



# MPC Newsletter

Spring 2020

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



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# Planning for the Future while Respecting the Past

The Comprehensive Plan will guide our development and land use decisions as a City and County in the years to come.



One of the fundamental responsibilities of local government is planning and the preparation of plans. Planning is the word used to describe how a community shapes and guides growth and development. This process is often called “city planning,” “urban planning,” or sometimes “land use planning.”

The results of planning are contained in documents called “comprehensive plans” or “growth management plans.”

Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the community and local government wants.

In order to provide for better consistency and coordination between local governments in this vital activity, the State of Georgia has passed laws and regulations to guide communities in the preparation of their plans. MPC staff have begun working on the numerous elements of the Chatham

County - Savannah Comprehensive Plan, which is scheduled for update in October of 2021. Stay tuned for more information on the public process for this vital planning document for our community by checking the MPC’s website at [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) and following us on social media.

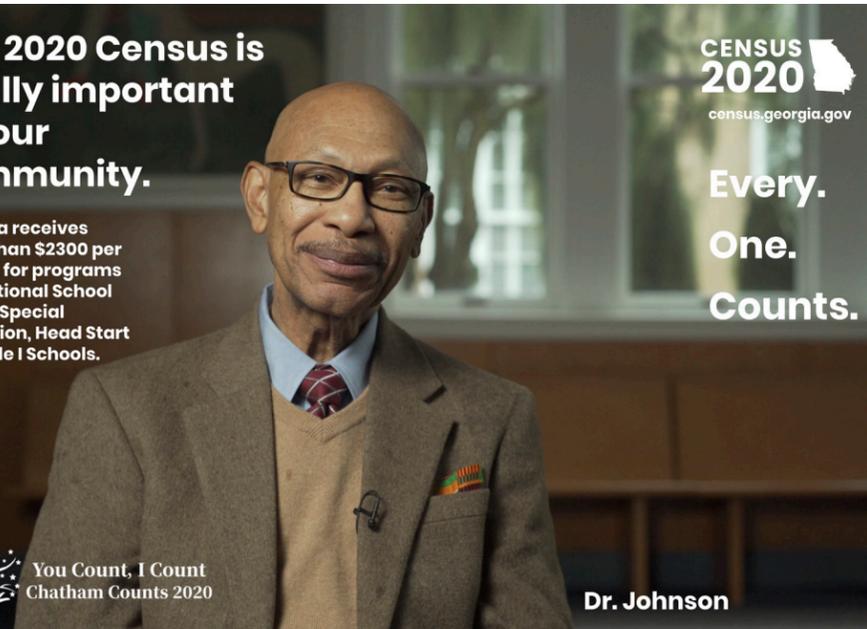
 MPC Natural Resources

 @MPCNatResources

The 2020 Census is vitally important for our community.

Georgia receives more than \$2300 per person for programs like National School Lunch, Special Education, Head Start and Title I Schools.

You Count, I Count  
Chatham Counts 2020



CENSUS 2020  
census.georgia.gov

Every.  
One.  
Counts.

