

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION





# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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## Introduction

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Plan 2040 ultimately belongs to the citizens of unincorporated Chatham County and Savannah.

Through the Community Participation Plan Element, the Plan 2040 team sought to gather the community's opinions, priorities, and visions about the future of the area. An in-depth public engagement effort was made in the months leading up to the draft of Plan 2040, and included a public survey, pop-up events, and virtual meetings.

Specifically, this community participation plan sought to engage the public on issues that are addressed in the comprehensive plan.

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

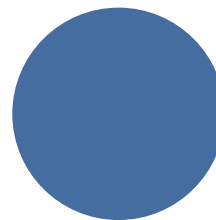
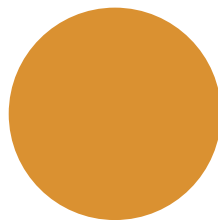
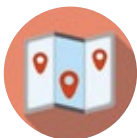
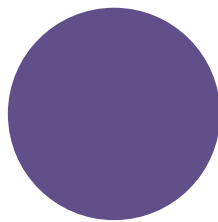
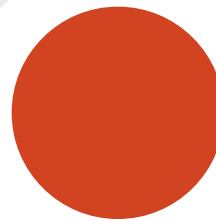
The vision for Plan 2040 represents the voice of our community. Through the two-year planning process, Chatham County–Savannah community members shared their unique perspectives on what makes their community great and their suggestions for improvements. The goal of the engagement process was to bring as many voices into the planning effort as possible to get a wide range of ideas and perspectives and build a broad base for implementing Plan 2040.

The Plan 2040 process collected valuable input from diverse platforms, community members, and stakeholders to shape the Plan's vision and goals. The outreach process involved a variety of different approaches, which are listed below:

- 5 Subcommittee Meetings
- 14 Virtual Public Meetings
- 30 Internal Meetings
- 10 Email Blasts (Over 1,500 Email Recipients)
- 6 Quarterly Newsletters
- MPC Annual Report
- Press Releases (Traditional Media Interviews)
- City of Savannah Online Promotional Video (2.8K Views)
- Online Interactive Comment Mapper (~300 Comments)
- 8 Community Pop-up Events
- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)
- Utility Bill Messages
- Dedicated Plan 2040 Website
- Online Survey (1,406 Participants)







# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## Survey Overview

MPC staff developed a survey aimed at collecting a wide range of input. The survey was intended to be more in depth than previous comprehensive plan updates and took approximately 25 minutes to complete. The survey aimed to collect a wide range of input and covered various topics including:

- Quality of Life
- Housing
- Land Use
- Natural Resources (Sea Level Rise)
- Transportation
- Economic Development

The 24-question survey consisted of multiple choice and open-ended response questions. The MPC staff participated in the survey and made suggested changes prior to publication. The survey was available online and in print versions, and was offered in Spanish for communities where English is not the primary language.

The survey was open from October 23, 2020 to January 19, 2021. A total of 1,406 responses were received, with 989 responses received from Savannah and 417 responses received from unincorporated Chatham County.



### Survey Respondents

To get a better understanding of the citizens who participated in the Plan 2040 Survey, additional information about each respondent was requested.

The survey informational questions included:

- What is your race/ethnicity?
- What is your age?
- What housing category describes you?
- What is your highest level of education?
- What is your primary mode of travel?

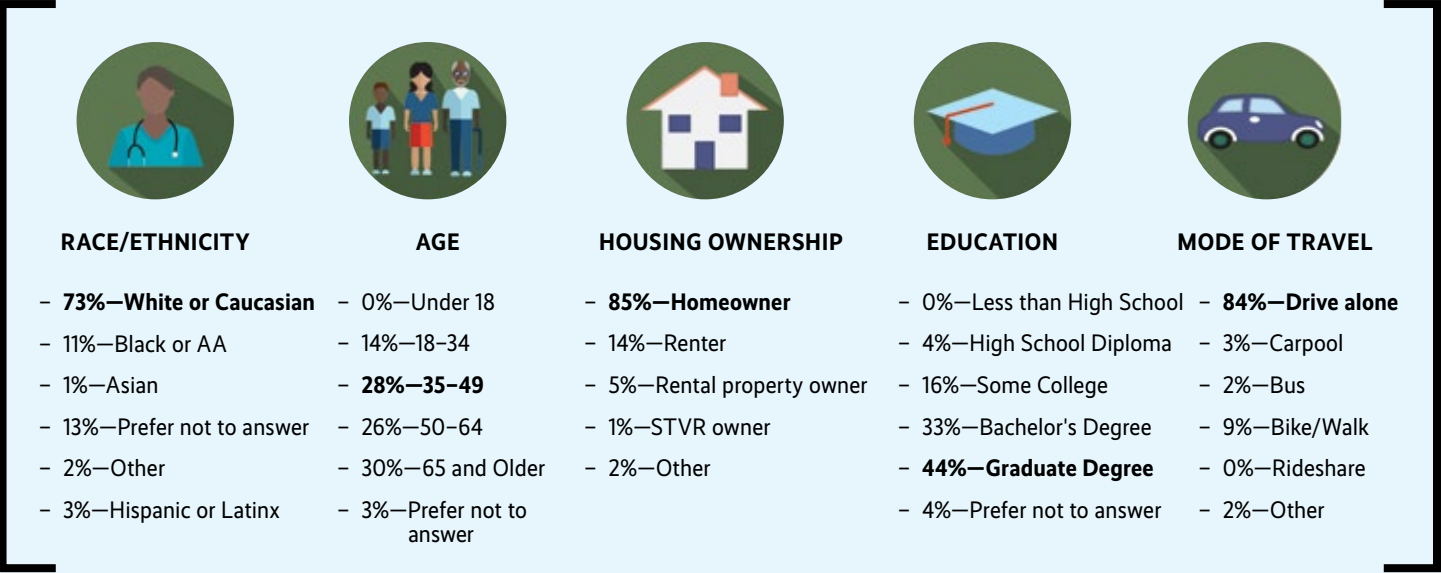
### Subcommittee Needs Analysis

The Plan's Subcommittee participated in an exercise analyzing issues and opportunities in Chatham-Savannah.

