

Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

MPC 2020 A YEAR IN REVIEW

MELANIE WILSON *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

ELLISON COOK CHAIRMAN

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OUR BOARD

2020 MPC BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Ellison Cook* Chatham County
Chairman

Mr. Joseph Welch
Vice-Chairman

Chatham County

Ms. Karen Jarrett City of Savannah
Secretary

Ms. Eula Parker Chatham County
Treasurer

Mr. Thomas Branch* City of Savannah

Mr. Travis Coles City of Savannah

Mr. Lacy Manigault City of Savannah

Ms. Tanya Milton City of Savannah

Mr. Wayne Noha Chatham County

Ms. Linder Suthers Chatham County

Mr. Tom Woiwode Chatham County

Mr. Lee SmithCounty Manager

Mr. Joseph Ervin

Mr. Michael BrownInterim City Manager

Ex-Officio

Ex-Officio

City of Savannah

* Term ended December 2020



MELANIE WILSONExecutive Director MPC

Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to submit the MPC's 2020 Annual Report to you and I hope that you too will see the great amount of time, hard work, and dedication that this talented group of individuals have given for our community

As Executive Director I am delighted to share the many accomplishments that we have experienced since last year's report.

I want to thank my staff for their commitment, hard work, and dedication to the communities we serve. As our country to face the challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are continuing to leverage our resources to protect our employees and the communities that we serve.

I do not think that any of us could have predicted the many challenges we have faced this year, but we all know that the citizens of Chatham-Savannah always come together to support each other during turbulent times. Indeed, we have!

This year has been shaped by leading through major global, national, state and local public health and economic emergencies. We continue to support our community.

I am deeply proud that the MPC has been able to maintain its core services while providing needed COVID-19 community/emergency response efforts.



OUR VISION

The Chatham County - Savannah MPC will be a leader in planning, development, and preserving a greater community through partnerships and an open process

OUR MISSION

"It shall be the mission of the Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission to provide an accessible planning process, sound professional planning products, and recommendations to ensure a greater quality of life for all to enjoy a community that is historic, sustainable, mobile, and prosperous."

OUR PRINCIPLES

- To have a professional and high energy organization
- To be a resource to the community on planning issues
- To create a customer service orientated organization
- To develop partnerships with neighborhoods, business, developers and other governmental entities
- To direct in efforts to build a greater community
- To act in the public's best interest



WHO WE ARE EVERYTHING ABOUT US

OUR PAST

The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (the MPC) was jointly created in 1955 by the Board of Commissioners of Chatham County and the Mayor and Alderman of the City of Savannah to develop a Master Plan for the orderly growth of the district, and the residential and industrial development of the City and the unincorporated portions of the County.

During the past year, the MPC has been involved in a variety of planning programs, all of which combine to create the potential for a better community for everyone. The MPC has continued its comprehensive planning program which includes, among other areas, land-use planning, public services planning, transportation, and natural resources.

The Commission's ongoing responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations on zoning and subdivision issues has continued. Additionally, the MPC has provided valuable planning assistance to many of the municipalities within Chatham County.

The MPC is committed to the task of protecting the community's economic stability and channeling its growth.

OUR PRESENT

The Metropolitan Planning Commission is the comprehensive planning agency for the City of Savannah and Unincorporated Chatham County. The Commission and its staff conduct surveys and studies of the past, present, and future conditions within the community for the purpose of determining current community problems, anticipating probable future problems, and for the purpose of developing alternative solutions to these problems.

The MPC's mission is to provide a professional, accessible planning process, sound professional planning products, and recommendations to ensure a greater quality of life for all to enjoy a community that is historic, sustainable, mobile and prosperous; and promotes long-term sustainable growth.

In keeping with this charge, the MPC acts as an advisory board to the City and County with regard to: 1) preparation and adoption of the comprehensive plan and other plans (such as small area plans, natural resource protection plans, transportation plans, etc.); and 2) implementation of those plans by various mechanisms, especially preparation and application of the Zoning Ordinances.

The Planning Commission's role with regard to zoning issues and land-use is to conduct public hearings on proposed changes to the Official Zoning Maps (i.e. rezoning requests) and proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinances (i.e. text amendments). In addition to these advisory functions, the Planning Board acts as a final decision-making board in regard to the subdivision of land.



WHAT PLANNERS DO

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

According to the APA, Urban Planners work to make cities safe, healthy and enjoyable places to live. Planning and Planners consider the big picture. While architects often focus on a single building, a Planner's job is to work with residents and elected officials to guide the layout of an entire community or region.

