

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION





# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

---

## Introduction

---

Through the Community Participation Plan, the Garden City 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 preparation of Garden City 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 primarily in the comprehensive plan.



# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

The vision for Garden City 2040 represents the voice of our community. Through the two-year planning process, Garden City 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 Garden City 2040.

The Garden City 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:

- 14 Virtual Public Meetings
- 10 Email Blasts
- 6 Quarterly Newsletters
- MPC Annual Report
- Press Releases (Traditional Media Interviews)
- Garden City Online Website Promotion
- Online Interactive Comment Mapper (~300 Comments)
- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)
- Utility Bill Messages
- 4 Pop-up events
- Dedicated Plan 2040 Website
- Online Survey (101 Participants)





# COMMUNITY SURVEY & SWOT ANALYSIS

## 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 survey was open from October 23, 2020 to January 19, 2021. A total of 101 responses were received from Garden City's residents.

The 24-question survey consisted of multiple choice and open-ended response questions. The MPC staff participated in the survey development 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.

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

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

The Plan's Stakeholder Committee participated in an exercise analyzing issues and opportunities in Garden City.

The Stakeholder Committee's input helped determine the needs and opportunities as part of the comprehensive planning process. The results of the needs and opportunities analysis are incorporated into the body of the plan and are outlined by plan element on pages 38 and 39.

RACE/ETHNICITY	AGE	HOUSING OWNERSHIP	EDUCATION	MODE OF TRAVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>56%—White or Caucasian</li> <li>28%—Black or AA</li> <li>0%—Asian</li> <li>14%—Prefer not to answer</li> <li>2%—Other</li> <li>0%—Hispanic, Latinx</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0%—Under 18</li> <li>10%—18–34</li> <li>16%—35–49</li> <li>38%—50–64</li> <li>28%—65 and Older</li> <li>8%—Prefer not to answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82%—Homeowner</li> <li>16%—Renter</li> <li>2%—Rental Property Owner</li> <li>0%—STVR Owner</li> <li>0%—Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0%—Less than High School</li> <li>14%—High School Diploma</li> <li>36%—Some College</li> <li>26%—Bachelor's Degree</li> <li>16%—Graduate Degree</li> <li>8%—Prefer not to answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>87%—Drive alone</li> <li>6%—Carpool</li> <li>2%—Bus</li> <li>2%—Bike/Walk</li> <li>3%—Rideshare</li> <li>0%—Other</li> </ul>

# SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very low property tax rate</li> <li>- Continual business development and bringing new people into the city</li> <li>- Location, perfectly placed within the county</li> <li>- New school complex being built</li> <li>- Public safety presence is strong and well known</li> <li>- Can be both a strength and a weakness: low millage rate</li> <li>- Jurisdictions are working together</li> <li>- Close proximity to Savannah and tourism (both people and dollars brought into the community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited housing type options</li> <li>- Limited water and sewer in southern area of city limiting growth</li> <li>- Need more people to both work here AND live here</li> <li>- City needs more restaurants and services for the residents</li> <li>- Garden City lacks the “sense of place” that a community needs</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tiny homes could be beneficial to the city</li> <li>- Broaden housing options and types for residents both new and existing</li> <li>- Capitalize on the city’s economic and business activity</li> <li>- Partnership with Georgia Ports Authority</li> <li>- Create work programs</li> <li>- Expand entertainment opportunities</li> <li>- Reduce crime and poverty</li> <li>- More emphasis on vocational training</li> <li>- More services for new residents (like grocery stores, shopping, parks, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congestion and traffic due to trains going to and from the Georgia Ports Authority</li> <li>- Lack of land to build new housing developments, subdivisions, senior housing, affordable housing</li> <li>- Lack of grocery stores within the city</li> <li>- The city’s poverty rate has increased due to the impacts of COVID-19</li> <li>- Lack of water and sewer in certain areas</li> </ul>

# PLAN 2040 SURVEY QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

## 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 describe 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 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?