Dr. Johnson

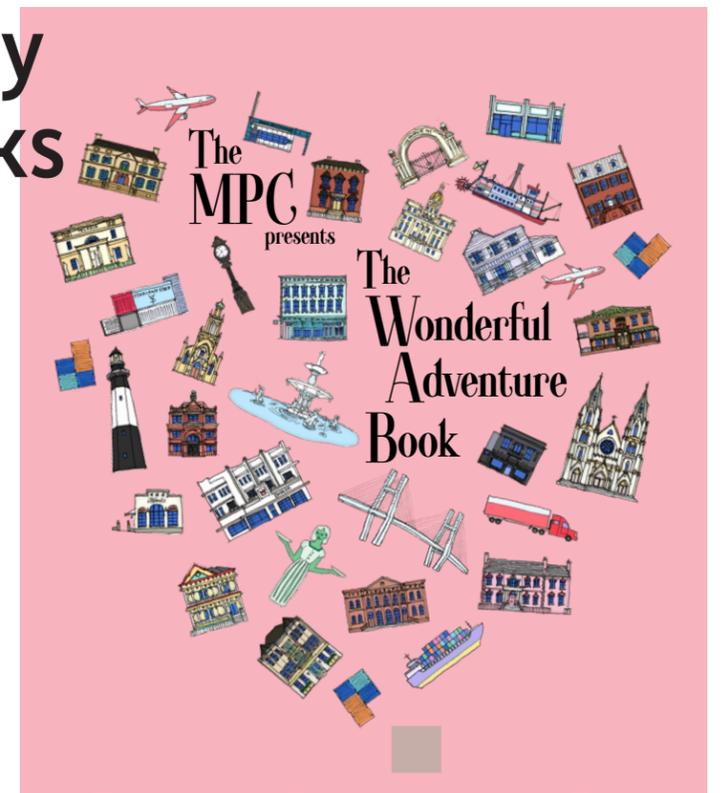
## Census Day is April 1<sup>st</sup>

It’s time for the 2020 Census! Data from the census helps the government allocate funding for important resources in our community. You can respond to the questionnaire online, by phone, or by mail. More information on ways to respond can be found at <https://2020census.gov>.

## Children’s Activity Book in the Works

The MPC will soon be presenting *The Wonderful Adventure Book*, an activity book full of challenging mazes, connect the dots, and word scrambles. As part of our Executive Director Melanie Wilson’s initiative for public outreach and education, *The Wonderful Adventure Book* has been created to educate our youth about the MPC, our lovely cities and towns, riverfronts, and nearby attractions. This activity book is a perfect gift for kids aged 8-12 and great to have during travel, vacation or to do indoors when the iPhone needs charging.

Please be on the lookout for *The Wonderful Adventure Book* in the summer of 2020. Check the MPC website [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) for updates.



# 2019 By the Numbers



# New Zoning Ordinance Officially In Place

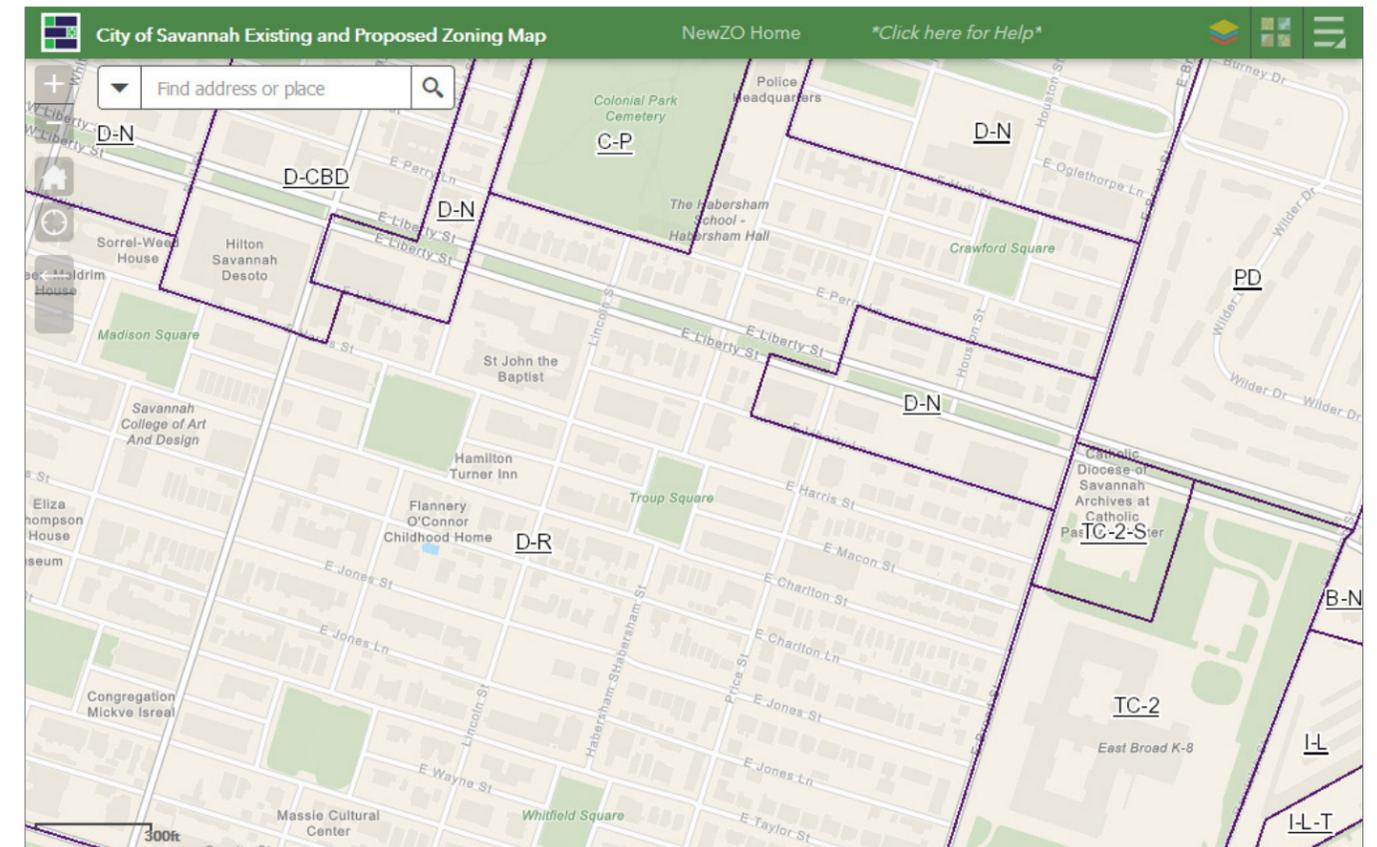
After several years and a great amount of community input, the City of Savannah's new zoning ordinance and zoning map was approved by City Council on July 18, 2019. Referred to as NewZO, this is the tool used to implement the Chatham County - Savannah Comprehensive Plan and revises the existing zoning code and zoning map. **As of March 1, 2020, any new development plans are now required to be submitted for review under NewZO.**