The analysis was designed to identify priority needs and opportunities, both internally and externally for Chatham County and Savannah and was used as a basis for shaping the future vision and goals for the community.

Subcommittee input helped determine the needs and opportunities as part of the comprehensive planning process. The results are incorporated into the body of the plan. On pages 42 and 43 are the results of the Subcommittee's Needs and Opportunities analysis.

### Survey Respondents by the Numbers



# PLAN 2040 SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Quality of Life

1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about the quality of life topics?
2. Please rate your satisfaction with the following public amenities and services in your community.
3. In your opinion, what are the most important historic preservation actions?
4. Do you have any additional comments about quality of life?

## Housing

5. Which categories describes you?
6. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about housing topics?
7. Please rank the following housing options in order of how they should be prioritized in the next 5 years, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest.
8. In your opinion, do we need more, less, or about the same of the following housing types?
9. Do you have any additional comments about housing?

## Land Use

10. Compared to recent trends, do you think we should encourage the following types of development more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years?
11. Please rank the following growth scenario in terms of your preference. On each map below, Chatham County's existing populated areas are shown in orange and possible areas of new growth under that scenario are shown in yellow.
12. Do you have any additional comments about land use?

## Natural Resources

13. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about natural resources?
14. How important are the following objectives to you?
15. Which of the following strategies would you support to protect resources from hazards related to climate change?
16. Do you have any additional comments about natural resources?

## Transportation

17. What is your primary mode of travel?
18. How strongly do you agree with the following statements about transportation?
19. Do you have any additional comments about transportation?

## Economic Development

20. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive, how would you rate the general growth in the past 5 years?
21. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about economic development?
22. How important are the following objectives to you?
23. Do you have any additional comments about economic development?
24. Are there other priorities or issues not covered in this survey that you think are important to consider as part of the Comprehensive Plan?

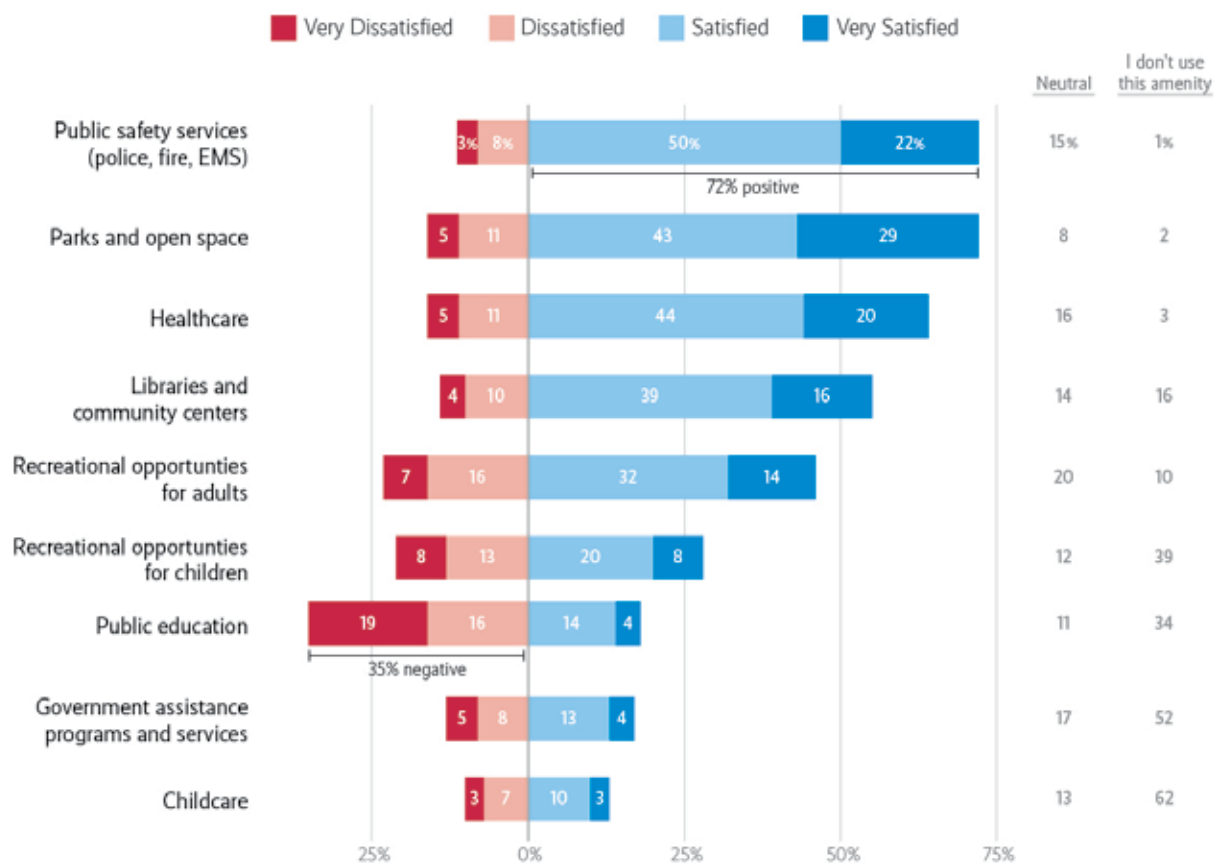
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## Quality of Life

1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about the quality of life topics?
2. **Please rate your satisfaction with the following public amenities and services in your community.** (Results Below)
3. In your opinion, what are the most important historic preservation actions?
4. Do you have any additional comments about quality of life?