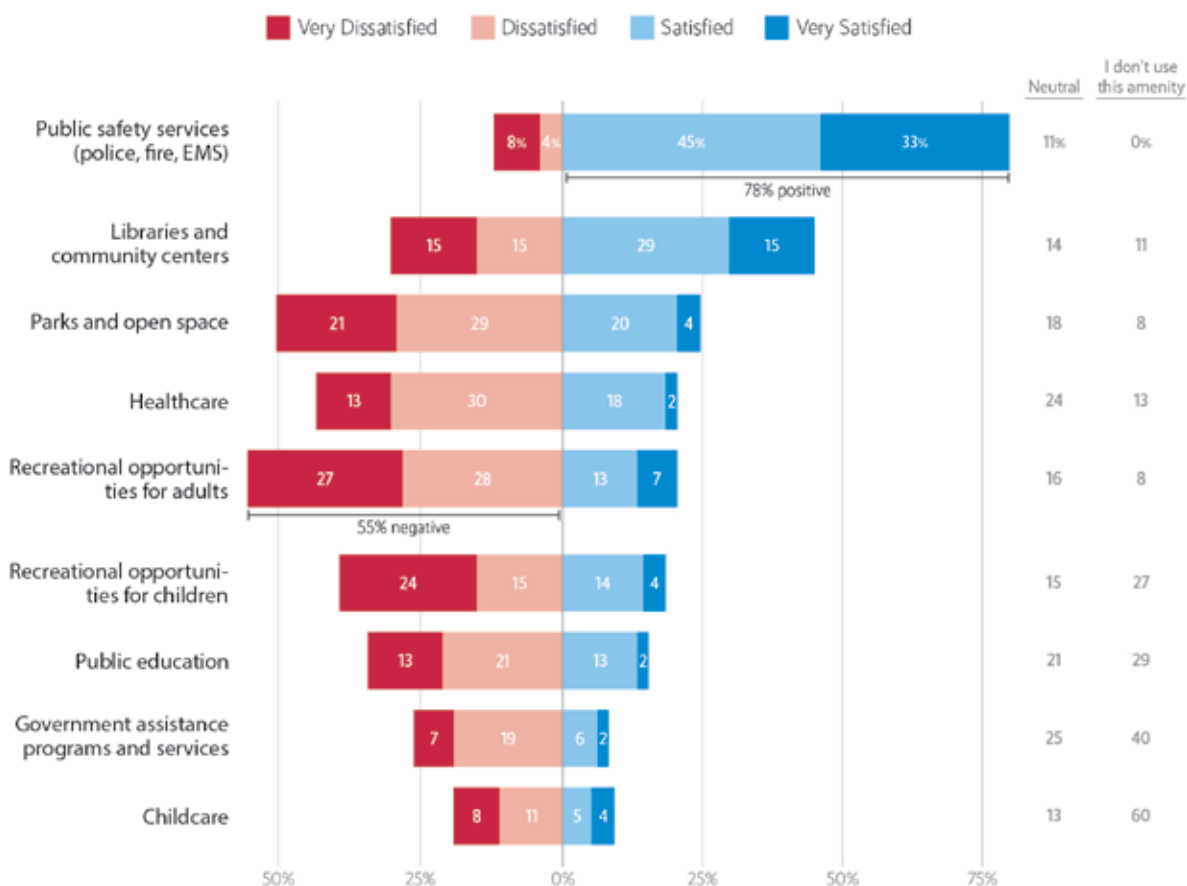




## Quality of Life

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?

