



MPC Newsletter

SUMMER 2021

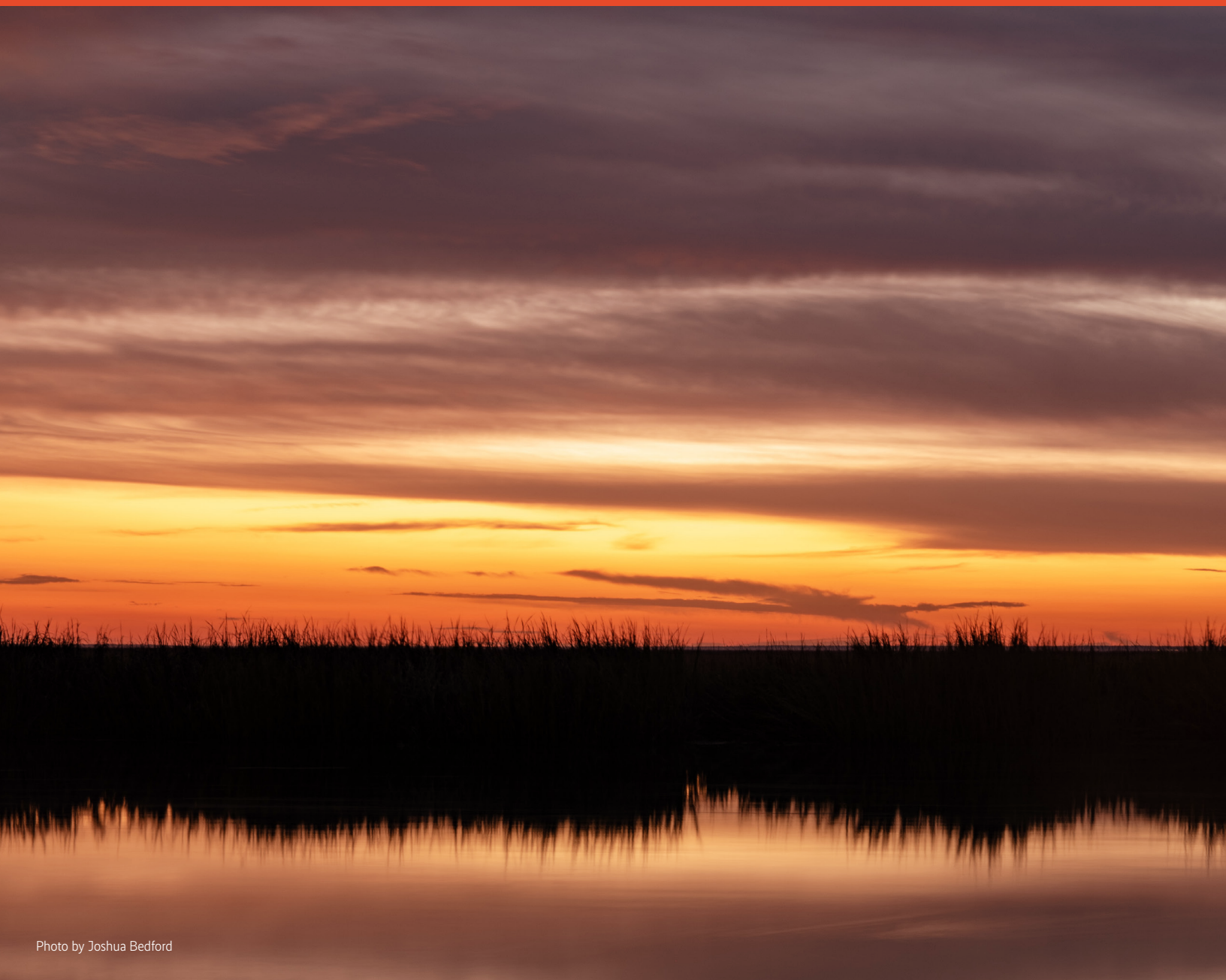


Photo by Joshua Bedford

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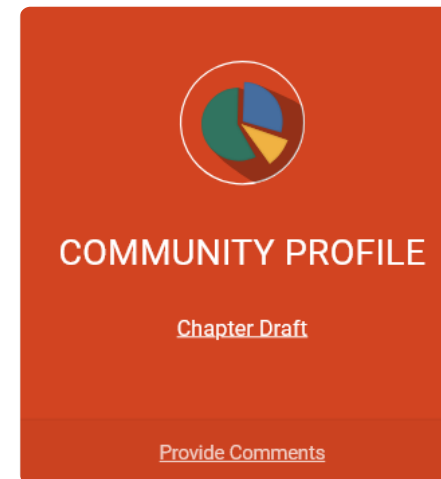
Photo by Tyler Edic