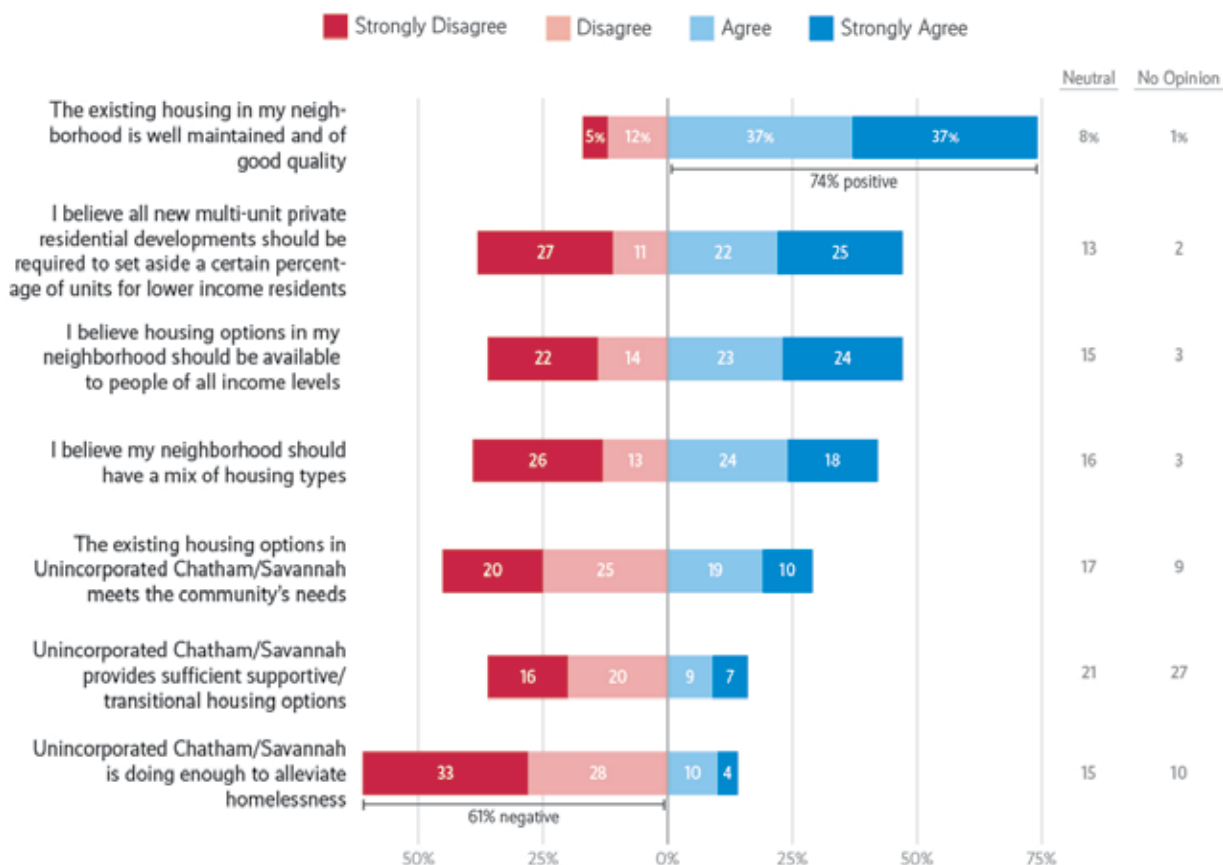
% of survey respondents who are \_\_\_\_\_ with the following public amenities and services in their community.



## Housing

1. Which categories describe you?
2. **How strongly would you agree with the following statements about housing topics?** (Results Below)
3. Please rank the following housing options in order of how they should be prioritized in the next 5 years, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest.
4. In your opinion, do we need more, less, or about the same of the following housing types?
5. Do you have any additional comments about housing?

% of survey respondents who \_\_\_\_\_ with the following statements about housing in Unincorporated Chatham/Savannah.

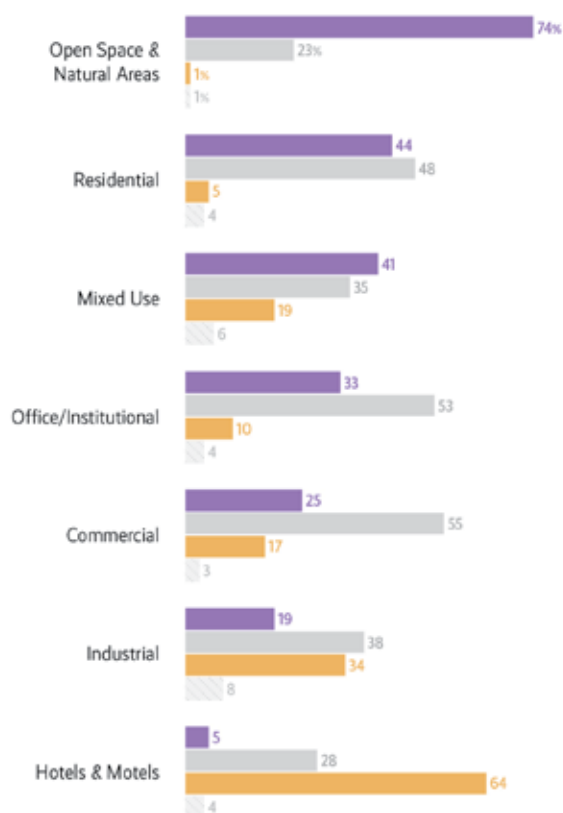


## Land Use

1. Compared to recent trends, do you think we should encourage the following types of development more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years? (Results Below)
2. Please rank the following growth scenario in terms of your preference. On each map below, Chatham County's existing populated areas are shown in orange and possible areas of new growth under that scenario are shown in yellow.
3. Do you have any additional comments about land use?

