



# MPC Newsletter

## Fall/Winter 2021



Photo by Benjamin Disinger

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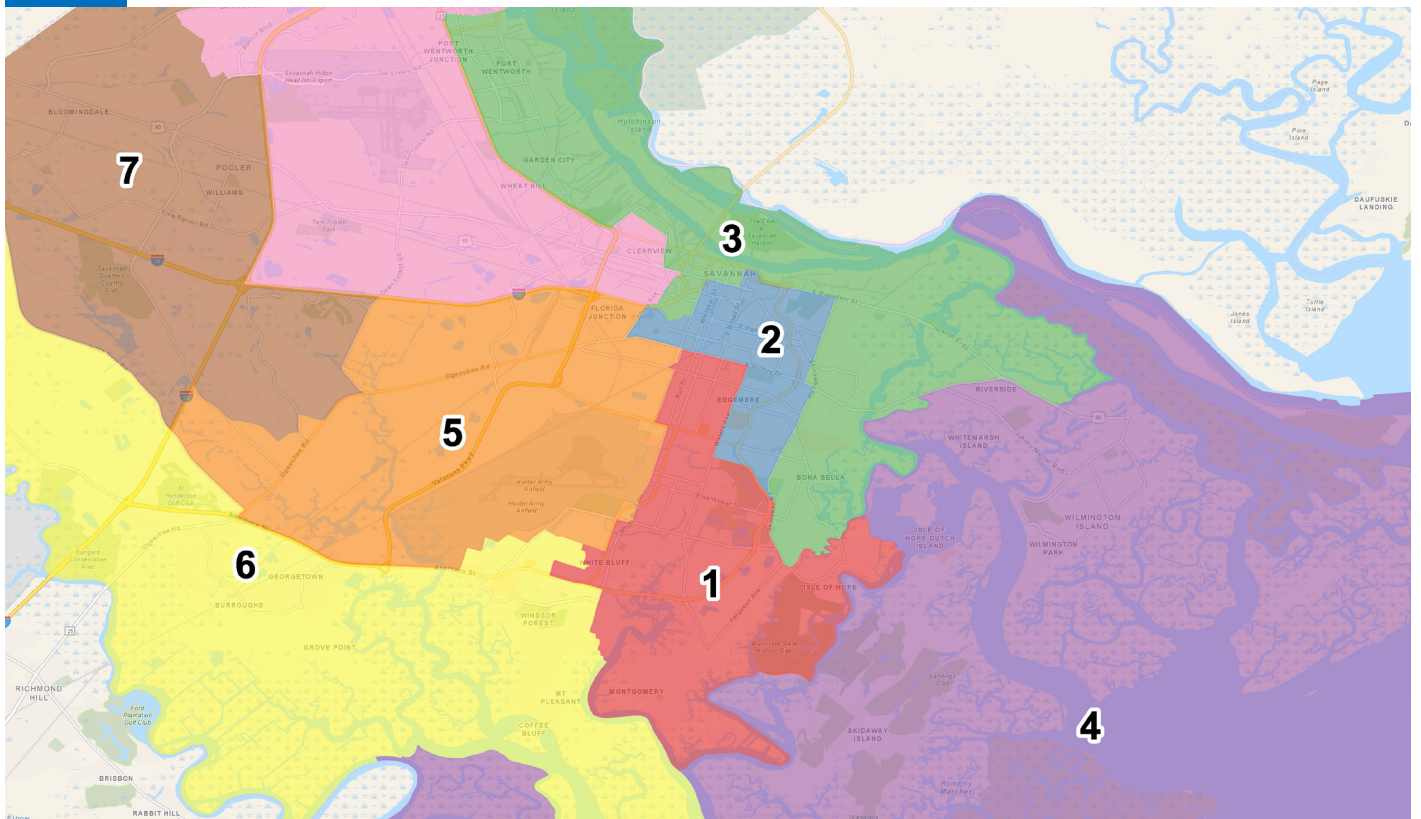
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# Redistricting Chatham County

The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission is charged with coordinating and providing technical support for the redistricting of the Chatham County Board of Commission, City of Savannah Aldermanic, and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School Board Districts. Redistricting is the process of redrawing district boundaries based on population data. It occurs every ten years after the U.S. Census releases data gathered from the Decennial Census to redistribute the population evenly between voting districts.