A Big Step Forward for Plan 2040

As the final development stages of the Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan update process draw near, we would like to thank everyone that took the time to participate in both the many in-person and virtual meetings, filled out our surveys, provided input and feedback on the draft elements, as well as all the individuals and organizations that helped us get the word out about this long update process. Your input was invaluable and has assisted in the development of a document that will help shape our community by identifying issues, opportunities, and priorities and allocating resources accordingly.

On June 29th the Chatham County–Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) approved the transmittal of the draft Comprehensive Plan to the County and City of Savannah for their final review. Savannah’s City Council approved the draft Plan 2040 document on July 22nd and the Chatham County Commission approved the draft Plan 2040 on July 30th. The Coastal Regional Commission is now reviewing Chatham County–Savannah’s Plan 2040 prior to the document’s submittal to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

You can view the full draft document on the Plan 2040 website <https://mpc.compplan2040.org/>.



Comprehensive Plan Chapters

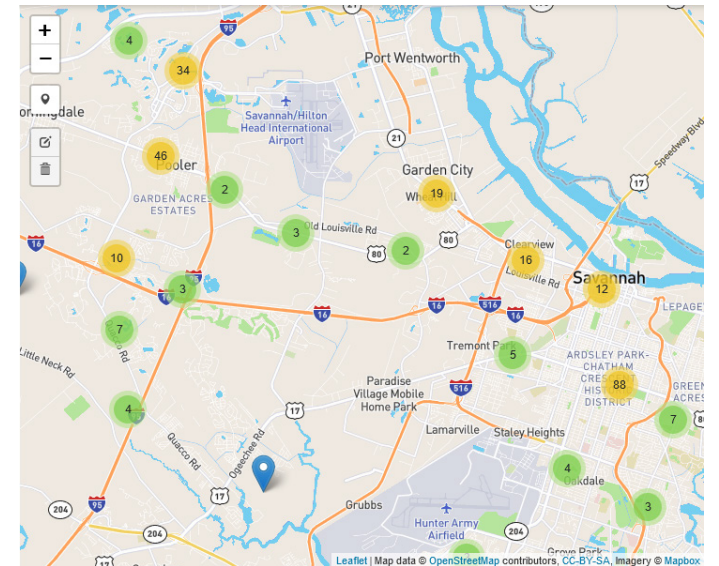
We want to know your thoughts on the draft chapters of Plan 2040! To give your input, click on the “Municipality” tab at the top of the website and select the municipality you are interested in. About halfway down the municipality’s page, you will see the “Plan Elements” section, where drafts of the chapters we’ve been working on are made available.

After reading a chapter, click “Provide Comments” at the bottom of the plan element. This will bring up an email window to plan2040@thempc.org, which will be sent to the whole Advance Planning team to ensure your comments are addressed.

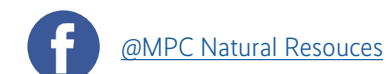
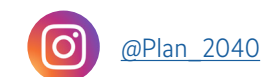
Comment Map

This online public engagement tool allows the public to anonymously voice any ideas, issues, or statements about a specific area within Chatham County. So far, we have received almost 300 comments!

To put your ideas on the map (literally!), click the “Get Involved” tab at the top of the Plan 2040 website. There, you will find a green button to access the Comment Map, along with a list of any upcoming meetings as well as materials from past events and forums.