Zoning is used by jurisdictions across the country to classify the division of land into separate districts and regulates what uses are permitted, prohibited or permitted with

conditions. It is also used to promote compatible patterns of land uses and includes site development standards to maintain consistent and compatible development patterns.

To learn more about NewZO, the MPC and the City of Savannah created outreach materials and informational tools such as the NewZO zoning map and map viewer at <https://cloud.sagis.org/newzo> as well as a [video](#).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the MPC at 912-651-1440 or City of Savannah at 912-525-3097 or email [planning@savannahga.gov](mailto:planning@savannahga.gov).





Top left: Georgia Tech students help install a sensor on a private dock; Top right: CEMA Emergency Planner Randall Mathews and Georgia Tech Computer Scientist Russ Clark install a sensor on a Highway 17 bridge; Bottom: MPC Planner Kait Morano and others participate in the Map Room, an event to engage local residents on how sea level rise affects their communities.

# Mapping Flooding in Real-Time

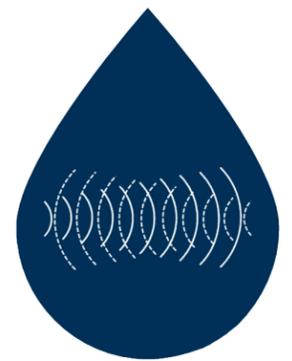
The Smart Sea Level Sensors Project has installed a network of internet-enabled water level sensors across flood-vulnerable Chatham County via a working partnership between officials from the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) and the City of Savannah, along with a diverse team of scientists and engineers from Georgia Tech. As partners on the project, MPC staff are working towards the goal of quantifying the short- and long-term hazards associated with continued sea level rise.

The network consists of over 40 sensors—with 30 additional sensors being assembled this spring by

students at Jenkins High School—and stretches across the entire county, capturing a wide range of tributary sizes, waterway orientations, and building densities. The data collection will be complemented by a suite of modeling tools to inform flood risk and vulnerability, including a high-resolution coastal ocean model as well as an integrated hydrological model to capture surface runoff during high precipitation events. Taken together, this framework will enable the assessment of coastal flood risk and vulnerability, and help inform planning strategies for flood mitigation.

This is the first project of its kind in the region, and our goal is to

provide a template for expansions of this technology and community stakeholder framework to other areas of vulnerable coastline along the southeastern US.