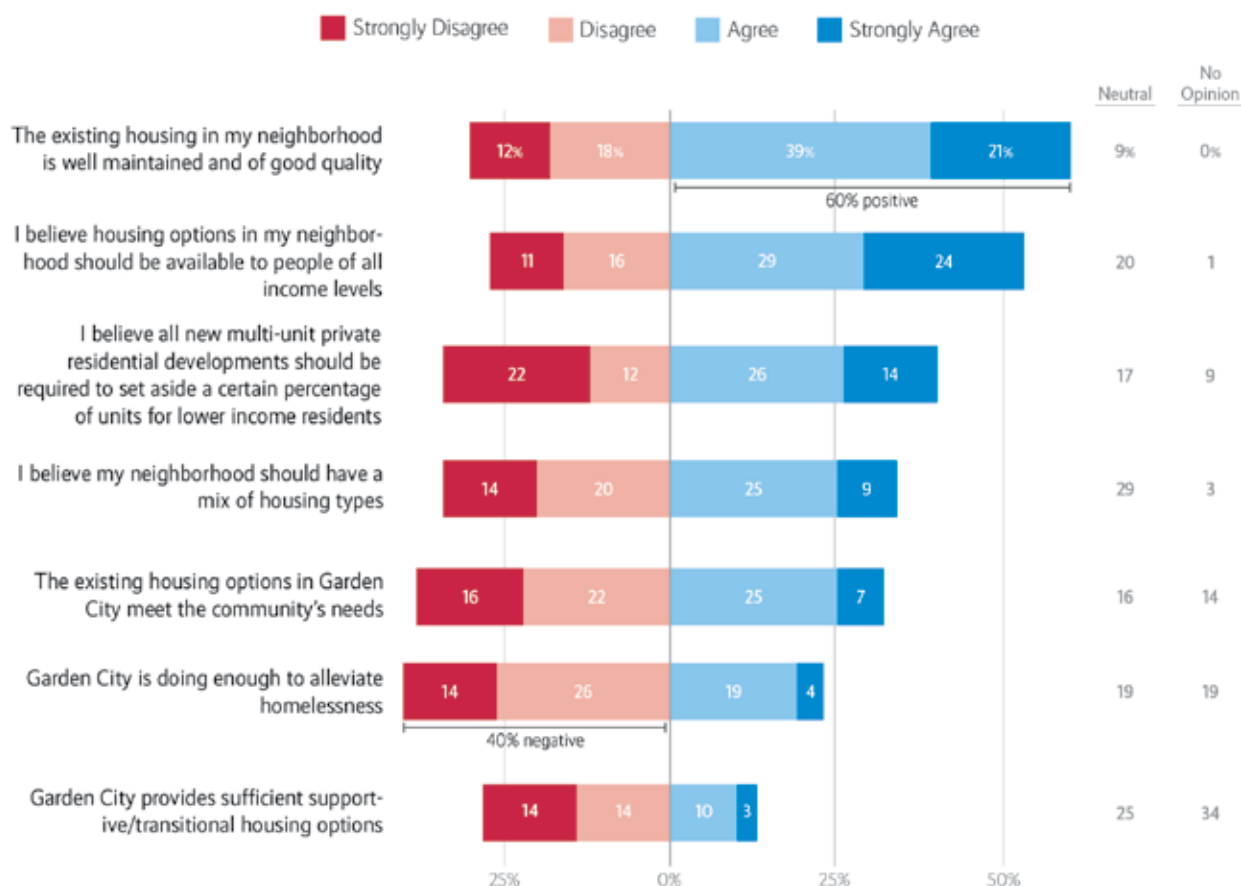
% of survey respondents who are \_\_\_\_\_ with the following public amenities and services in their community.



## 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?

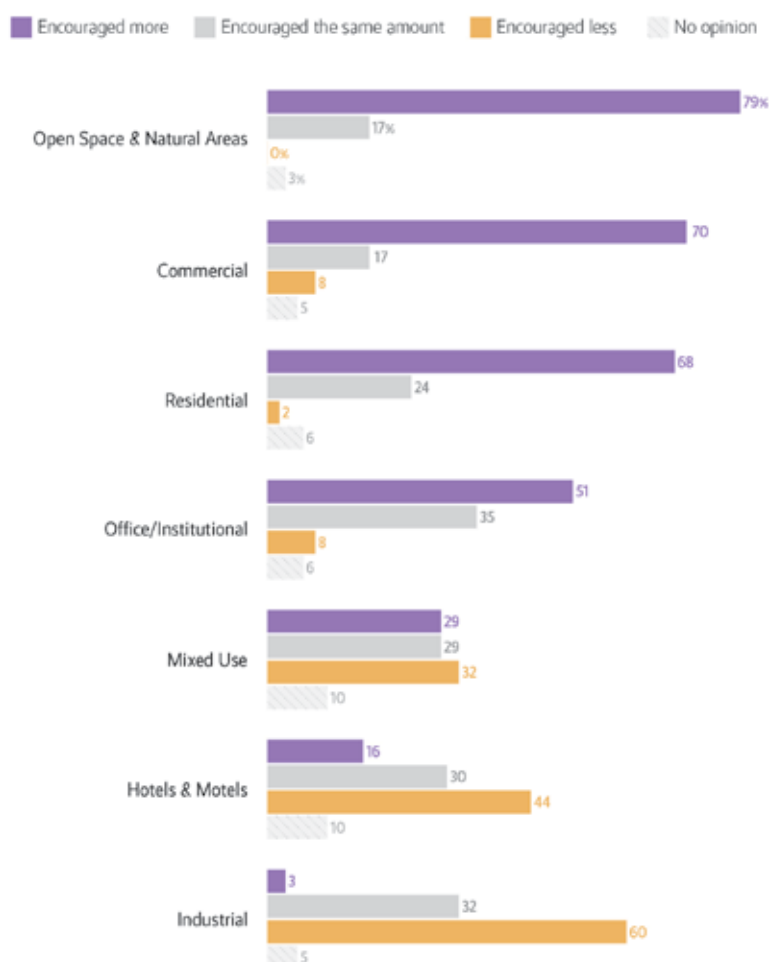
% of survey respondents who \_\_\_\_\_ with the following statements about housing in Garden City.