The next step in the legal process requires the Draft Redistricting Plan be sent to the Georgia Reapportionment Office. After making a few adjustments based on their feedback, the Redistricting Plan was certified by the Reapportionment Office.

Once the Legislator is notified of the technical certification, legislation will be drafted to enact the new map, the General Assembly will pass the legislation and the Governor's signature will make the districts official for Chatham County. Next SAGIS & MPC staff will work with the City of Savannah Aldermen in 2022 for the redistricting of the city districts.

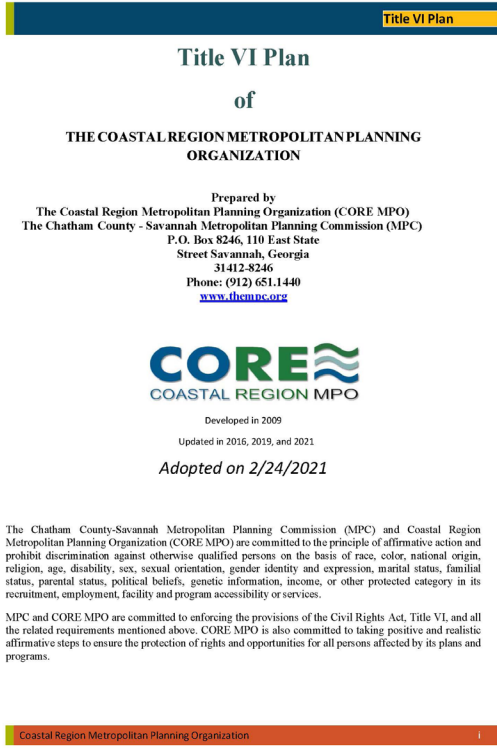


# CORE MPO

## Title VI Plan Update

The Title VI Plan outlines how the CORE MPO promotes inclusivity and prevents discrimination for residents of the Savannah Area. One of the ways the CORE MPO accomplishes this is by providing translated materials for people who have limited proficiency in the English language. Specifically, when the population of people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) grows beyond 1000 residents, the CORE MPO must provide translations in the language that LEP residents can understand. This helps prevent gaps in service and improves communication, so people who are not proficient in English can stay informed. In addition to Spanish, The CORE MPO will begin providing translations in Chinese and Vietnamese, as, according to the 2020 US Census Bureau, these populations have grown tremendously over the last decade. If you know any person with Limited English Proficiency skills, feel free to inform them of these updates.

To learn more, we invite you to visit the CORE MPO's Title VI website using the following link: [Title VI Plan Update](#)



## MTP 2050

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a large and detailed document. This is because it covers just about everything surrounding transportation. From highways, to public transit, to bike lanes, the MTP lays out a long-range plan on all forms of transportation in the Savannah Metropolitan Planning area. The Plan goes through an update every 5 years. These updates give residents the opportunity to give their input and communicate their transportation needs. It provides a forum for people to have their voices heard, documented, and put into action. Be on the lookout for your opportunity to be heard and get involved with the 2050 MTP update coming soon!

Feel free to browse the CORE MPO website for more information about the MTP and other transportation plans and projects using the link provided: [MTP 2050](#)

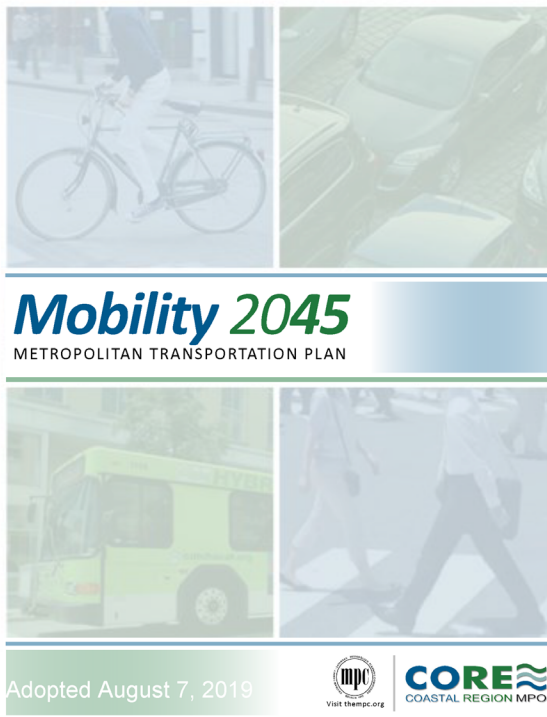






Photo by Farm Truck 912

## Shout Out: Farm Truck 912

Does a neighborhood in your community need access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable food?