The goal of planning is to maximize the health, safety, and economic well-being of residents in ways that reflect the unique needs, desires, and cultures of those who live and work within the community. (APA, 2020, para. 1).

Planners take a broad viewpoint and look at how the pieces of a community — buildings, roads, and parks — fit together like pieces of a puzzle. Planners also work to imagine what can and should happen to a community: how it should grow and change, and what it should offer residents 10, 15, or even 20 years into the future.

What is Planning? Take a moment to wonder about your community. Why are homes located in a specific area? Why are businesses or factories located in another? How did someone decide where the roads would go — and how many lanes each road would have? How much park or open space is available to play in? Can you easily walk to a bus or train to get to your destination?

These questions are what Planners think about and are at the heart of planning as a profession. (APA, 2020, para. 1).



PLANNING POP-UP FOR PLAN 2040



GARDEN CITY SENIOR CENTER
OUTREACH EVENT

SERVICES WHAT WE DO



SAGIS

- Database Development & Administration
- Property Map Viewer
- Spatial Analysis



Advance Planning & Special Projects

- Comprehensive Plans
- Data Collection
- Natural Resource Planning



Education & Outreach



Transportation Planning & CORE MPO

- Multi-Modal Transportation Planning
- Congestion Management
- Project Selection Traffic Forecasting
- Traffic Impact Review



Development Services

- Subdivision Review
- Zoning | Subdivision
 Ordinance Development
- Existing Development Review Processes



Historic Preservation

- Review COAs
- Review Markers, Monuments & Public Art
- Historic Resource Surveys



Grant Writing Assistance & Project Oversight



Training



Data Compilation

SERVICES

A QUICK LOOK AT OUR DEPARTMENTS



SAGIS

The MPC, City of Savannah, and Chatham County participate in a partnership to establish a regional Geographic Information System (GIS), used for economic development, infrastructure management, and community planning.

Known as SAGIS (Savannah Area Geographic Information System), we maintain standards, manage data, support geospatial education, and coordinate geospatial projects that affect the greater Savannah - Chatham County area.

SAGIS provides access to geospatial data through the SAGIS Map Viewer and the Open Data site. The Map Viewer contains data layers such as parcels, zoning, roads, census data, and more.



SAGIS MAP VIEWER



Mobility 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

CORE MPO'S MOBILITY

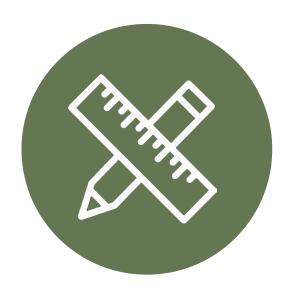
2045 PLAN UPDATE

TRANSPORTATION & CORE MPO

Core MPO is the Metropolitan Planning
Organization for Chatham County, including
all of its municipalities and portions of
Effingham and Bryan Counties including
Richmond Hill. CORE was initiated in 1963,
and is housed at the MPC. The CORE planning
process focuses on identifying deficiencies in
the transportation system, proposing projects
that address the deficiencies and then
securing funding for those projects.

The 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act mandated that all urbanized areas with a population of more than 50,000 establish a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3C) planning process in order to be eligible to receive U.S. Department of Transportation funding. The 1974 Federal-Aid Highway Act further formalized the process by mandating the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000.

The MPC staffs CORE and it is responsible for compliance with all federal planning requirements as well as hosting all CORE meetings.





EXAMPLE ELEVATION FOR REVIEW

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

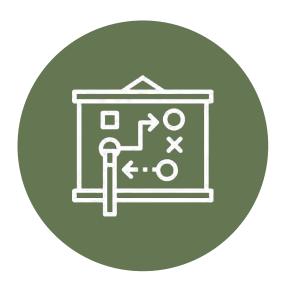
Development Services is charged with the primary responsibility of review and analysis of all rezoning requests for both the City of Savannah and Chatham County. The analysis includes an examination of not only the relationship of the proposed changes to the overall community needs, but to the resultant impact on the immediate neighborhood.

The Development Services Department is responsible for all aspects of current planning in the City of Savannah and Unincorporated Chatham County. The staff works with residents, local officials, and the development community with a focus on helping to shape the built environment. The departments review authority induces:

- Site Development Plans
- Subdivisions
- Zoning Amendments
- Wireless Facilities
- Special Uses & Special Exceptions
- Planned Developments

In this role, department staff must ensure compliance with applicable ordinances, assist developers and residents on review procedures and serve as a neutral advisor to the governing bodies.