## 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?

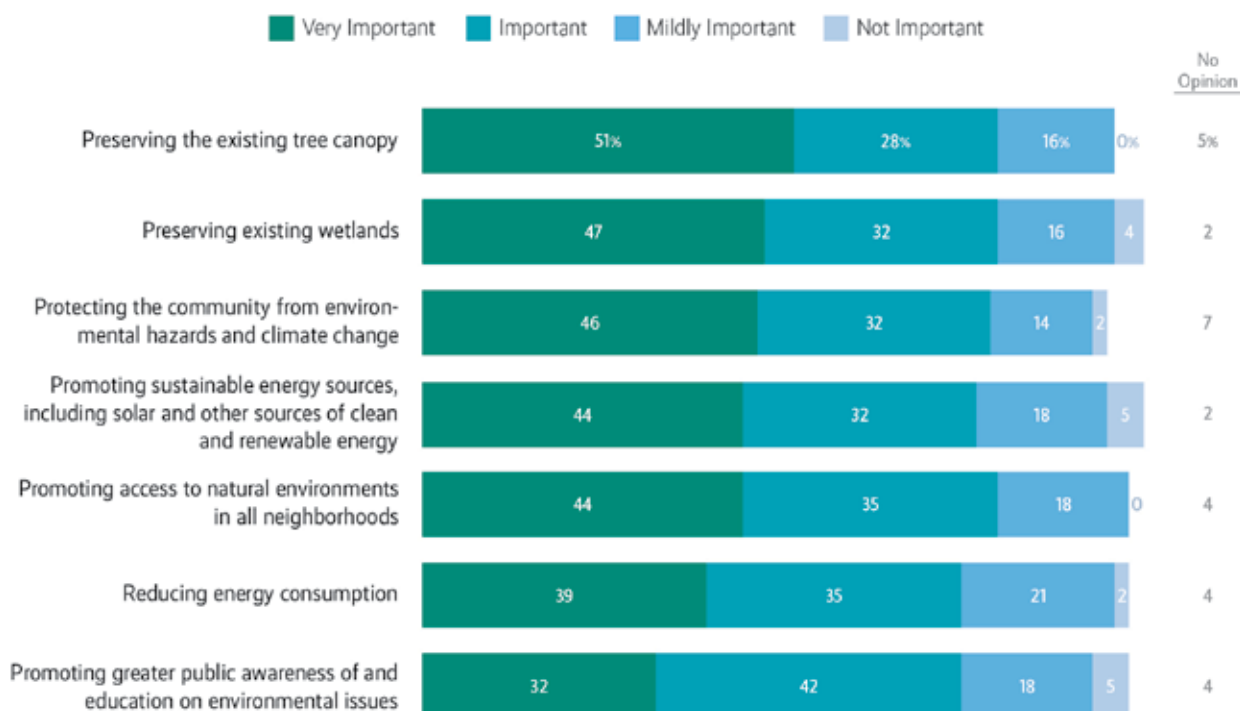
% of survey respondents who think the following types of development should be encouraged more, less, or about the same over the next 10 years.