Farm Truck 912 "Pop-Ups" are available to come to your community, business, and organization!

- Pop-ups are available on Fridays between 11am-6pm. They will take requests for other dates and times, but flexibility is very limited
- The truck can be location for two hours at a time but is not able to commit to any immediate rotating schedules
- Farm Truck 912 does not have the capacity to facilitate pop-ups outside of Chatham County

[Farm Truck 912 Pop-up](#)

## Progress Towards a Food Policy: Revisiting "Rediscovering Roots"

In 2011, the MPC completed its first ever Food Policy document to help the City of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County establish an implementation strategy to help ensure the community has access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable priced foods.

This document provided analysis, definitions, and recommendations to implement and complete the complicated task of creating a healthy food system. Since the research of food deserts has advanced significantly since 2011, the MPC wanted to acknowledge the efforts the City and County have made towards its original recommendations and provide current information and links to material on the following pages.





## Revisiting Recommendation 1: Establish A Vacant Lot Leasing Program

The City of Savannah approved a Community Garden Initiative in July of 2012. This program invites individuals and/or groups to use City-owned property in establishing a community garden.

The City of Savannah recognizes community gardens as valuable recreational and educational activities that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction, and community education.

Additionally, the City has a Land Bank Authority to acquire underutilized properties, as well as a Side Yard Program, which was established to address sites that are considered too small for development due to limited street frontage and/or depth. The purpose was to help alleviate the financial burdens of maintenance on the neighborhoods, and to move the community into repurposing the vacant lots for community gardens and urban farms. For more information on community gardens contact the City of Savannah at 912-651-6524.

## Revisiting Recommendation 2: Streamline the Process of Establishing a Farmers Market

The State, City and County have offered various manuals to establish farmers markets, mobile farmers markets, and community garden throughout the City/County including:

- [The Georgia Farmers Market Guide - Farmers Market Toolkit](#)
- [Savannah's Community Garden Manual](#)

While the material is helpful, the process has the potential to be streamlined further to reduce roadblocks for interested local organizations. This past year the MPC's Advance Planning and Special Projects Department drafted a Chatham County Food Truck Tool-Kit, and Mobile Farmers' Market Tool-Kit upon the request of Chatham County. The drafted material is currently being reviewed.

For more information on additional programs check out some of the links below.

- [Savannah Community Garden](#)
- [Savannah Land Bank](#)
- [Forsyth Farmers' Market](#)





### Revisiting Recommendation 3: Update the City and County's Animal Control Ordinance

As recommended by the MPC, the City and County's animal control ordinances were amended in 2019 and 2015 respectively to eliminate the keeping of livestock within the city. This unfortunately created additional roadblocks for residents that were interested in developing smaller scale urban agricultural systems. The City's Animal Control ordinance was updated to address the keeping of bees, chickens, and other livestock in the city.

A link to the amended Chatham County code is below:

[Chatham County Animal Services: Animal Ordinance](#)



### Revisiting Recommendation 4: Facilitate the establishment of a Produce Grocery in West Savannah

The MPC recommended facilitating the establishment of a produce grocery in West Savannah. As planners we realize the economic value and potential of West Savannah; however, historically the development community has shied away from this area of the City. As of late, West Savannah has reemerged as the home to the Canal District, and eventually the EnMarket Arena which will serve as a catalyst for future development. While much planning work has gone into the area, access to healthy, affordable food choices is still a major concern. A list of some previous plans for the West Savannah area include:

- West Savannah Revitalization Plan (2005)
- West Savannah Zoning (2006)
- August Avenue Corridor Revitalization Plan (2012)

While there is still more research and analysis to complete, the City and County have made huge strides to create a hospitable environment for a flourishing food system to emerge in this area.