% of survey respondents who think the following types of development should be encouraged more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years.

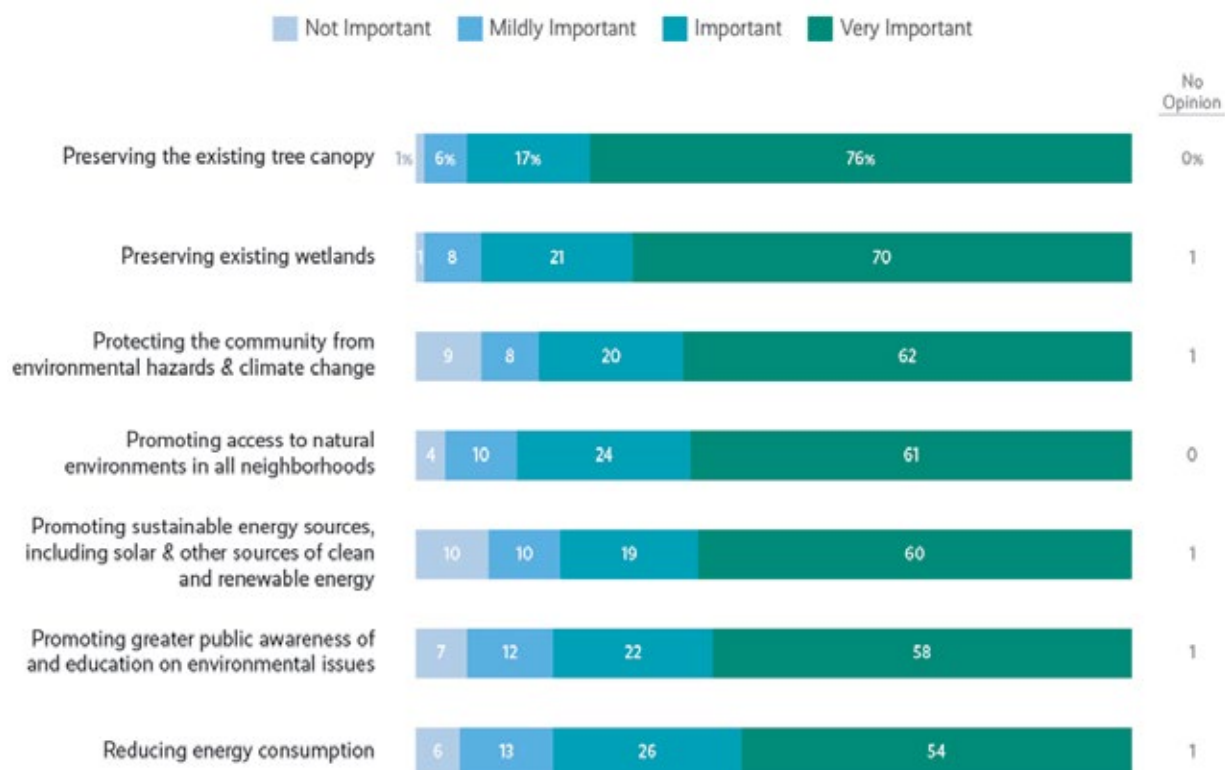
Encouraged more Encouraged the same amount Encouraged less No opinion



## Natural Resources

1. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about natural resources? (Results Below)
2. How important are the following objectives to you?
3. Which of the following strategies would you support to protect resources from hazards related to climate change?
4. Do you have any additional comments about natural resources?

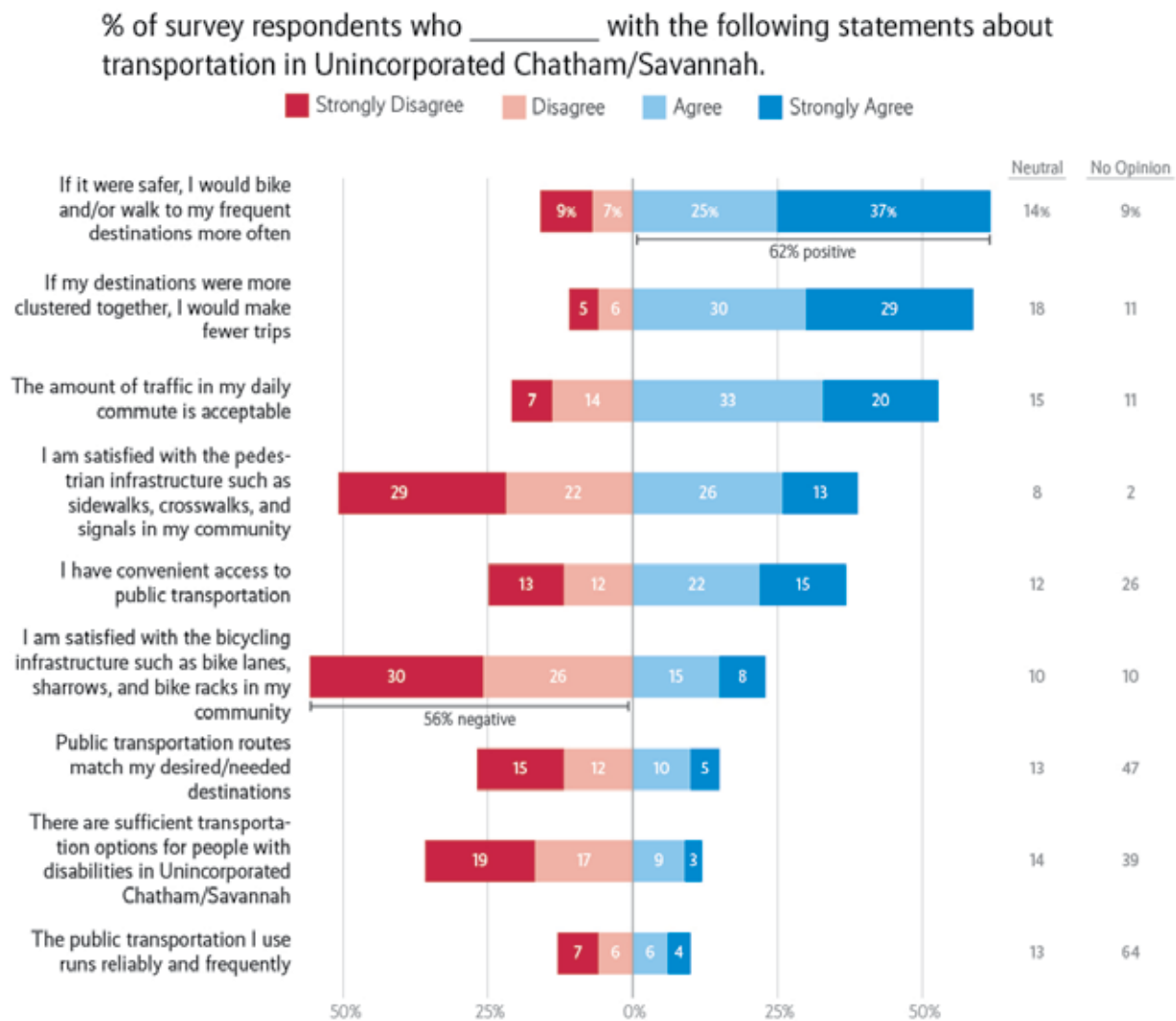
% of survey respondents who say the following natural resource objectives are \_\_\_\_\_.