## 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?

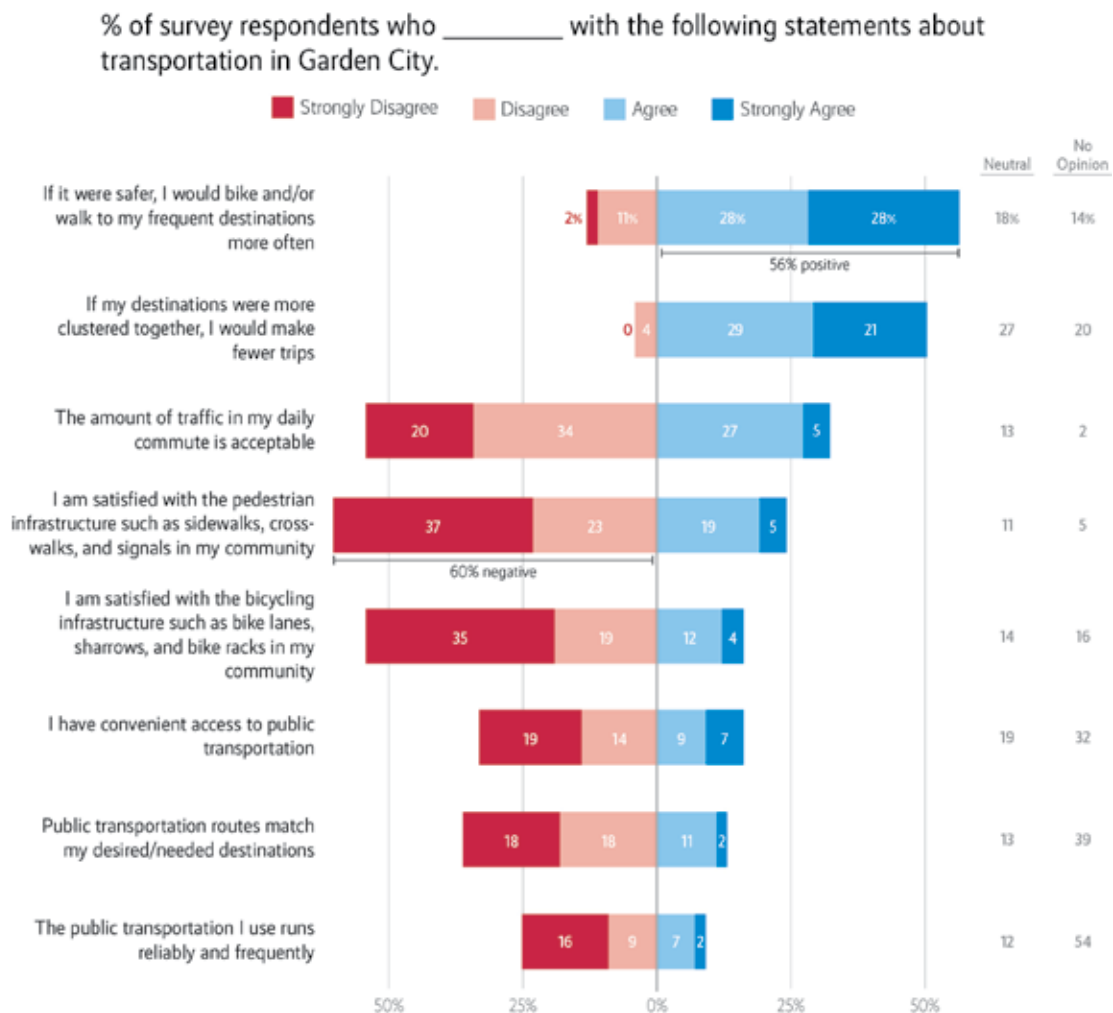
% of survey respondents who say the following natural resource objectives are \_\_\_\_\_.