# Broughton Streetscaping: “But What is Streetscaping?”



As progress continues on Savannah's Broughton Streetscaping Plan, a looming question comes to mind: what exactly is a streetscape and what does streetscaping mean? Before we dive into the terminology, it is important to understand the context of Broughton Street and why there is a need for streetscaping.

Previously known as “Georgia’s first shopping district” and “the Hollywood of the South,” Broughton Street has been woven together by a patchwork of eras, architectural styles, and design of the times. While incremental changes in the landscape is considered a positive occurrence, it has left Broughton Street, our city’s glowing smile, mismatched and fraying at the seams. The City of Savannah understood that unifying Broughton Street was an important goal in creating a safe, equitable, and prominent urban corridor for the community of Savannah to enjoy. In simple terms, a streetscape refers to an urban roadway design and conditions as they impact users and nearby residents, while streetscaping is focused on people and are changes to improve the overall streetscape condition.

Streetscaping can include improvements and changes to various elements to road access, traffic management, sidewalk conditions, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, building frontage and signage. While the need for streetscaping is subjective and at times seems purely aesthetic, there are economic, social, and environmental benefits associated with streetscaping improvements. (Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2018). Some established benefits include:

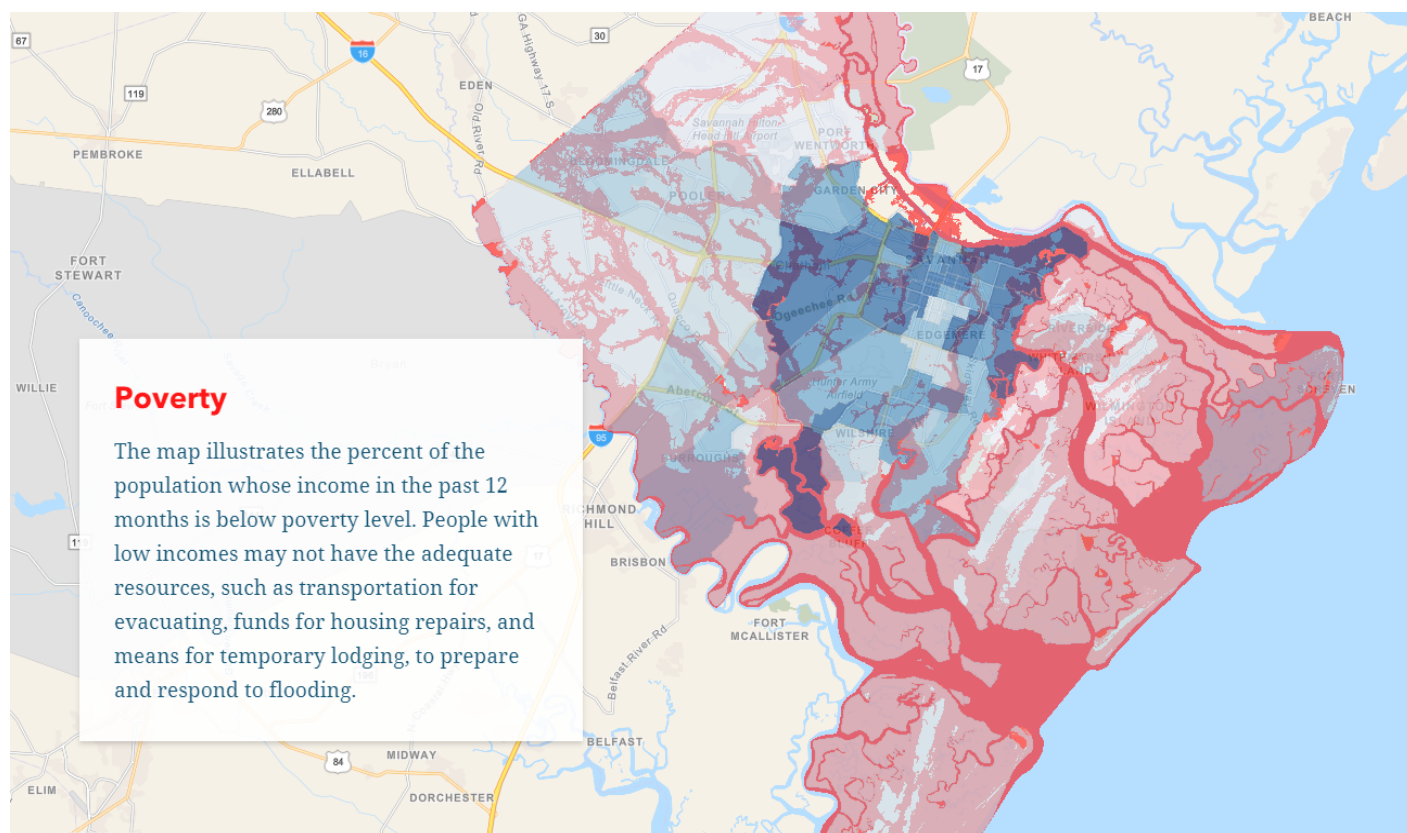
- Improved walking and cycling conditions, and therefore increased nonmotorized travel
- Increased traffic safety due to narrower streets and slower traffic (Traffic Calming)
- Promoting more compact, mixed, infill development (New Urbanism)
- Improved community livability, interaction, and cohesion
- Increased property values
- Improved transport and access for non-drivers and the support of Universal Design
- Improved public health due to increased walking and cycling

