sea Island Storm Circa 1893, Photo Courtesy of Georgia Historical Society

Right: Fire in Multi-Tenant Housing–Date Unknown , MPC Archives



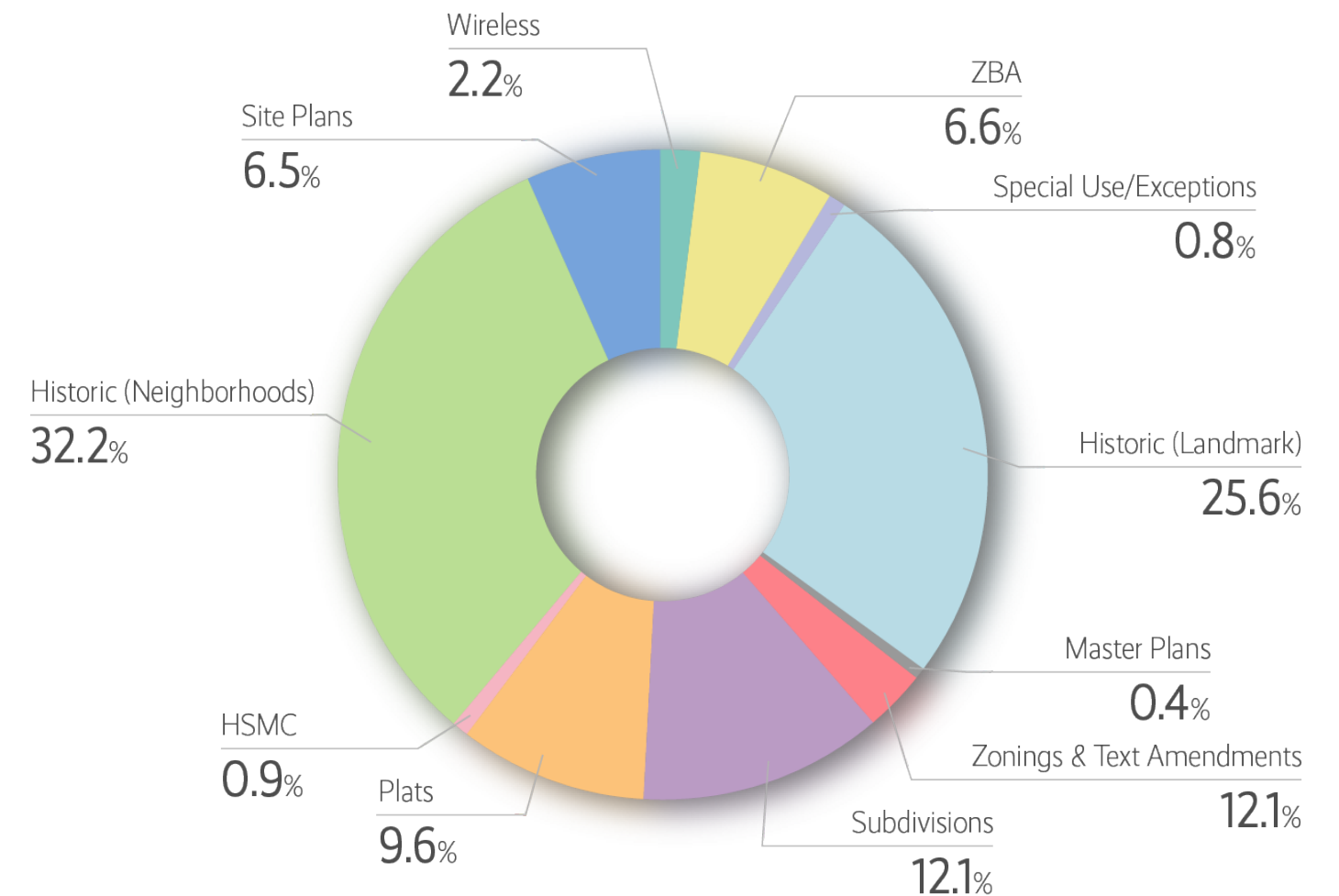
2021 Resilient Savannah Calendar cover

Resilient Savannah 2021 Calendar

The MPC's annual calendar promotes awareness of our history in Savannah and is designed to educate a new generation about the historic and cultural milestones of our fair city. "Resilient Savannah" is an opportunity to learn about the many struggles of pandemics, natural disasters, and setbacks of our community and how, together, we were able to recover and grow.

This calendar goes back to the beginnings of the great City of Savannah, beginning with a background of the Pandemic of 1733, which would result in Savannah becoming a more open and inclusive City. The calendar then takes you through the entire history of epidemics and pandemics in Savannah, finishing off with the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and how the City of Savannah has fought to protect its citizens.

Permit Applications

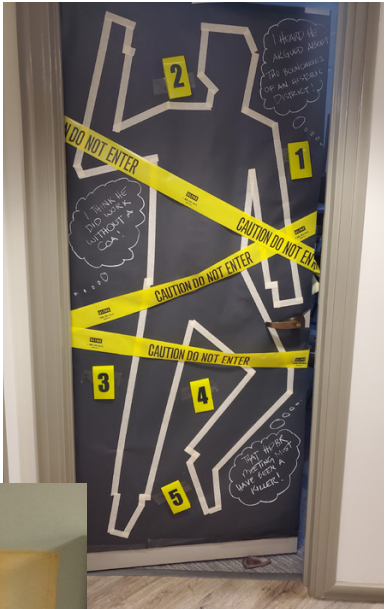


Between January and September 2020, MPC staff processed 785 permit applications for Development Services and Historic Preservation projects. The charts below represent activity in both the City of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County. Through the course of the pandemic, MPC staff has continued to serve our Boards and the public, and assist the private sector in the ongoing development of our community. These numbers indicate there has not been a significant downturn in development reviews and development activity has remained relatively consistent.



Around the MPC Office

From holiday door decorating contests to birthdays and Bosses' Day celebrations, MPC's staff has sought ways to bring some joy and entertainment to the office these past few months.



As a reminder to all readers, Chatham County, the City of Savannah, Garden City, and Pooler are all updating their Comprehensive Plans, and we need your input!

The MPC needs all residents to share their ideas and visions for the future of our communities. Take the Plan 2040 survey today!

Survey questions cover housing, land use, quality of life, natural resources, transportation, and economic development. Your feedback will help the MPC better understand what citizens would like to see more (or less) of and where the community leaders should focus future efforts. All responses will remain anonymous.

The Plan 2040 survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MPCPlan2040>. If you have any questions or would like to request a paper copy of the survey, please call MPC staff at 912-651-1480 or email us at plan2040@thempc.org. **The deadline to complete the survey is January 15, 2021.**



Upcoming Meetings

***Schedule may change. Please refer to the MPC website www.thempc.org for additional details & all application deadlines, including those pertaining to COVID-19.*

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Site & Monument 4:00 p.m.	8	9
10	11	12 MPC 1:30 p.m.	13 Historic Review Board 1:00 p.m.	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26 County ZBA 9:00 a.m.	27 Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m.	28 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	29	30

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 MPC 1:30 p.m.	3	4 Site & Monument 4:00 p.m.	5	6
7	8 CORE MPO ACAT 1:00 p.m.	9 SAGIS 9:00 a.m.	10 Historic Review Board 1:00 p.m.	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 CORE MPO TCC 2:00 p.m. CORE MPO CAC 5:30 p.m.	19	20
21	22 CORE MPO ACAT 1:00 p.m.	23 County ZBA 9:00 a.m. MPC 1:30 p.m.	24 CORE MPO Board 10:00 a.m. Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m.	25 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	26	27
28						



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