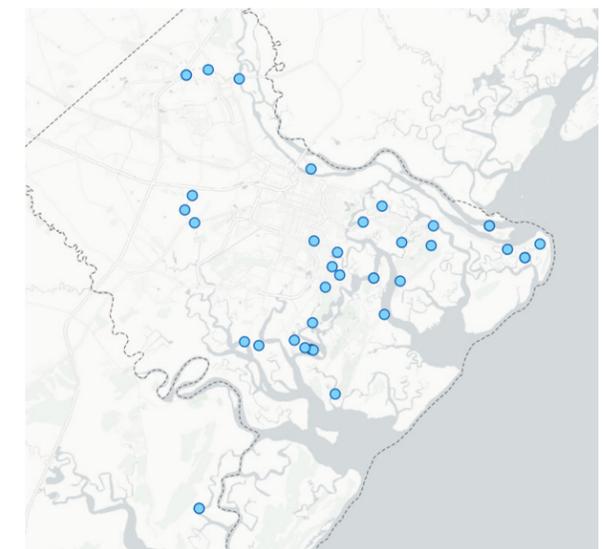
**SMART**  
SEA LEVEL SENSORS

## Datastream of water level measurements relative to the fixed position of the sensor

1626 Observations



Above: water level measurements for a sensor over a one week period; Right: sensor locations throughout Chatham County



Find out more at [www.sealevelsensors.org](http://www.sealevelsensors.org).

# SAGIS

## GIS Day Savannah

Approximately 400 local middle school students attended this year's event



Months of tireless preparation and planning by a team led by SAGIS staff gave way to the annual celebration of GIS Day Savannah on November 13, 2019 at Savannah Technical College. This year marked the 13th local event for GIS Day, an international celebration that is part of National Geographic's International Geography Week. Local 8th grade students and the public are invited each year to learn how GIS technology provides the capabilities to analyze, visualize, manage,

and share important information. Approximately 400 students attended the event. Eighteen sponsor booths, including one manned by MPC Executive Director Melanie Wilson, displayed content related to GIS, where students interacted with GIS professionals. Students were given a "GIS Day Passport" highlighting different possible GIS career fields, in which they collected passport stamps when visiting each booth. Georgia Power sponsored a compass course where students learned to use

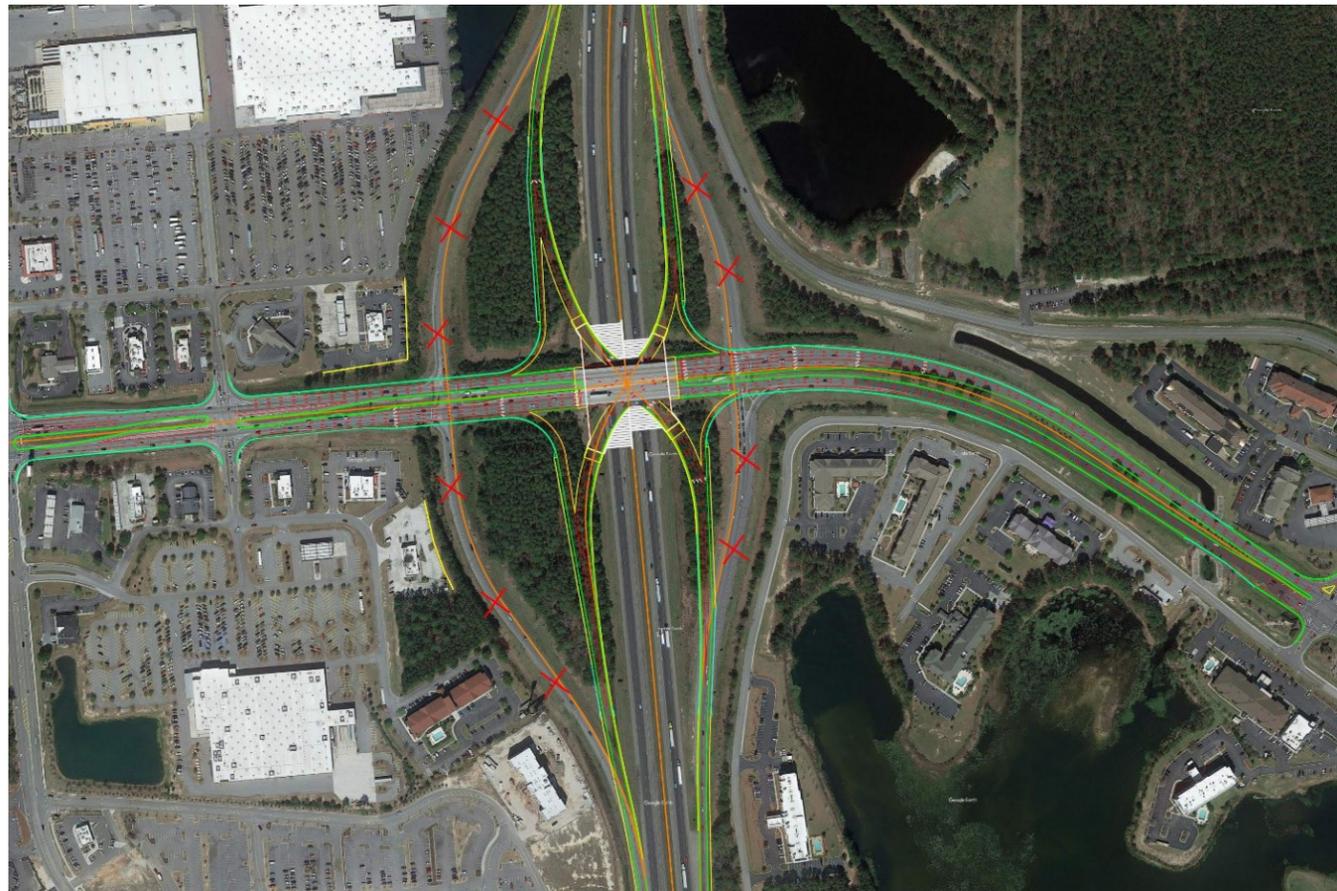
a compass by navigating an outdoor field with points given to determine distances and bearings. Students also participated in structured classroom workshops that introduced them to ArcGIS Online GIS software. Students used transparencies of the state of Georgia in a 'hard-copy' GIS to solve a series of geographic questions. This annual event would not be possible without the hard work of the GIS Day Savannah Committee throughout the year and the generous sponsor support.