In addition to these responsibilities, members of the department also serve as planning staff for the City and County Boards of Appeal and the Metropolitan Planning Commission, where recommendations are presented for the Board's consideration during public hearings.





PLAN 2040 PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENT

ADVANCE PLANNING & SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Advance Planning and Special Projects Department consists of continually studying the community and its many elements. Some of the various physical elements which make up the community are water and sewer systems, community facilities, parks and open space, land use patterns and storm drainage systems.

Population and economic characteristics are also vital to the comprehensive planning process. Each year, the MPC evaluates its planning program in relation to these elements.

An essential document we prepare every 5 years is known as the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan. This document named Plan 2040, describes specific goals and strategies designed to achieve a shared community vision.

Advance Planning staff also works to ensure that other plans and projects are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan.





CUYLER-BROWNVILLE
HISTORIC RESOURCES
SURVEY UPDATE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Historic Preservation Department is responsible for the preservation of the City of Savannah and Chatham County's historic resources. It protects the area's architectural integrity and historic character through the use of local zoning ordinances.

This department staffs the City of Savannah's Historic Preservation Office and is responsible for reviewing and approving Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior building changes within Local Historic Districts and other Historic Properties through Savannah and Chatham County.

They also staff multiple MPC Commissions and Boards, coordinate historic resource identification, assists in drafting National Register nominations, draft ordinances that affect historic resources, and performs Section 106 reviews for the City's Housing Department.

BOARDSWHO WE ARE







SAGIS



CORE MPO



SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW



HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION



SAVANNAH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



CHATHAM COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS



CITY OF SAVANNAH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS



DEPARTMENTS STAFFED BY THE MPC

ADVANCE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

SAVANNAH AREA GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (SAGIS)

TRANSPORTATION/METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION
(COREMPO)

BOARDS SUPPORTED BY THE MPC

THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SAGIS

CORE MPO

SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION
SAVANNAH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSIO

CHATHAM COUNTY
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

CITY OF SAVANNAH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

BY THE NUMBERS

WHAT'S GOING ON IN CHATHAM COUNTY

In 2019, Chatham County, GA had a population of 289,430 people with a median age of 36 and a median household income of \$56,842.

Between 2010 and 2019 the population of Chatham County, GA increased from 265,128 to 289,430, a 9.2% increase and its median household income increased from \$42,728 to \$56,842, a 33% increase.