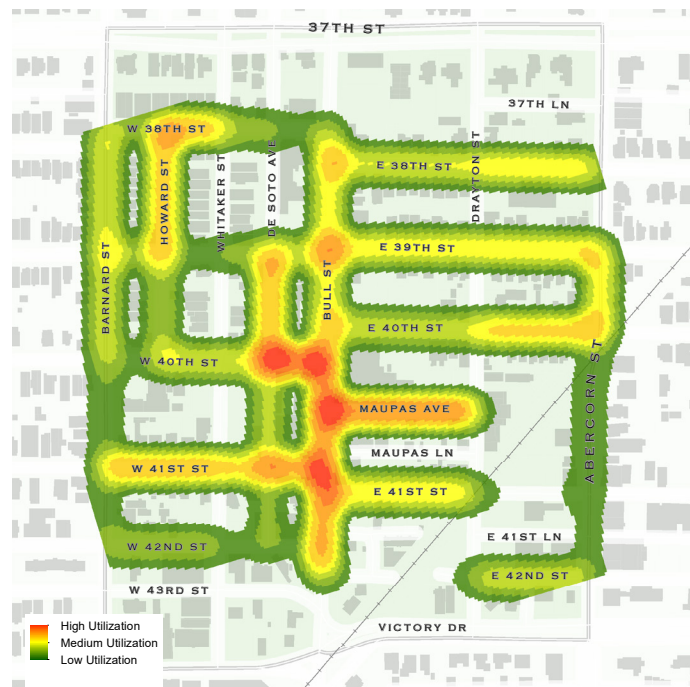
Follow us on social media and the web to keep up with our progress & learn about upcoming meetings!



Starland District Parking Study

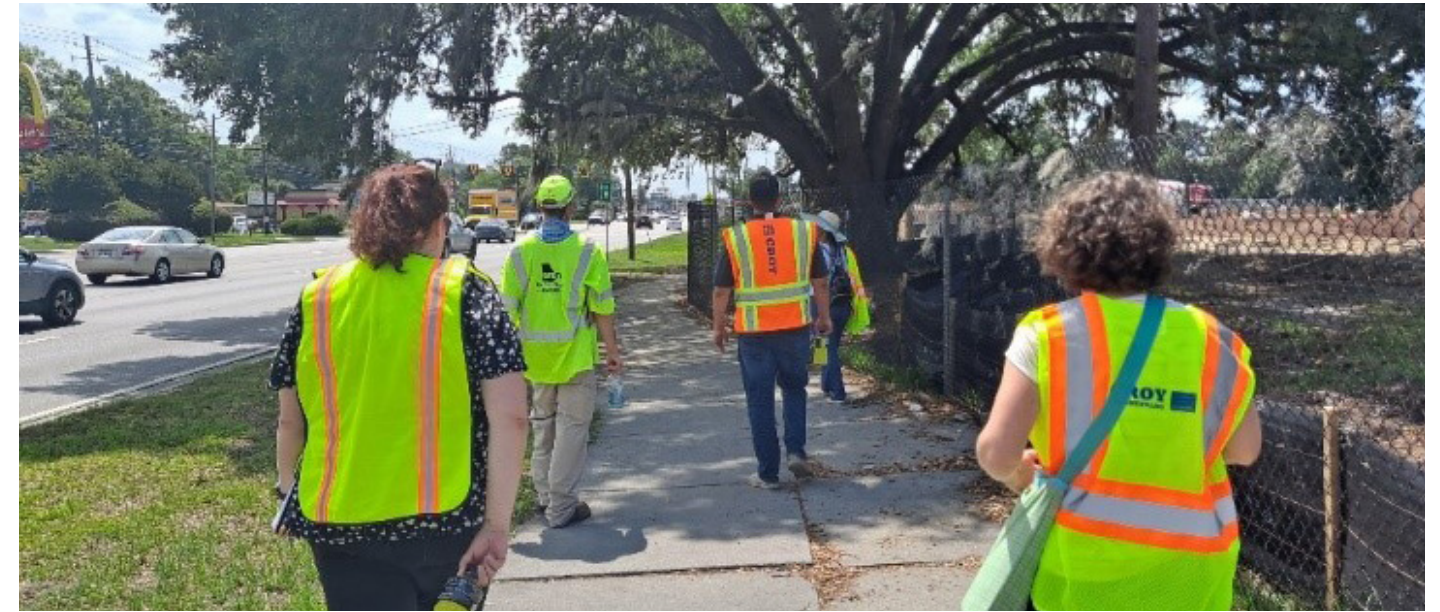
The City of Savannah and the Metropolitan Planning Commission have partnered to study the effects of recent development and land use changes on the availability of parking in the Starland area of midtown Savannah. This three-phase study will aid the effort to better understand the balance between the amount of parking that is needed to maintain a desirable residential neighborhood and the neighborhood-serving commercial uses. The Starland District is within the Streetcar Historic District and the boundaries of the study area are 37th Street to the north, Victory Drive to the south, Barnard Street to the west, and Abercorn Street to the east. This area was chosen, in part, because of the rapid growth that is happening in both the residential and nonresidential sectors there. Historically, parking demand has fluctuated, and the use of unmeted on-street parking has mitigated the need for significant amounts of principal use surface parking lots. In addition, the historic development pattern for both commercial and multi-family uses was modest in scale, thereby limiting the need for large off-street lots or structured parking. However, in recent years, development has trended toward denser residential at a greater scale than the historic pattern.