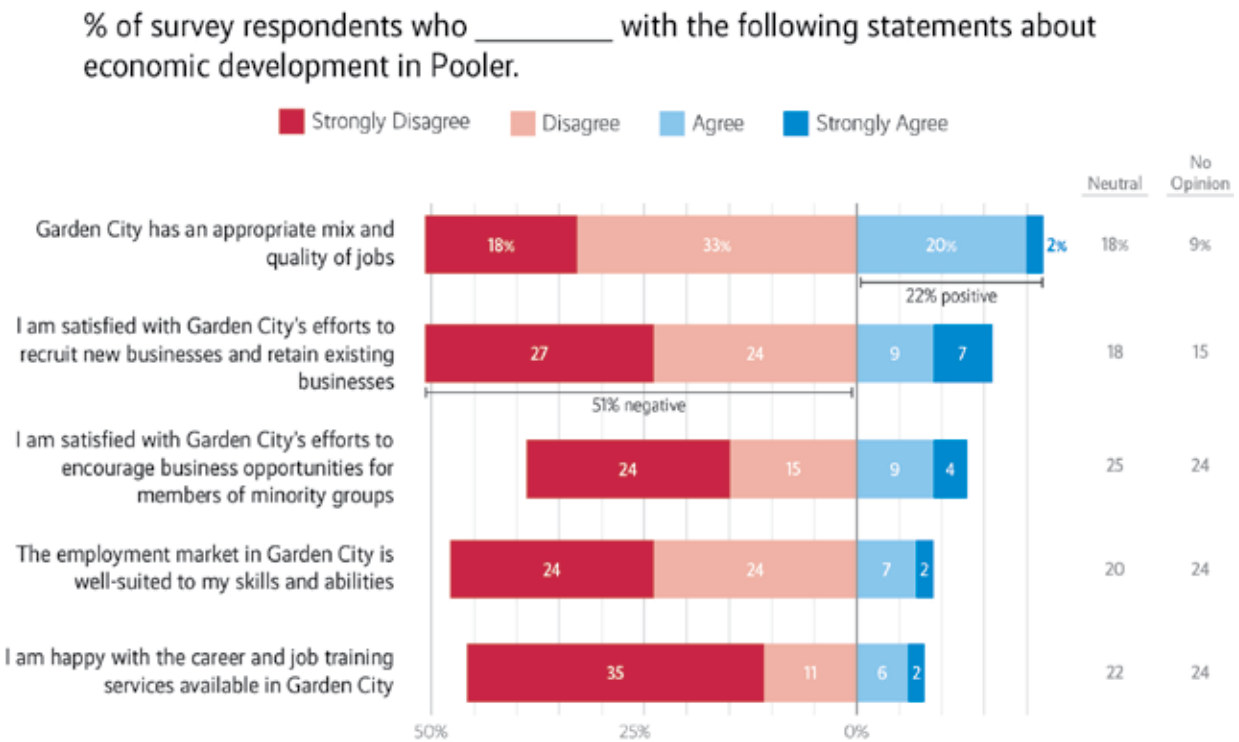
## Transportation

1. What is your primary mode of travel?
2. How strongly do you agree with the following statements about transportation? (Results Below)
3. Do you have any additional comments about transportation?



Economic Development

- 1. 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?
- 2. How strongly would you agree with the following statements about economic development? (Results Below)
- 3. How important are the following objectives to you?
- 4. Do you have any additional comments about economic development?
- 5. Are there other priorities or issues not covered in this survey that you think are important to consider as part of the Comprehensive Plan?

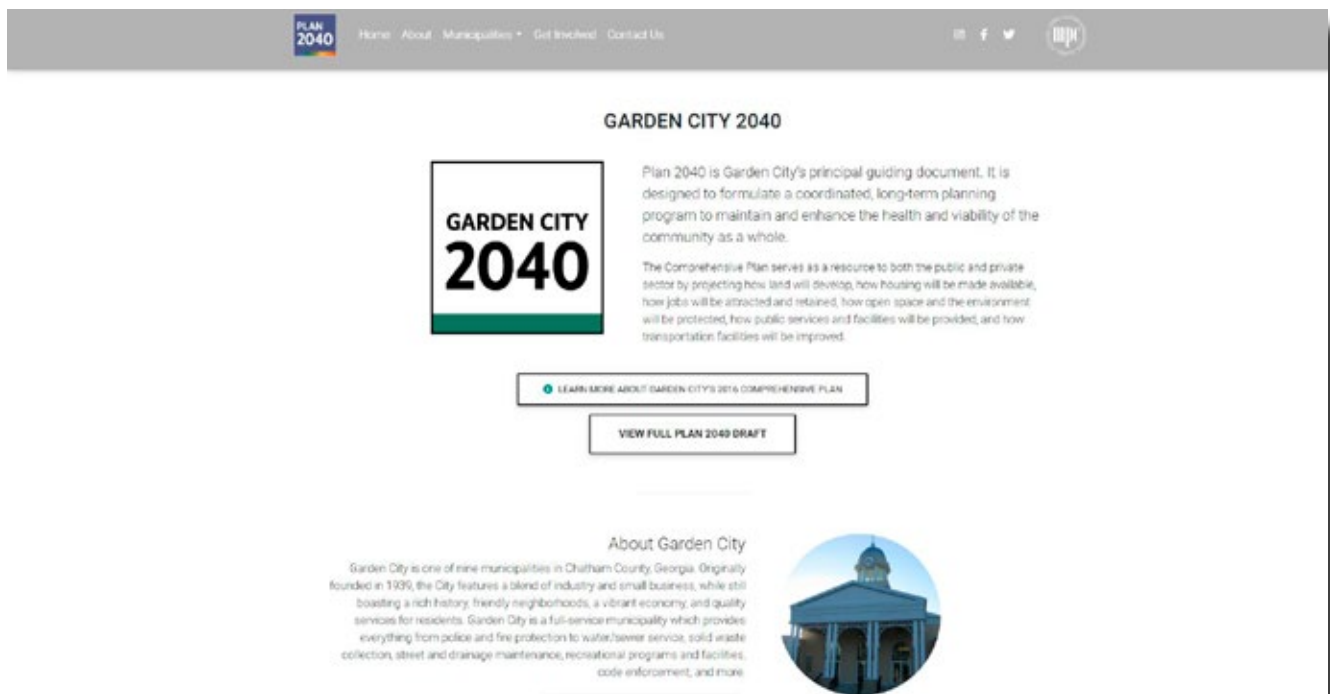


# WEB PAGE

## Web Page Overview

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

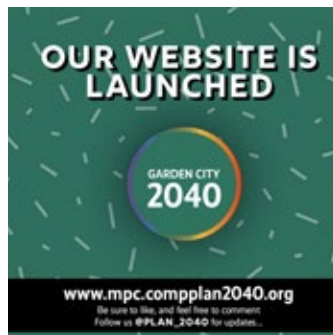
The web page was set up and designed to be user friendly, easily read, and interactive for all users. The page included a diverse mix of information including a project summary, history, a virtual meeting library, comment mapper, draft chapters, and a bulletin board of upcoming events.