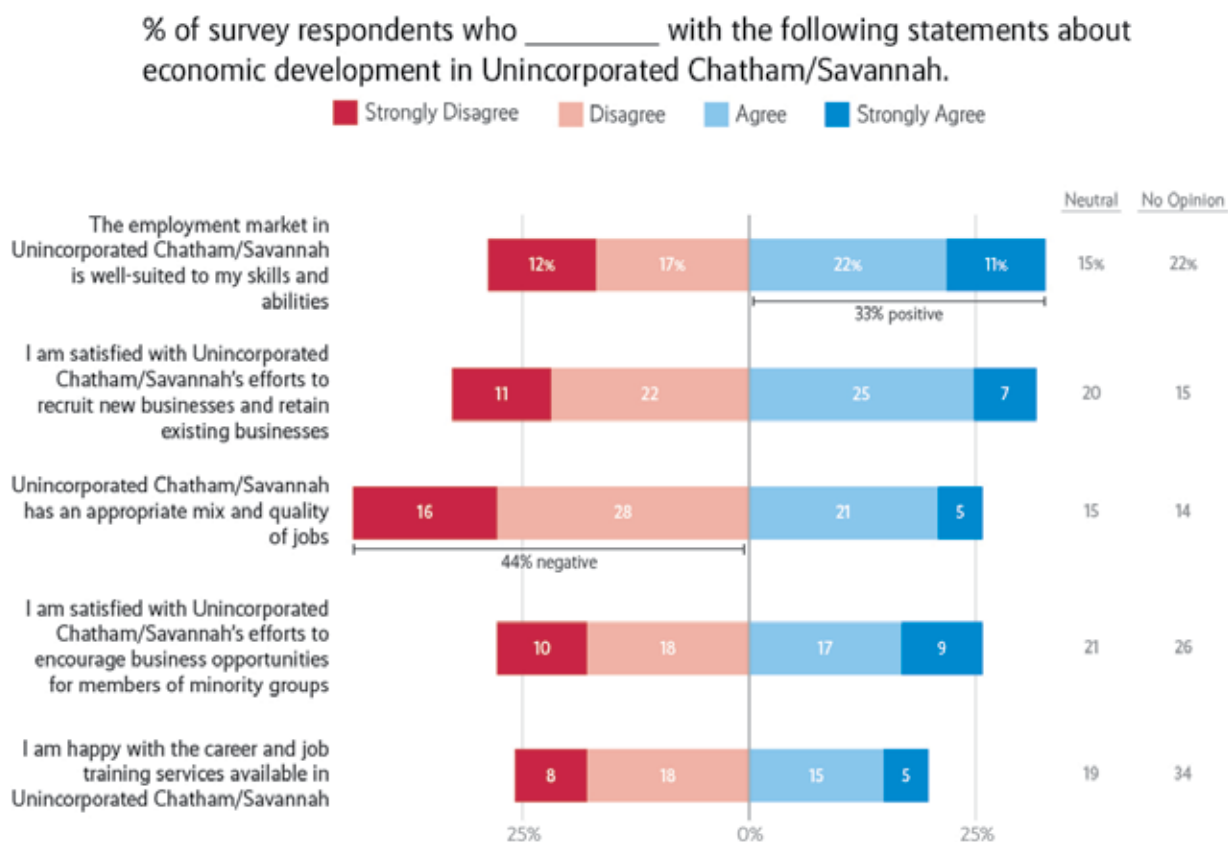
## Transportation

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## Economic Development

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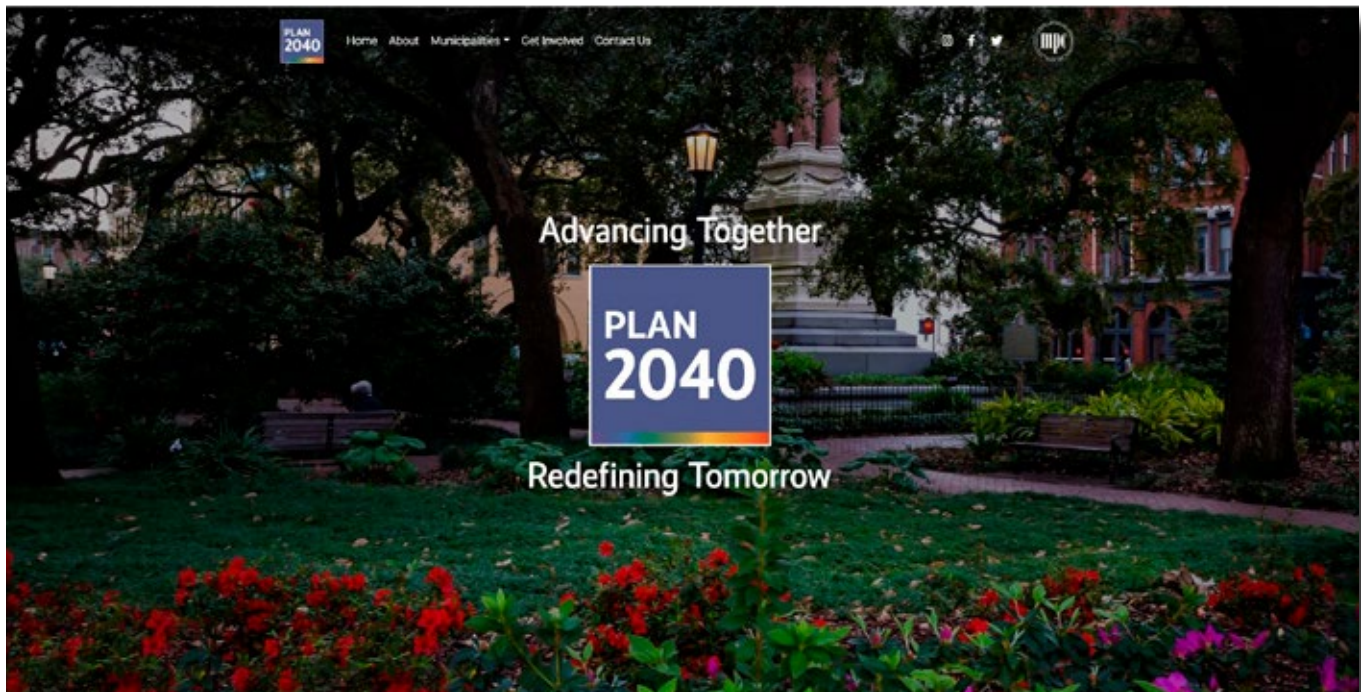


# WEB PAGE

## Web Page Overview

To engage the community further, the Plan 2040 team designed and maintained a web page to be a dedicated platform for all planning, public outreach and social media information.

The web page was set up and designed to be user friendly, easily read, and interactive for all users. The page included a diverse mix of information including a project summary, history, a virtual meeting library, comment mapper, draft chapters, and a bulletin board of upcoming events.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## Social Media Overview