Because of these trends—and the recent adoption of the new Savannah Zoning Ordinance (NewZO)—it seemed the appropriate time to gather data, review the existing parking requirements, and make any necessary changes. The study will include a land use inventory, which will give staff a snapshot of the ratio of residential to nonresidential uses and the relative intensity of required parking. Another feature of the study will be gathering parking counts and associated data. The parking counts will provide a clearer understanding of demand, particularly for on-street parking, and guidance as to whether



Map showing on-street parking utilization in the Starland District on a typical Friday at 6:00 p.m.

or not the current standards are properly calibrated for the land uses that make up the development pattern in Starland. Upon completion, staff will provide a parking model to the City of Savannah that can be applied to the Starland District. The model can be used to show future parking demand vs. supply as land use in the area changes, as well as the impacts of changes to mass transit routes and stops. The information gathered within this one square mile will also help the City of Savannah determine the viability of projects in the area moving forward.



CORE MPO & Partners to Conduct Road Safety Audit in Garden City

CORE MPO is currently partnering with Garden City as a local sponsor and Croy Engineering as a project consultant to conduct an access management study of State Route 21 (SR 21) between I-516 and Grange Road. SR 21 serves as a major corridor linking the Georgia Ports Authority with both I-95 and I-516 as well as providing access to a plethora of commercial and industrial uses. Currently, much of this corridor has a seven-lane cross section, including a continuous two way left turn lane and numerous closely spaced driveways, creating frequent conflict points for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

In recent years, Garden City has seen considerable new development and redevelopment creating increased demand and usage of SR 21. A review of recent crash data revealed that the accident rate for this section of SR 21 is about twice the statewide average for similar types of roadways. The data also revealed patterns of conflicts for turning vehicles using the center two-way left turn lane at specific locations. To dig deeper, a day-long Road Safety Audit was conducted on June 9th in which staff from the Georgia Department of Transportation

(GDOT), Garden City, the MPC's CORE MPO, and Croy Engineering walked the corridor to observe and document existing conditions firsthand, and to gain a greater understanding of the likely causes of the accident patterns observed in the crash data.

Observations and feedback of the SR 21 Road Safety Audit will be used to identify countermeasures for improving safety along the corridor and recommendations will be carried forward to the next phase of the access management study. The study will provide recommendations for operation, safety, and multimodal improvements, access management strategies, streetscape elements, and economic development. The study will be completed in 2022.

For more information, or to provide feedback to the team, visit the study website at <https://www.thempc.org/Core/SR21Access> or contact Mark Wilkes at wilkesm@thempc.org, 912-651-1477.

Are You Prepared for a Hurricane?

Hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th each year.

Forecasters at Colorado State University are predicting an above-average 2021 Atlantic hurricane season with 20 named storms, 9 hurricanes, and 4 major hurricanes. We have already been impacted by Tropical Storms Danny and Elsa—now is the time to make and/or review your hurricane plan in case another storm(s) threatens the Georgia coast. Luckily, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) has information to help you safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter the storm while also protecting yourself and others from COVID-19.

Do you have an emergency kit ready if needed? If not, CEMA makes it easy by providing a [list](#) of everything you'll need—don't forget to include COVID-19 basics like cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, and extra face coverings! Do you know which evacuation zone you live in or in which surge zone your home or business is located? If not, CEMA has [maps](#) to help you figure that out. What should you do when a hurricane watch has been issued? CEMA has your "[To Do List](#)." Do you need assistance evacuating because you have functional, access, or medical needs? Eligible residents can apply to be on the [Hurricane Registry](#) list maintained by the Health Department.