While streetscaping along Broughton Street will surely be a catalyst to re-invigorate this commercial center and unify the City after years of patchwork solutions, it is important to note that streetscaping alone will only have modest impacts. There must also be an effective implementation of an overall Downtown Master Plan that looks to improve alternative modes of transportation, encourages infill residential development, and incorporates traffic calming measures. Check out the City’s Progress at the link below:

[City of Savannah: Broughton Streetscaping](#)

# Don't Know the Difference Between a Flood Watch and Warning?

## Don't Know Your Flood Zone? Don't Know How to be Prepared for a Flood?



The Story Map is a comprehensive guide to bring awareness to flooding, flood protection, and flood mitigation initiatives in Chatham County. Due to the landscape of the Savannah coastal region, communities in Chatham County are likely to experience flooding. It is important for all citizens to understand their flood risk. SAGIS recently updated the “Find Your Flood Zone” Story Map to provide the tools for residents to understand flood zones and prepare for floods. The “Above Water” story map is a comprehensive guide to bring awareness to flooding, flood protection, and flood mitigation initiatives in Chatham County.

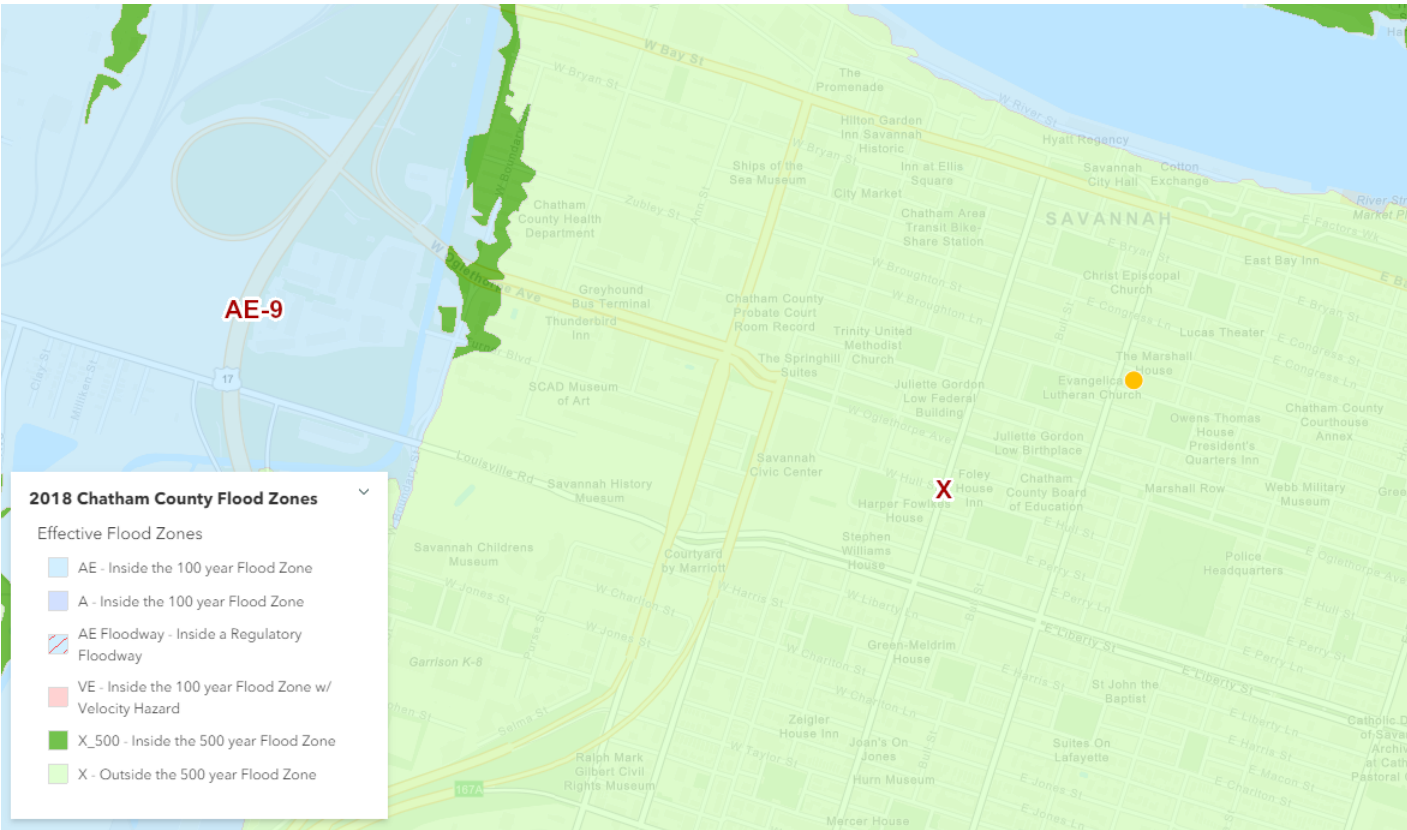