Top: SAGIS staff John Kidd and David Ramsey talk to students about GIS at the MPC; Bottom left: SAGIS's Mandy Terkhorn and the MPC's Kait Morano and Sandy Michel gather information from students and update a live web map; Bottom right: SAGIS Director Lara Hall being interviewed for the evening news!

# CORE MPO's Interchange Studies

# CORE MPO



The CORE MPO authorized funding for two interchange traffic studies in the Fall of 2017: the I-95 / Airways Avenue Interchange Study and the I-16 / Little Neck Road / Future Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Interchange Study. Both studies were completed in December 2019, and recommendations have been submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

## I-95 / Airways Avenue

Two viable interchange improvement alternatives were identified to address the congestion caused by nearby commercial development and continued commercial and residential development in western Chatham County, either reconstruct the existing diamond interchange as a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI), or retain the existing interchange, adding flyover ramps for southbound I-95.

## I-95 / Airways Avenue Single Point Urban Interchange Concept

## I-16 / Little Neck Road / Jimmy DeLoach Parkway

In order to accommodate increased traffic volumes anticipated upon the completion of the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, as well as anticipated commercial and residential development in western Chatham County, a Diverging Diamond Interchange is recommended

at this location. Since Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension will connect with the existing interchange when it opens in late 2021, the study recommends interim improvements, including signalization of the intersections, which are currently being implemented.