POPULATION

Total Population

289,430

Percent Poverty

14.8%

HOUSING

Total Housing Units

127,435

Median Gross Rent

\$1,085

36

Total Housing Units

127,435

Median Age

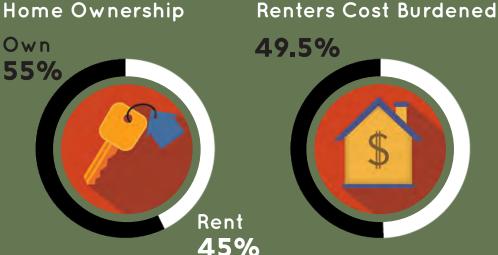
% Foreign Born

6.5%

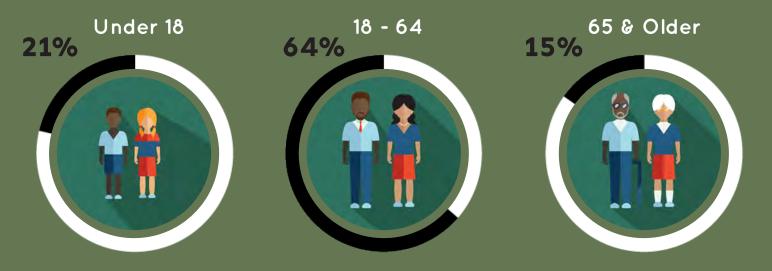
Persons Per Household

2.55

Home Ownership



AGE DISTRIBUTION



EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, INCOME

Median Household Income

33.6%

% Unemployment

\$56,842

% With No Degree

3.3%

17.3%

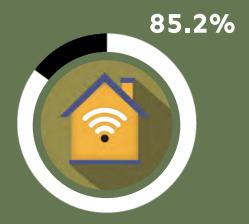
COMPUTER & INTERNET ACCESS

Percent Computer Ownership

92.3%

Broadband Internet Subscription

% With College Degree or Advanced





HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO

- Chatham County Savannah Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan Initiated
- County Wide Comprehensive Plan Survey
- Canal District Public Survey
- Community Focused Review and Analysis of Canal District Plan
- The Wonderful Adventure Book 2020
- Resilient Savannah Historic Preservation Department Calendar
- Cuyler-Brownville Historic Resources Survey Update
- Chatham County SMART Sea Level Sensor Project
- Carver Village Designated as a Conservation District
- Savannah Surplus Property Preference Survey & Report
- Proposed Savannah Fairgrounds Project Review
- Garden City 2040 Comprehensive Plan Initiated
- Pooler 2040 Comprehensive Plan Initiated
- Historic Preservation Month
- State Route 21 Access Management RFP
- State Route 307 Corridor Study RFP
- Census 2020
- SAGIS's COVID-19 Data Hub & Dashboard

- Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- Coastal Empire Resiliency Network Grant (CERN)
- Housing Coalition Initiatives
- City of Bloomingdale Stormwater Outreach & Permit Compliance Activities
- CEMA Emergency Operations Center Training
- Creation of Historic Preservation Commission Board (HPC Board)
- Webinar Series: MPC Policies, Tools & Procedures
- County and City Ordinance Revisions & Updates
- Bloomingdale & Garden City Stormwater Program Compliance



THE WONDERFUL
ADVENTURE BOOK 2020



RESILIENT SAVANNAH
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT CALENDAR

PROJECTS

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS FOR MPC



PLAN 2040: COMP PLAN PROGRESS

Plan 2040 is a shared vision of the future of our community. It reflects the community's values and goals, and lays out strategies to achieve them. Since our last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016, the County and City have grown considerably. Continued progress of our community must follow a strategic approach that balances a desirable built environment, economic development, natural resources, transportation options, and a high quality of life for all of our residents.

Plan 2040 is the community's principal guiding or "vision" document-designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the health and viability of the jurisdictions.

The MPC is currently on Phase II in our timeline for completion. This Phase is the Engagement & Development Phase, which we are drafting elements, visions and goals, coordinating virtual and pop-up events, evaluating our survey results, and completing our Steering Committee Meetings.

The Final Presentation and Adoption for Plan 2040 is October 31st 2021.



SAVANNAH SURPLUS PROPERTY REPORT

The MPC was requested by the City of Savannah to produce a Community-Focused Land Use Preference Report for three surplus properties in the west Savannah area. The purpose of this report was to help Savannah's City Council determine the best use of surplus property that the City of Savannah currently owns. To ensure widespread and active participation, the engagement process was designed to reach a diversity of residents and community members, offering multiple opportunities to get involved.

Our outreach methods for feedback included: An online survey, hard copy surveys, virtual forums, in-office appointments, a dedicated phone line and email address to help capture as many responses as possible. The MPC received 626 total survey responses. Highlights from the comments received suggested that the community put higher priority on open space, housing and food security over larger scaled development.

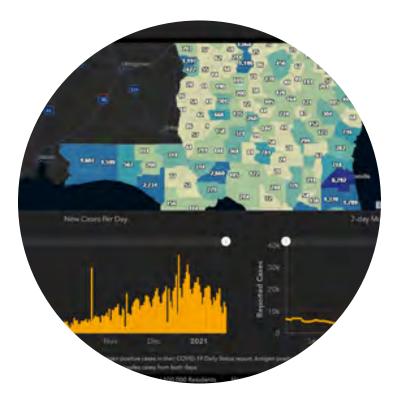
After survey results were collected and evaluated, the MPC suggested recommendations to the city for further review.

METRIC SUMMARY

- ✓ Social Media Awareness
- ✓ 10 Outreach Pop-ups
- ✓ 2.8 K Online Video Views
- ✓ 2,500 Online Surveys Completed
- ✓ Website & Comment Mapper
- ✓ Radio, Television & Billboard Ads

METRIC SUMMARY

- ✓ 1 Final Report
- √ 626 Online Surveys Completed
- ✓ 4 Virtual Forums



COVID-19 HUB & DASHBOARD

SAGIS staff created resources to support the planning and response to the ongoing public health emergency related to COVID-19.