Don't wait until a hurricane is headed our way! Plan ahead and visit www.chathamemergency.org to make sure that you and your loved ones are well prepared.

Left: Hurricane Florence from the International Space Station (Credit: NASA)

Heat Safety at Home

Heat risk is often underestimated. Heatwaves are among the most dangerous and deadly of natural hazards, but their health impacts, death tolls, and impacts on urban infrastructure, energy, and other issues such as crime, are not always visible.

Article Source: <https://ghhin.org/heat-and-covid-19/>

"As warmer weather and extreme heat days become more intense and prevalent due to climate change, it is important to know what measures you can take to stay safe and healthy. Below is a list from C40 Cities, an organization working to combat climate change in urban areas, of actions to help keep you and your household cool at minimal, moderate, or no cost to you.

Heat Stress

Heat stress can affect anyone, but certain populations are particularly vulnerable, including the elderly, people with pre-existing medical conditions, essential workers who work outside, and people who are socially isolated. Symptoms of heat stress include:

- Higher body temperature
- Hot, red, dry, and/or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Fainting/passing out





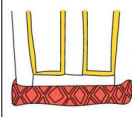

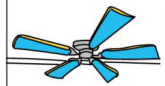
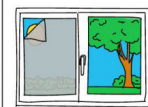
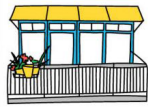
Heat & COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic heightens the health risks of intense heat in our city. Many of our residents who are vulnerable to COVID-19 are also at higher risk to suffer from heat stress. When seeking heat relief outside of your home, make sure to stay 6 feet away from others in parks and public spaces[.]

For more information, visit <http://www.ghhin.org/heat-and-covid-19>."

HEAT RELIEF AT HOME

In these summer months during COVID-19, it's important to be aware of indoor heat risks. Here are some solutions for keeping cool inside:

NO COST  If outdoor air quality isn't poor, open windows and doors on opposite facades to ventilate in the early mornings and late evenings when outside temperatures are lower.	NO COST  During the day, close windows and shutters , especially those facing the sun, and turn off artificial lighting and electrical devices as much as possible.	NO COST  Have lighter meals, use cooking techniques that don't release much heat or steam , and avoid using the oven.
LOW COST  Drink enough water.	LOW COST  If you have air conditioning, buy or create draft stoppers for doors and windows to keep cool air in.	MEDIUM COST  Hang shades, curtains, or shutters on windows that face the sun.
MEDIUM COST  Use a regular fan or install ceiling fan that helps circulate the air in the room.	MEDIUM COST  Apply solar window film to help control light or heat coming through.	MEDIUM COST  Install temporary shading structures or planters on flat roofs, balconies and terraces.

Source: C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group



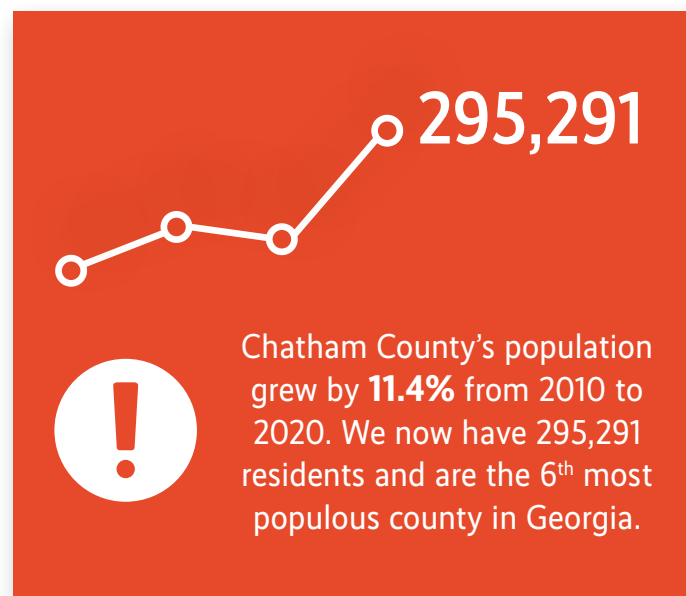
2020 Census Redistricting Update

"The U.S. Census Bureau announced [in February] that it will deliver the Public Law 94-171 redistricting data to all states by Sept. 30, 2021. COVID-19-related delays and prioritizing the delivery of the apportionment results delayed the Census Bureau's original plan to deliver the redistricting data to the states by March 31, 2021.