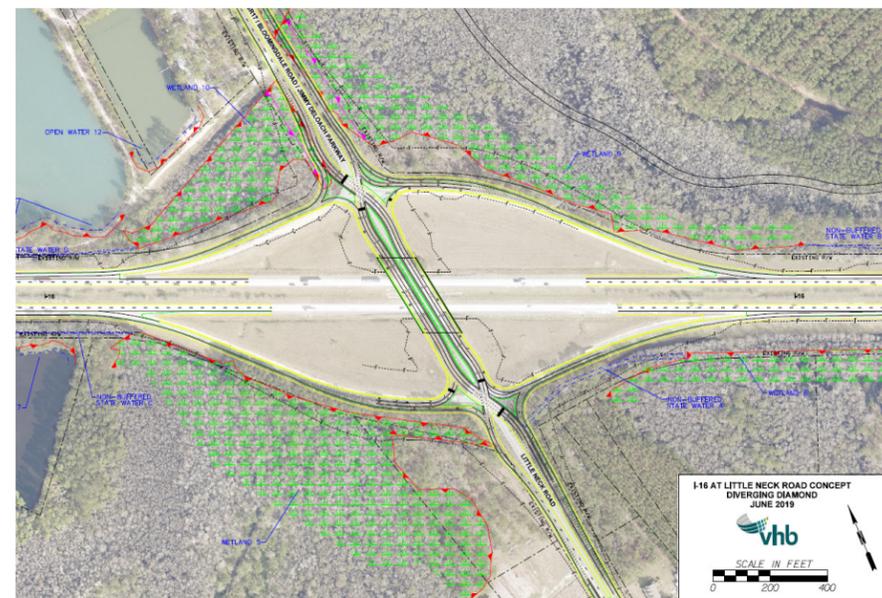
### Next Steps

Both studies have been reviewed by CORE MPO staff and have been forwarded to GDOT for concurrence and further direction. Changes in access to the interstate system are conditioned on the approval of an Interchange Modification Report (IMR) by GDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. To the maximum extent possible, both studies have been carried out to IMR standards in order to streamline the implementation of recommended improvements once a decision is made to advance the projects. Beyond the requirement of the IMR, both improvements would follow the GDOT's normal Plan Development Process.

For further information on each interchange study, including traffic forecasts, alternatives studied, and alternatives evaluation results, please visit [www.thempc.org/Core/Studies](http://www.thempc.org/Core/Studies).



I-95 / Airways Avenue Single Point Urban Interchange Concept



I-95 / Airways Avenue Diverging Diamond Interchange Concept

# Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Originally adopted in 2014, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan was formally updated this February.



For more information on the updated plan and other non-motorized planning efforts, please visit [www.thempc.org/Core/Bpp](http://www.thempc.org/Core/Bpp) or scan the QR code below with your cell phone or tablet.



CORE MPO adopted the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in October of 2014. Since 2014, CORE MPO staff have collected data and continued to re-evaluate the original plan. An update to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan was adopted in February 2020. It includes several additions and upgrades to facility types.

Many of the additions were to incorporate local priority trail initiatives that have arisen since the original plan adoption in 2014, such as Tide to Town. Additional highlights of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan update include:

- Inclusion of Tide to Town, East Coast Greenway, and US 1 Route
- Truman Trail southward extension
- Bull Street extension (Washington to Thackery)
- Canal District area
- Aspirational concepts such as bike boulevards and rail to trail
- Modifications to downtown bike routing and alternate parallel roads providing more bikeable routing
- Addition of Eastern Wharf streets
- Updated sidewalk mapping
- Cycle Tracks on Montgomery Street and River Street

# Historic Preservation Commission

On September 1, 2019, as required by the new zoning ordinance, the City of Savannah created the Savannah Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC is the review authority for all Local Historic Districts and Conservation Districts, with the exception of the Savannah Downtown Historic District.

The purpose of the HPC is to provide for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of areas having a special historic, cultural, or aesthetic interest or value.

Within the Local Historic District, the HPC oversees rehabilitation, new construction, demolition, and any alterations that affect the exterior of buildings. If a property is located within a Conservation District, demolition requests of historic buildings are heard by the HPC.

The following districts are overseen by the HPC:

## Local Historic Districts

- Victorian Historic District
- Cuyler-Brownville Historic District
- Streetcar Historic District

## Conservation Districts

- Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Conservation District
- Ardmore Conservation District
- Parkside-Daffin Park Conservation District
- Historic Carver Village-Flatman Village Conservation District

**Interested in serving as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission?**

Apply at the City of Savannah's website [www.savannahga.gov](http://www.savannahga.gov).

For more information on the HPC, please visit [www.thempc.org/Historic/HPComm](http://www.thempc.org/Historic/HPComm).

# Around the MPC Office

If you've stopped by the MPC recently, you've seen that we have been in the midst of some much needed renovations to our office space for the past few months. During this process, we are doing our part to **reduce, reuse, and recycle** as much as we can. We were able to reuse much of our existing furniture to reduce our consumption of new materials and we purchased many items second-hand from Virginia College, including the chairs in our Mendonza hearing room!