# 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 Garden City 2040 included Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.





# COMMENT MAP

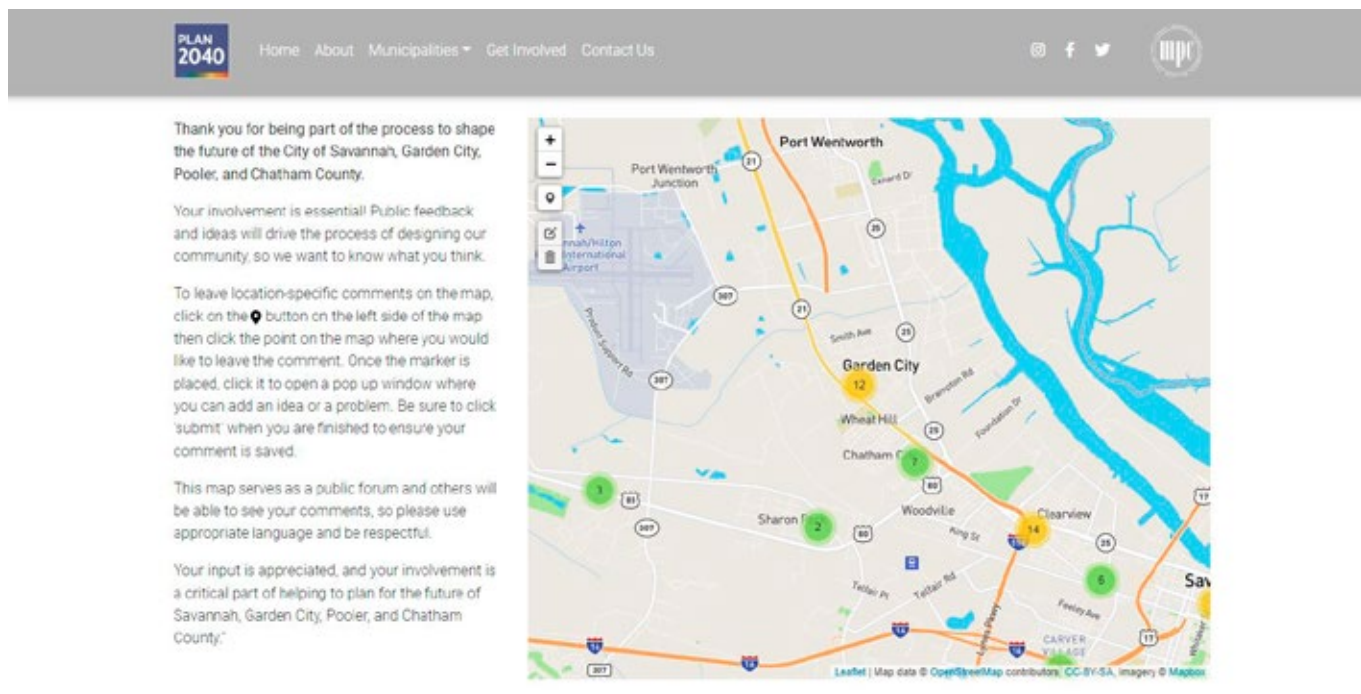
## Comment Map Overview

To ensure that the Garden City 2040 public outreach methods were widespread and equitable, the Garden City 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.