Different from previous censuses, the Census Bureau will deliver the data for all states at once, instead of on a flow basis. This change has been made because of COVID-19-related shifts in data collection and in the data processing schedule and it enables the Census Bureau to deliver complete and accurate redistricting data in a more timely fashion overall for the states.

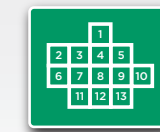
The redistricting data includes counts of population by race, ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino origin), voting age, housing occupancy status, and group quarters population, all at the census block level. This is the information that states need to redraw or "redistrict" their legislative boundaries.

In preparation for the delivery of redistricting data products, the Census Bureau has been in close coordination with each states' official nonpartisan liaisons to understand the impacts of the delayed delivery on individual states. Since 2019, states have had access to prototype geographic support products and data tabulations from the 2018 Census Test to help them begin to design their redistricting systems. This is one tool states can use to help minimize the impact of schedule delays. In addition, the Census Bureau [completed] the release of all states' 2020 Census geographic products needed for redistricting. This will enable states to redistrict promptly upon receipt of their 2020 Census tabulation data."



Article Source: <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-releases/statement-redistricting-data-timeline.html>

2020 Census Redistricting Data Steps to Delivering Products



Ensure all records are coded to their most detailed level of geography.



Conduct characteristic editing and imputation that ensures each record has valid values for major characteristics.



Apply differential privacy to ensure confidentiality of responses.



Tabulate and review all redistricting data in multiple formats.



Create physical media, load and test web-based systems.



Deliver data to the states and public by September 30.

United States®
**Census
2020**

Source: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/2020-census-redistricting.html>



New Data Added to SAGIS Property Map Viewer

The Chatham County Board of Assessors recently released the 2021 Tax Digest, which indicates the property boundaries for each parcel of land as well as information about the landowner, the parcel identification number, land and building valuation, and total acreage. The 2021 Parcel Digest,

which includes more information such as estimated zoning, flood zone(s), and school district, has recently been published on the SAGIS Public Map Viewer, available online at <https://www.sagis.org/map>.

MPC Celebrates Preservation Month

In 2005, the National Trust of Historic Places established the entire month of May as National Preservation Month. Every year, local preservation groups, historical societies, businesses, and other civic organizations across the country celebrate the event, including the MPC! This year, the Historic Preservation Department hosted a variety of activities, which included two virtual webinars. The two webinars, one on the Historic Site and Monument Commission and the other on Savannah's Local Historic Districts, can be found on our [YouTube page](#).

During Preservation Month, the Historic Preservation Department also posted on the Instagram page, [@mpchistoricpreservation](#). Daily posts and stories highlighted HP staff members, items from the archives, new preservation projects around town, and interesting histories of familiar places! One of the most popular posts was about Daffin Park, which gave a