While the web page served as a platform for all of the planning documents, the social media page served as an advertising platform to engage the public on upcoming events, meetings, pop-up events and announcements. The social media platforms used to advertise Plan 2040 included Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.





# COMMENT MAP

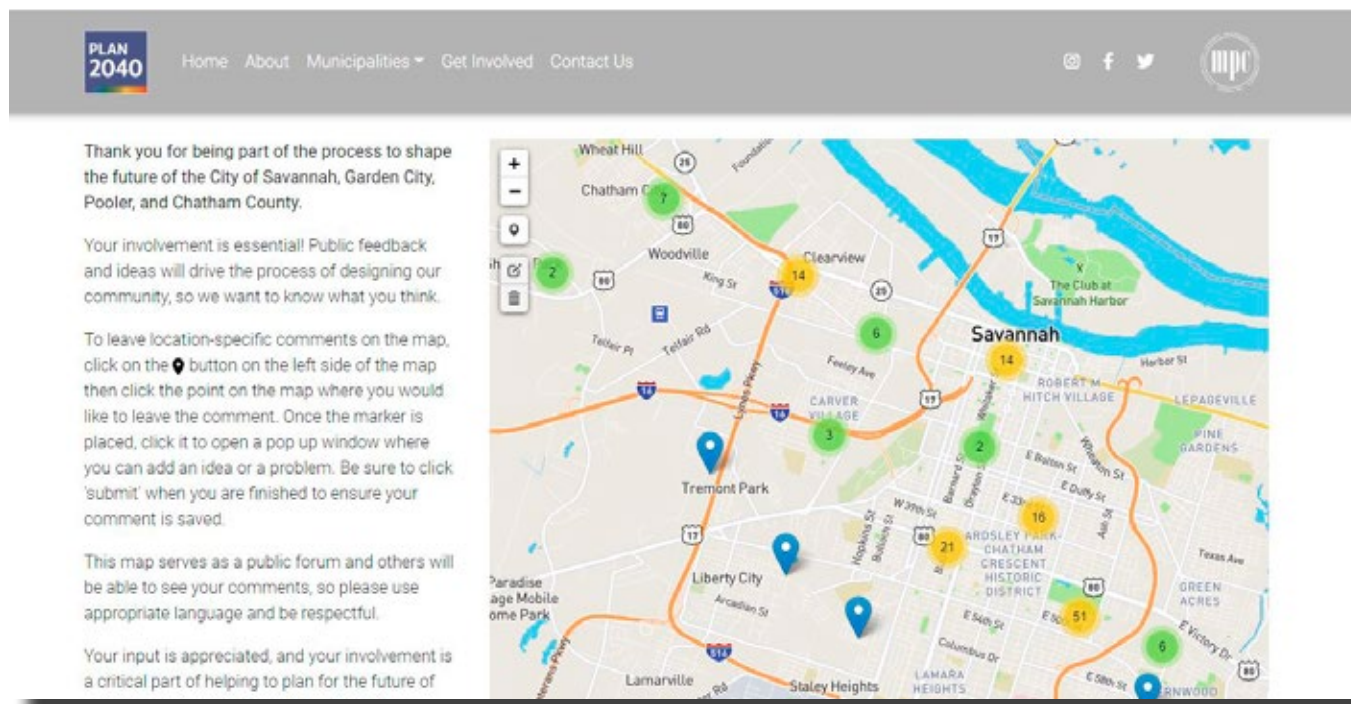
## Comment Map Overview

To ensure that the Plan 2040 public outreach methods were widespread and equitable, the Plan 2040 team created a comment mapping tool to collect additional feedback. This technique was a new tool that allowed community members to anonymously geolocate "Ideas" and "Problems" in their community.