We also are working to find others who can use the items we no longer need here at the MPC. Ms. Joyner with the Redemption Center Church purchased the chairs from our hearing room, thereby keeping them out of the landfill. Thank you Ms. Joyner and the Redemption Center Church!

Our office renovations are expected to be completed in May 2020.



# Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler!

Nothing says Mardi Gras like a King Cake! Mardi Gras, also known as "Fat Tuesday," began in 1875 and is now seen as a day to indulge in tradition such as eating one too many slices of King's Cake and looking for the baby inside of your slice of this treat. If you find the little one lying in your slice, then you are the King or Queen of Mardi Gras (at least, among your group of friends).

Executive Director Melanie Wilson brought this Fat Tuesday tradition to the MPC by providing a tasty King Cake for the staff to search for the elusive baby inside!

# Join Us in Welcoming Our New Staff!

## Jackie Jackson

Jackie Jackson is the MPC's Director of Advance Planning and Special Projects. Technically Jackie isn't a new employee—she was previously with the MPC for 14 years as the Director of Comprehensive and Natural Resources Planning until 2016. At that time, she began working for the City of Garden City overseeing Special Projects for the City Manager and City Council. Now back at the MPC, her focus will be the update of the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan and focusing on resiliency policies to benefit the community.



## Nicholas Fazio

Nic serves as an urban planner and designer in the Department of Advance Planning and Special Projects. His passion is in illustrations, digital modeling, urban design, and placemaking. Nic has been part of various design teams focusing on master planning, land planning, and conceptual architecture. Before joining the MPC, Nic worked with Urban Design Associates and is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh with a Master's in urban design. Nic is currently pursuing accreditation in Planning.



## Sandy Michel

Sandy is an urban planner with an Architecture degree from Florida Atlantic University and a Master of Science in Sustainable Building Conservation from Cardiff University. She is currently working for the MPC's Advance Planning, Historic Preservation, and Development Services departments, where she utilizes her knowledge and expertise in urban planning, architecture, historic conservation, and engineering. Before joining the MPC, Sandy worked the planning departments of Broward and Lake Counties in Florida.



# Important Information Regarding MPC Meetings & COVID-19

In response to the coronavirus disease, all City of Savannah meetings with the Planning Commission and other review bodies will be postponed through April 20, 2020. This includes:

- Rezoning
- All Local Historic and Conservation District Certificates of Appropriateness for Board Review (staff level reviews will continue to be accepted and processed, electronically, during this time)
- Historic Site and Monument Commission (Markers, Monuments, and Public Art)
- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments
- Special Use Approvals

Additionally, no meetings for the following review bodies will occur during this time:

- The Planning Commission
- City of Savannah Zoning Board of Appeals
- Historic Site and Monument Commission
- Savannah Historic District Board of Review
- Historic Preservation Commission

The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) is cancelling the following April 2020 meetings as well, including:

- CORE MPO Board meeting
- Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meeting
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting
- Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) meeting

Thank you for your patience during this emergency situation and please stay well.

Please refer to the MPC website [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) for additional details & all application deadlines.

## Upcoming Meetings

\*\*Schedule may change. Please refer to the MPC website [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) for additional details & all application deadlines.

### May

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	13 Historic Review Board 1:00 p.m.	14	15	16
17	18	19 MPC 1:30 p.m.	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

### June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Site & Monument 4:00 p.m.	5	6
7	8	9 MPC 1:30 p.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.	24 Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m. CORE MPO Board 10:00 a.m.	25 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	26	27
28	29	30 MPC 1:30 p.m.				



Melanie Wilson  
*Executive Director*

Pamela Everett  
*Assistant Executive Director  
Compliance & Operations*

Christy Adams  
Roger Beall  
Debbie Burke  
Nicholas Fazio  
Sabrina Finau  
Jessica Hagan  
Lara Hall  
Sally Helm  
Jackie Jackson  
Ryan Jarles  
Marcus Lotson  
Kevin MacLeod

Leah G. Michalak  
Sandy Michel  
Mary Mitchell  
Kait Morano  
David Ramsey  
Stephanie Rossi  
James Small  
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