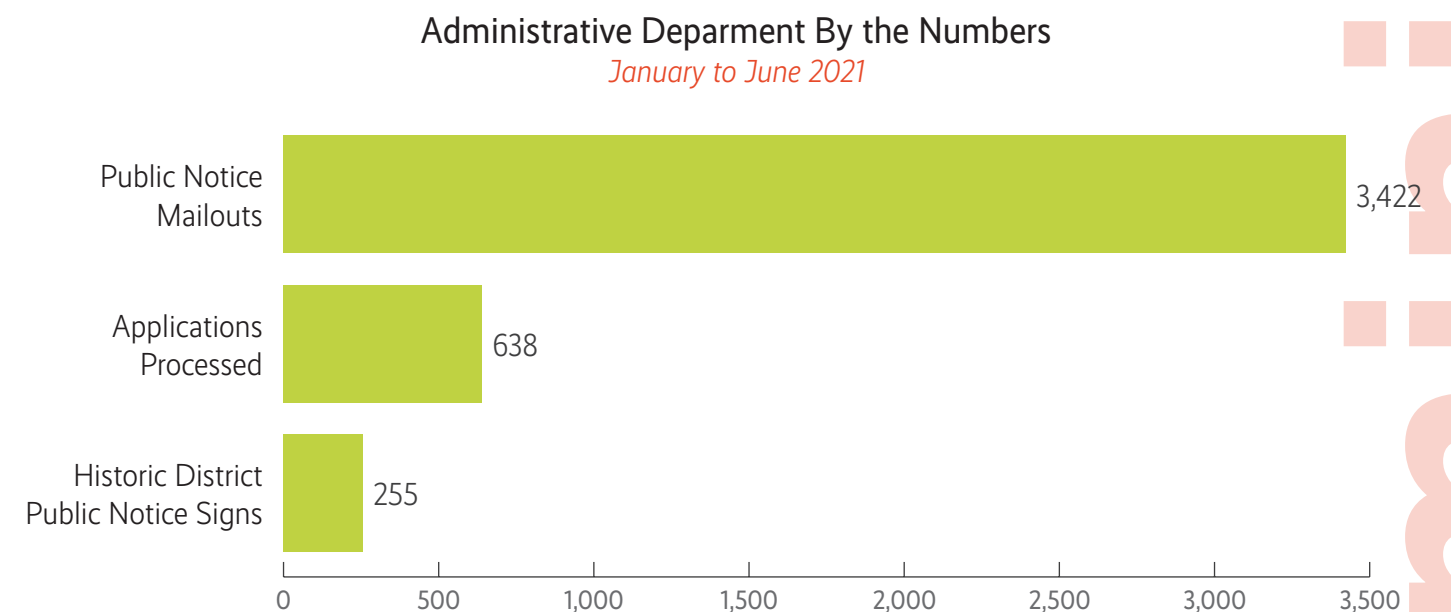
Daffin Park Swimming Pool

history of how the park was designed and developed over time and included photos of the old swimming pool and race-track that were once at the park. Other posts announced the recent National Register nominations for the Savannah Water Works Pump House and the Springfield Terrace School by the City of Savannah and the histories of the local historic districts.

Administrative Department By the Numbers

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Administrative Department continues to serve the MPC Boards and the public, and assist the private sector in the ongoing development of our community. The graph below shows the number of public notice mailouts, applications processed, and public notice signs completed by the department in the first

half of 2021. Compared to the same time period in 2019 and 2020—when the MPC processed 707 and 581 applications, respectively—these numbers indicate that there has not been a significant downturn in development reviews and development activity has remained relatively consistent.



CORE MPO Initiates Freight Study

The CORE MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area includes the Port of Savannah, which is the 4th largest container port in the United States and is a significant gateway for freight movement in the Southeast. The freight which flows through the Savannah region has a substantial impact on the local, regional, and state economy. Much of this economy is connected with the Port of Savannah, with imports and exports flowing through this deep-water seaport. Import and export commodities benefit from the access to other modes such as freight rail and highway due to the presence of intermodal facilities and warehousing and distribution centers in the Savannah region. Chatham County, as the center of the Savannah MSA, is also home to a substantial manufacturing industry which is able to take advantage of local and imported resources to create and ship a diverse portfolio of finished products to clients around the globe. As part of an integrated economic development region, Bryan County and Effingham County provide human capital and services for freight-related industries.

With the rapid development of the Port of Savannah, a thriving economy of the Savannah region, and intense freight movement between Savannah and Atlanta, it is highly important to develop a comprehensive freight plan to document freight goods movements, modes, trends and the freight impacts on the transportation network and economy in our region.

The last CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan was completed in December 2015. Since then, the Port of Savannah has experienced unprecedented growth, significant amounts of warehouses have been constructed or are under construction, and various freight corridors are either under construction or are going into construction in the near future. It is time to update this Plan to reflect the changes and project what is needed in the future.

The Freight Transportation Plan update will take place in Georgia's state Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. Taking advantage of new data, the updated Freight Plan will include both policy and infrastructure recommendations which will feed into and support the development of the Mobility 2050 MTP. CORE MPO will soon be soliciting the help of a consultant firm to assist in completing the Plan update.



The scope of the Freight Plan Update will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Freight needs assessment and analysis
 - » Update the existing and future freight and goods movement assessment
 - » Update the freight performance measures
 - » Update the forecasting of future freight growth
 - » Update the regional freight profiles and assessment
 - » Update the freight network bottleneck, and safety and security issues
 - » Truck parking inventory and truck restrictions
 - » Freight impact from emergencies
 - » Freight needs assessment
- Land use assessment and analysis
 - » Assessment and analysis of land use policies and local decision-making within regional freight and goods movement context
 - » Assessment of freight and goods movement impact on land use in region
- Update to the economic development market assessment
- Update to the environmental and community impact scan and analysis
- Recommendations for future land uses related to freight and goods movement needs and forecasts
- Final recommendations—identification of improvements, strategies, and solutions
- A final report and documentation—freight, goods, and services plan



Photo by Elias



First African Baptist Church on Montgomery Street in downtown Savannah. Photo by Kait Morano

Did You Know?