By highlighting the types of flooding, flood zones, and dangers of flooding, Story Map users can understand why preparation and protection is critical. The first step in protecting homes, families, and property is knowing the flood zone designation of an area. Users can see their flood zone by searching for their address in the

“Chatham County Flood Zone Map.” The accompanying legend illustrates all flood zone designations in Chatham County.

Flooding can be unexpected and have detrimental impacts on communities. The story map discusses the implications and impacts of flooding on essential services, critical facilities, and vulnerable populations. There are several initiatives implemented throughout the County to mitigate flooding, such as the Smart Sea Level Sensors and Coastal Georgia Adopt a Drain Program. Learning about these initiatives can help users become more involved in their communities and reduce local flooding.



# Above Water Flooding Storymap



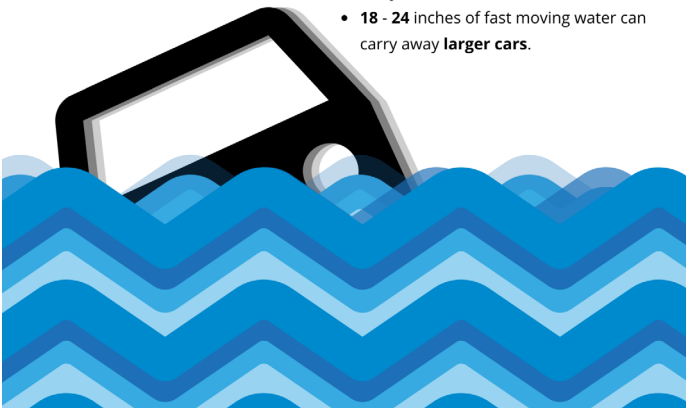
[Click this link for more information about the \*Above Water\* Storymap!](#)



## TURN AROUND!

**DRIVING THROUGH FLOODWATERS IS VERY DANGEROUS**

- 6 inches of fast moving water can knock down **adults**.
- 12 inches of fast moving water can carry away **small cars**.
- 18 - 24 inches of fast moving water can carry away **larger cars**.