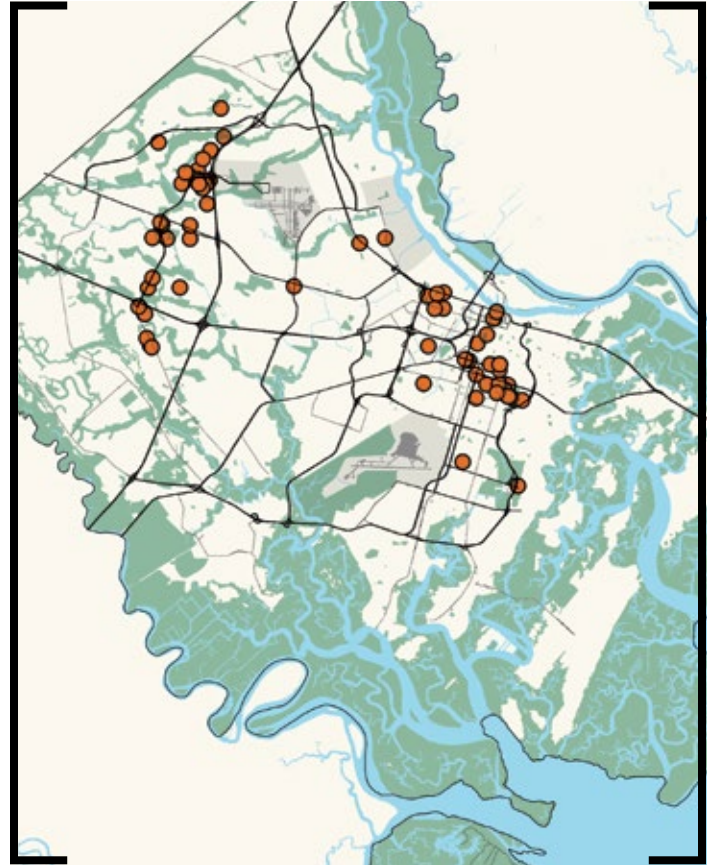
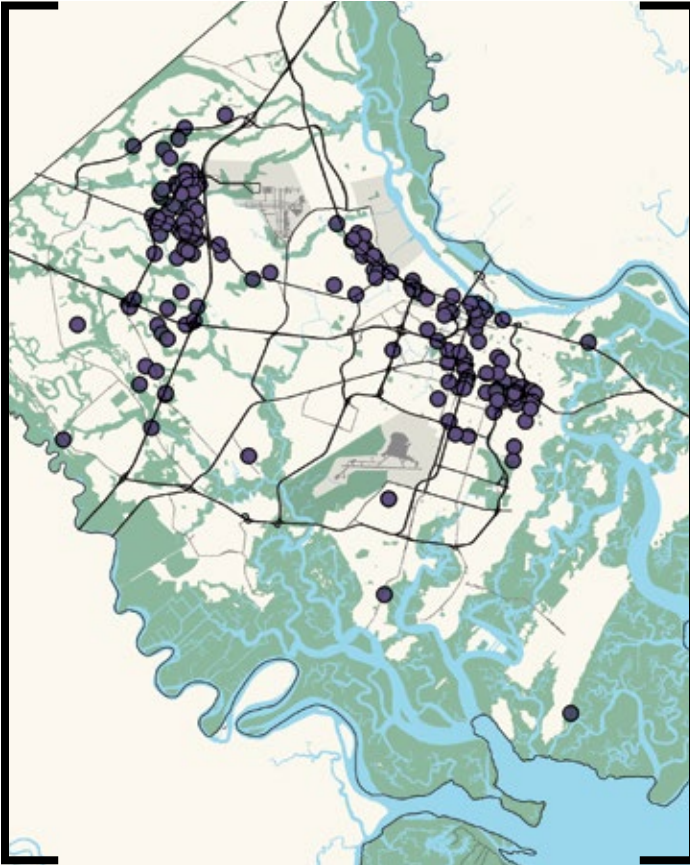
The collection process revealed opportunities in the community and provided insights into where future neighborhood plans and corridor studies might be needed. It also served as a starting point for future public outreach.

The major "Ideas" and "Problems" uncovered with the comment mapper revealed that food insecurity, neighborhood trash/maintenance, and walkability are hindering the quality of life of the citizens of both unincorporated Chatham and Savannah alike.

The data represented next is from October 23, 2020 to June 10, 2021. This resource will remain active and will be used as an additional method of public comment for future Plan 2040 engagement opportunities.



## Response Locations



## What We Heard

### IDEAS

- Grocery Store
- Community Center
- More Sidewalk Connections
- Mixed Use Housing
- Street Lighting
- Dog Park
- Bike Lanes
- Movie Studio
- Pocket Parks
- Community Beautification Projects

### PROBLEMS

- CAT Bus Stops Needed
- Traffic Congestion
- Public Restrooms Needed
- Flooding
- Excess Trash & Litter
- Lack of Housing Options
- Incomplete Sidewalk Connections
- More Tree Canopy
- Major Ditch & Canal Drainage Improvements Needed



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH POP-UPS

## Community Outreach Overview

The Plan 2040 team conducted a series of nine community pop-up events throughout Chatham County and the city of Savannah. The pop-up events were held at various times to reach as many residents as possible across the county.