Savannah's First African Baptist Church was the first black church in the Country

"This cherished landmark is known for its prominent role as a safe house for slaves and African Americans throughout history. The First African Baptist Church served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, and you can still see the holes in the floorboards that were used to ventilate the concealed spaces through which slaves traveled.

This church played an integral part in the Civil Rights Movement as well. It is a lesser-known fact that First African Baptist is [the] oldest black church in North America. Today, this church stands on Montgomery Street, where it's been since 1777, as a testament to the contributions of the black community to Savannah and America."



Photo by Kait Morano

Article Source: <https://www.visitsavannah.com/list/7-rarely-known-facts-about-savannah>



Temperance West's tree decorated for COVID-19 (top) and Memorial Day 2021 (above).

Around the MPC Office

Temperance West, MPC's Budget Analyst, decorates a tree in her office throughout the year. It started when she decorated a tree for the Christmas holidays last year and then decided to keep the tree up to bring a little joy and fun to the office. It has been decorated to represent holidays such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Mardi Gras, and St. Patrick's Day, as well as celebrations such as Pride Month or even just for the arrival of Spring.

For Memorial Day, Temperance decorated the tree and included photos of soldiers who served with her husband, Cory (who recently retired from the Army), and were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. These photos normally hang in her home, but she felt it was important to share the photos and the stories of these soldiers with others on Memorial Day. They were soldiers, but also so much more, and for Temperance, it is important to make sure others know of their bravery and sacrifice.

Pictured to the left (in alphabetical order):

- SSG George T. Alexander
- SSG Jason Benford
- SFC Alwyn Cashe
- MSG Kenneth Elwell
- SPC Steven Givens
- CSM Kevin Griffin
- SPC Darren Howe
- SSG Roy Lewsader
- SGT Michael Robertson

The MPC Presents...

TOWN

Talks

2.0

Neighborhood Meetings

Express Your Vision for Your Neighborhood!

As part of the Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update we are engaging neighborhoods in the community

Check out our upcoming schedule for neighborhood meetings...

Neighborhood Meeting 1

Tuesday, August 10 at the Moses Jackson Community Center at 6:30 p.m.
Moses Jackson Advancement Center, 1410-B Richards Street, Savannah, GA 31415

Neighborhood Meeting 2

Tuesday, August 17 at the Eastside Community Center at 6:30 p.m.
Eastside Community Center, 409 Goebel Avenue, Savannah, GA 31404

Neighborhood Meeting 3

Tuesday, August 24 at the Windsor Forest Community Center at 6:30 p.m.
Windsor Forest Community Center, 308 Briarcliff Circle, Savannah, GA 31419

Neighborhood (Virtual) Meeting 4

Tuesday, August 31 online at 6:30 p.m.
Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87817199207>

Follow us @PLAN_2040 for the latest...

Sign-up on Website: www.mpc.complan2040.org

For more information (912) 651.1479 / plan2040@thempc.org

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.*

September 2021

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

October 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 County ZBA 9:00 a.m.	20	21 CORE MPO TCC 2:00 p.m. CORE MPO CAC 5:30 p.m.	22	23
24/31	25 CORE MPO ACAT 1:00 p.m.	26 County ZBA 9:00 a.m.	27 CORE MPO Board 10:00 a.m. Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m.	28 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	29	30



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

Pamela Everett
*Assistant Executive Director
Compliance & Operations*

Christy Adams
Olivia Arfuso
Roger Beall
Debbie Burke
Brianna Davison
Nicholas Fazio
Monica Gann
Jessica Hagan
Lara Hall
Sally Helm
Asia Hernton
Alicia Hunter
Jackie Jackson

Marcus Lotson
Leah G. Michalak
Mary Mitchell
Kait Morano
Sabrina Morgan
David Ramsey
Anna Stamatogiannakis
Mandy Terkhorn
Wykoda Wang
Temperance West
Mark Wilkes
Julie Yawn

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