# The MPC Celebrates Holidays with its Annual Door Decorating and Costume Contests!

The holidays are a special time within the walls of the MPC and especially the doors. On Halloween, the bare, standard office doors transformed into spooky creations, all done by MPC staff. Upon walking through the halls of the office, and you were greeted by frightful creatures, silly monsters, and eldritch horrors. Door decorating would not be complete without the main point of Halloween: costumes!

The MPC staff rose to the task with costumes that were fashionably frightening!

## Door Decorating Contest:

1st Place–	(Redistricting Nightmare)-SAGIS/IT
2nd Place–	(Comp Plan Mummy)-Advance Planning
3rd Place–	(Help Us)-Development Services

## Costume Contest:

1st Place–	Pablo Escobar-Kait Morano
2nd Place–	Running Witch-Melissa Paul-Leto
3rd Place–	Mr. Incredible-Marcus Lotson







The haunting spirits of Halloween were soon replaced by the Holiday spirit, as staff traded their costumes for ugly sweaters and decorated their doors with Holiday cheer!



#### **Door Decorating Contest:**

1st Place–	Administrative Services
2nd Place–	SAGIS/IT
3rd Place–	Financial Services

#### **Holiday Sweater Contest:**

Cutest–	Leah G. Michalak
Tackiest–	Jackie Jackson
Ugliest–	Temperance West

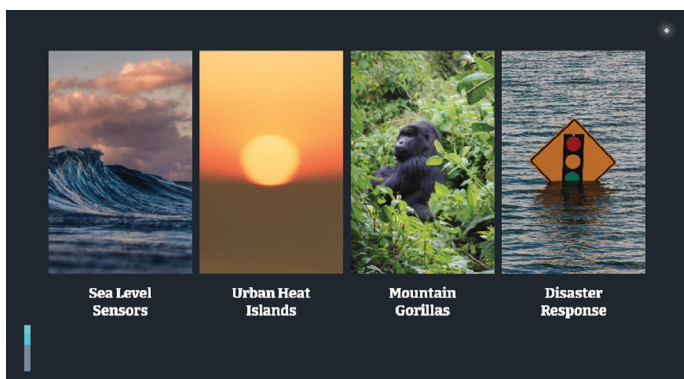
# Celebrating GIS Day Savannah



This year, the annual GIS Day Savannah celebration took place over an entire week! From November 15th to the 19th, local GIS professionals showcased the uses and benefits of GIS to local students. Although GIS Day looked quite different again this year due to COVID-19, volunteers were still able to connect virtually with the students and educate them on how GIS is used in different fields.

The MPC's Kait Morano talked with Mr. Cummings' class at Building Bridges Middle School Academy and Mrs. Fanelli's class at Johnson High School, while SAGIS's Moe Richert presented to Ms. Karfakis' class at Garrison School for the Arts, and Ms. Genereux's and Mr. Frenor's classes at JR Trippe Middle School. Along with Kait and Moe, SAGIS's Lara Hall and Brianna Davison joined even more sessions throughout the week as helpers.

While we missed seeing the students in person again this year, the virtual event was a great alternative to our traditional GIS Day event and we are looking forward to next year! You can find out more about GIS Day Savannah and the local GIS professionals who took part at <http://www.gisdaysavannah.org/>.





# Upcoming Meetings

*\*\*Schedule may change. Please refer to the MPC website [www.thempc.org](http://www.thempc.org) for additional details & all application deadlines, including those pertaining to COVID-19.*

## February 2022

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

## March 2022

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



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Melanie Wilson  
*Executive Director*

Pamela Everett  
*Assistant Executive Director  
Compliance & Operations*

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Olivia Arfuso  
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Stacy Bennett  
Debbie Burke  
Brianna Davison  
Nicholas Fazio  
Nirav Gandhi  
Monica Gann  
Lara Hall  
Sally Helm  
Asia Hernton  
Alicia Hunter  
Jackie Jackson

Jacqualle Johnson  
Marcus Lotson  
Leah G. Michalak  
Mary Mitchell  
Kait Morano  
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David Ramsey  
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