The SAGIS team consolidated regional, national, and global data to convey relevant information to the public. The following resources were developed:

- Coastal Georgia COVID-19 Dashboard
 This dashboard is updated multiple
 times a day and displays COVID-19 case
 counts for Georgia, Florida, and South
 Carolina. Daily case counts, two-week
 counts, seven-day moving averages, and
 cumulative counts can be shown per
 county or per state. The data is provided
 by Johns Hopkins University.
- SAGIS Map and Data Hub for COVID-19
 This site hosts multiple resources to keep the public informed on the pandemic
 links to official updates, community services, other dashboards, and more.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

Every year in May, local preservation groups, state historical societies, and business and civic organizations across the country celebrate Preservation Month! Preservation Month began as National Preservation Week in 1973, but in 2005, the National Trust extended the celebration to the entire month of May and declared it Preservation Month to provide an even greater opportunity to celebrate Historic Preservation throughout the country. During the month of May, the MPC held several virtual activities to engage the community in the world of Historic Preservation including, two webinars, a video tutorial and a historic preservation Instagram page.







WINDOW RE-GLAZING VIDEO TUTORIAL

METRIC SUMMARY

- ✓ Dashboard & Hub Development
- √ 34,000 COVID-19 Data Hub Hits
- ✓ Over 14,000 Regional Dashboard Hits

METRIC SUMMARY

- ✓ Social Media Awareness

496 Instagram Followers

- ✓ Webinar Series
- ✓ Over 220 Webinar Views

BENCHMARKS

HOW WE ARE DOING

OUTREACH

45.6K Website Visits









APPLICATIONS











GROWTH











LOCALINVESTMENTS

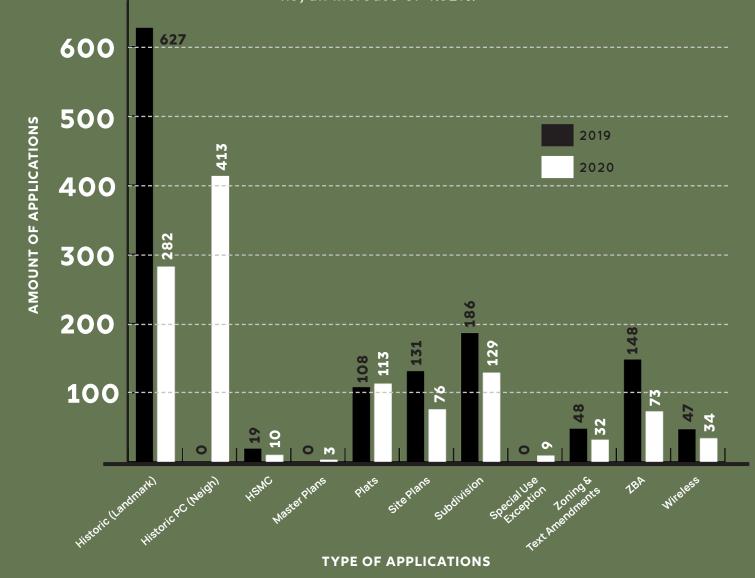
APPLICATIONS

In 2020, Chatham County, GA had a total of 1,174 applications processed by the MPC.

Between 2019 and 2020 the applications processed by the MPC decreased from 1,314 to 1,174, a 10.65% decrease in total applications.

Even though there is a decrease in total applications processed, between 2019 and 2020, Historic Planning Commission (PC) (Neighborhood Applications) increased from 0 to 413 due to the creation of the Historic Preservation Commission

There was also an increase in plat applications, from 108 to 113, an increase of 4.62%.



TEAM WHO WE ARE



MELANIE WILSON *Executive Director*



PAMELA EVERETT
Assistant Executive
Director Compliance &
Operations



CHRISTY ADAMS
Director of
Administrative Services



LARA HALLDirector of SAGIS



JACKIE JACKSON Director of Advance Planning Special Projects



MARCUS LOTSON
Director of Development
Services



LEAH G. MICHALAKDirector of Historic
Preservation



MARK WILKES

Director of

Transportation

MPC STAFF

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

Pamela Everett
Assistant Executive
Director of
Compliance &
Operations

Christy Adams
Director of
Administrative
Services

Lara HallDirector of SAGIS

Jackie Jackson Director of Advance Planning & Special Projects

Olivia Arfuso Roger Beall Debbie Burke Aislinn Droski Nicholas Fazio Jessica Hagan Sally Helm Asia Hernton Alicia Hunter Jordon Holloway Ryan Jarles Marcus Lotson
Director of
Development Services

Leah G. MichalakDirector of Historic
Preservation

Mark Wilkes Director of Transportation

Mary Mitchell
Kait Morano
Bri Morgan
Kiakala Ntemo
Gary Plumbley
David Ramsey
Anna Stamatogiannakis
Mandy Terkhorn
Wykoda Wang
Temperance West
Julie Yawn