Following CDC recommended COVID-19 safety measures, the Plan 2040 team also offered virtual meetings to supplement the community outreach effort.

There were seven rounds of virtual meetings that included an overview of Plan 2040, polls, and opportunities for community feedback on progress. In addition, virtual "Town Talks" were held to specifically focus on reaching neighborhood associations and the faith-based community.



These events were advertised and offered to community or faith-based organization responding to email blasts and other communications.

- Chatham Recycles—"Haunted Recycling" (October 24, 2020)
- Starland Yard—"Mini-Market" (October 28, 2020)
- Forsyth Park—"Farmer's Market" (November 21, 2020)
- Forsyth Park—"Farmer's Market" (December 21, 2020)
- Kiwanis—"TOWNTalks" (March 4)
- Colonial Village Community—"TOWNTalks" (April 12)
- Cann-Jackson Park—"TOWNTalks" (April 1)
- Ardsley Park—"Pop-up Park" (April 14)
- Edgemere Sackville—"TOWNTalks" (April 21)
- Rotary Club—"TOWNTalks" (June 15)
- Neighborhood Meeting 1—"TOWNTalks<sup>2.0</sup>" (August 10)
- Neighborhood Meeting 2—"TOWNTalks<sup>2.0</sup>" (August 17)
- Neighborhood Meeting 3—"TOWNTalks<sup>2.0</sup>" (August 24)

Over 1,170 participants attended these pop-ups, neighborhood and virtual meetings and provided over 1,000+ comments.

# MEETINGS

## Internal Meetings & Committee Meetings

- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(August 19, 2020)
- TCC & CAC— (August 20, 2020)
- ACAT—(August 24, 2020)
- CORE MPO—(August 26, 2020)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(October 7, 2020)
- MPC Board—(October 12, 2020)
- UGA Graduate Studies Class—(October 14, 2020)
- TCC & CAC—(December 3, 2020)
- ACAT—(December 7, 2020)
- CORE MPO—(December 9, 2020)
- TCC—(February 18)
- CORE MPO—(February 24)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(March 5)
- County Commission Meeting—(March 26)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(April 8)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(May 6)
- Historic Site and Monument Commission—(May 6)
- Savannah Historic District Board of Review—(May 12)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(May 20)
- Savannah Historic District Board of Review—(May 26)
- Savannah City Council—(May 27)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(June 2)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(June 3)
- County Commission Meeting—(June 11)
- PLAN 2040 Subcommittee—(June 17)
- MPC Board—(June 29)
- Savannah City Council—(July 8)
- County Commission Meeting—(July 16)
- Savannah City Council—(September TBD)
- County Commission Meeting—(September TBD)

## Public Meetings

- Virtual Meeting Round 1—(January 26)
- Virtual Meeting—(January 27)
- Virtual Meeting Round 2—(February 22)
- Virtual Meeting—(February 23)
- Virtual Meeting Round 3—(March 30)
- One-to-One Citizen Meeting—(April 7)
- Virtual Meeting—(April 9)
- MPC Board—(June 29)
- Savannah City Council—(July 8)
- County Commission Meeting—(July 16)
- Virtual Meeting "TownTalks 2.0"—(August 31)





# NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES



## QUALITY OF LIFE

- Lack of Visual Police Presence
- Trash, Litter, Illegal Dumping Everywhere
- Noxious Smells from Local Industry
- Panhandling, Vagrancy & Homelessness
- More Farmer's Markets, Grocery Stores & Healthy Food Options
- Obnoxious Traffic Sounds & Noise
- Concerns About Crime
- Unequal Quality of Life between Neighborhoods
- Stricter Code Enforcement
- More Services for Homeless
- Improve Lighting in Parks
- Concern with Food Insecurity
- Preservation of Heritage Sites



## HOUSING

- Mixed Use Housing
- More Workforce Housing
- Higher Density Housing Closer to Employment Centers
- Housing Cost is Too Expensive for Locals
- Restriction on Short Term Vacation Rentals
- More Senior Housing
- Increase the Quality of Public Housing
- Housing Options for Transitional Housing
- Tiny Home Options for Veterans
- By Right Accessory Dwelling Units
- More Equitable Housing Options
- Require Developers to Provide Affordable Units in Developments



## LAND USE

- More Parks, Trails & Green Space
- More Complete Sidewalks
- More Walk/Bike Infrastructure
- Restrict Additional Hotels
- Not Enough Public Spaces
- Too Many Chain Retailers
- More Detailed Neighborhood Plans



#### NATURAL RESOURCES

- Protection of the Existing Tree Canopy
- More Trail Systems that Interconnect
- Neighborhood Parklets
- More Dog Parks
- Better Maintenance for Parks
- Open Space Master Plan
- More Recycling & Green Initiatives
- Preserve our Wetlands & Marshes
- Drainage Issues and Flooding



#### TRANSPORTATION

- Accessibility to Bus Stops
- Bus Stops Should be Sheltered
- Large Employers Should Share Costs for Roadway Improvements
- Gaps in CAT Bus Service
- Impractical Bus Frequencies
- Traffic Congestion Due to City Growth
- Consider Designated Bus Lanes
- Reverting One Ways back to Two Way Streets
- Protected Bike Lanes
- Consider Transit Oriented Development



#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Need Higher Paying Jobs
- Less Focus on Tourism and More On Local Residents
- Providing More Programs for Youth
- More Community Events
- More Investment into Our Schools
- More Career Opportunities outside of Tourism
- Neighborhood Beautification
- Diversify our Economy