THE YEARBOOK

OUR TEAM







PAMELA EVERETT



CHRISTY ADAMS



LARA HALL



JACKIE JACKSON



MARCUS LOTSON



LEAH G. MICHALAK



MARK WILKES



OLIVIA ARFUSO



ROGER BEALL



DEBBIE BURKE



AISLINN DROSKI



NIC FA7IO



JESSICA HAGAN



SALLY HELM



ASIA HERNTON



ALICIA HUNTER



JORDON HOLLOWAY



RYAN JARLES



S MARY MITCHELL



KAIT MORANO



BRI MORGAN



KIAKALA NTEMO



GARY PLUMBLEY



DAVID RAMSEY



ANNA STAMATOGIANNAKIS



MANDY TERKHORN



WYKODA WANG



TEMPERANCE WEST



JULIE YAWN

WORK LIFE

HOLIDAYS & CELEBRATIONS



























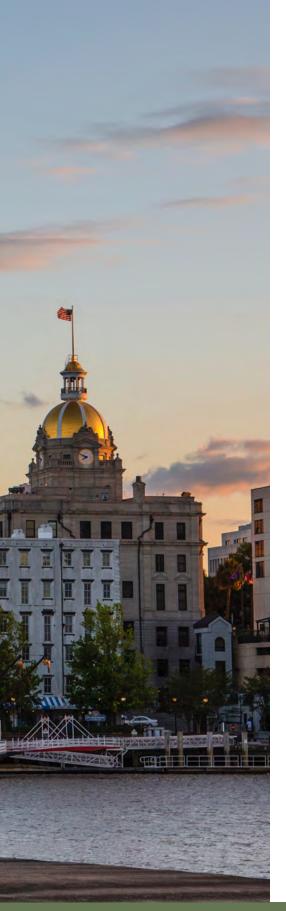












MOVING FORWARD

WHERE WE WANT TO GO IN 2021

- Planning Academy 2021
- Plan 2040 Unincorporated Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan Completion & Adoption
- Pooler 2040 Comprehensive Plan Completion & Adoption
- Garden City 2040 Comprehensive Plan Completion & Adoption
- State Route 21 Access Management Plan
- State Route 307 Corridor Study
- Starland Neighborhood Parking Model Update
- Update the Historic Site and Monument Commission Master Plan & Guidelines
- Update the Cuyler-Brownville Contributing Resources Map
- Update the Streetcar Historic District Historic Resources Survey
- Public Safety GIS Current State Assessment (E-911)
- Savannah Police Department Behavioral Health Unit
- Airport / Airfield Overlay
- CORE MPO Certification Review
- CORE MPO Transportation Improvement Program

- CORE MPO Public Participation Plan
- Continue to Develop Partnerships
- Virtual Lunch & Learn Meetings
- Progress on Coastal Empire Resiliency Network (CERN)
- Sea Level Rise Senor Project (SMART)
- Coordinate with County and City to Update Processes for Development Submissions
- Update on County Zoning Ordinance
- Work on Countywide Detailed Land-Use Review
- Continue Review of Needed Amendments to NewZo







PLAN 2040
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



MPC OPERATIONS

DURING COVID

The global pandemic created by COVID changed the way we looked at our work environment. The MPC's day-to-day operations were modified to follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as it relates to health protection during the COVID-19 pandemic, to aid in protecting our staff, Board members and the members of the public. For example, we implemented the following safety protocols:

- All persons entering MPC's office are required to have their temperature measured.
- Persons who are ill, or exhibiting symptoms of, or have been diagnosed with, COVID-19 are not permitted to enter the office.
- Requiring that no person be permitted to enter MPC's premises without a mask. Masks were provided to staff and the public if they did not have one.
- Use of technology such as Go-To-Meetings. Go-to-Webinar and Zoom for Board, staff and client meetings; and Hybrid meetings to allow a small percentage of Board members and the public to appear in person at Board meetings.
- Requiring all members of the public to provide a 24-hour notice for staff appointments.
- Marking all MPC offices, open spaces and conference rooms for social distancing to allow for maintaining a distance of at least six feet when interacting with one another.

- Providing hand sanitizer and disposable gloves to encourage hand cleanliness.
- Providing microphone covers for microphones used by the public and the Boards.
- Increased cleaning protocols of offices and high touch areas.