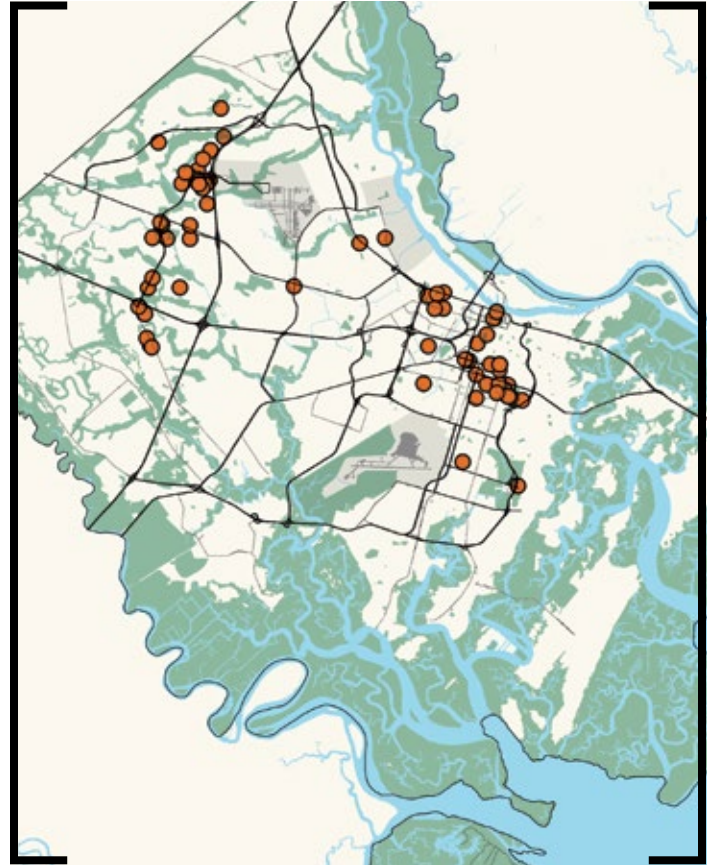
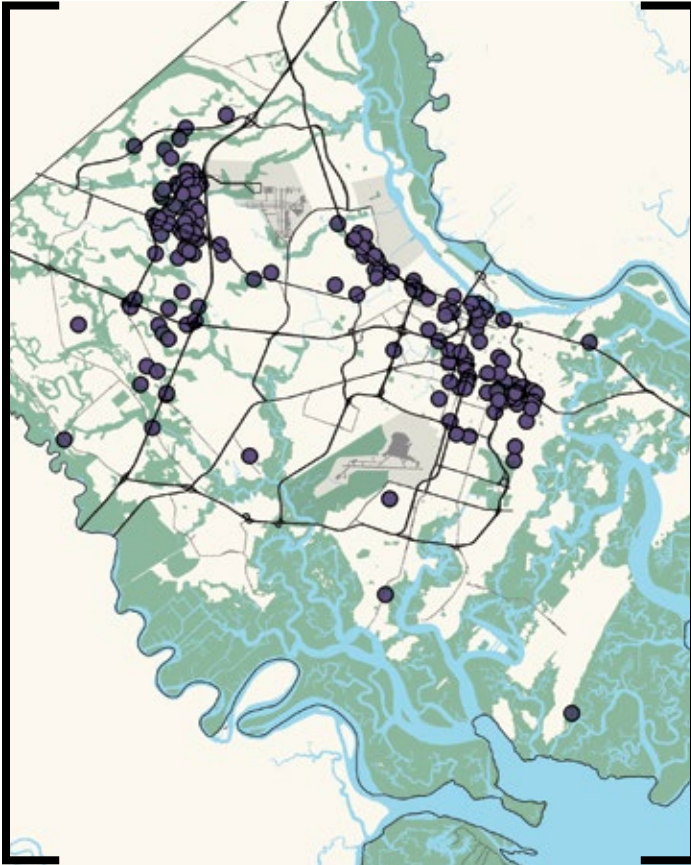
The collection process revealed opportunities in the community and provided insights into where future neighborhood plans and corridor studies might be needed. It also served as a starting point for future public outreach.

The major "Ideas" and "Problems" that were uncovered with the comment mapper revealed that food insecurity, neighborhood trash/maintenance, and walkability are hindering the quality of life of the citizens of Garden City.

The data represented to the right 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 Garden City 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

- More CAT Bus Stops Needed
- Traffic Congestion
- More Buffering Between Residential & Industrial Uses
- Flooding
- Excess Trash & Litter
- Lack of Housing Options
- Incomplete Sidewalk Connections
- More Tree Canopy
- Major Ditch & Canal Drainage Improvements Needed



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## Community Outreach Overview

The Garden City 2040 team conducted a series of five community pop-up events throughout Garden City. 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 Garden City 2040 team also offered virtual meetings to supplement the community outreach effort.

There were six virtual meetings that included an overview of Garden City 2040, polls, and opportunities for community feedback on progress.

These events were advertised and offered to community or faith-based organizations 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)
- Garden City Senior Center— (November 24, 2020)
- Forsyth Park—"Farmer's Market" (December 21, 2020)

Over 150 residents attended these pop-ups and provided over 500 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)
- Garden City's City Council Meeting—(September 21, 2020)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(October 7, 2020)
- UGA Graduate Studies Class—(October 14, 2020)
- TCC & CAC—(December 3, 2020)
- ACAT—(December 7, 2020)
- CORE MPO—(December 9, 2020)
- Garden City's Stakeholder Meeting—(December 16, 2020)
- Garden City's Stakeholder Meeting—(January 12)
- TCC—(February 18)
- CORE MPO—(February 24)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(March 5)
- Georgia Coastal Indicators Coalition—(June 2)
- Garden City's City Council Meeting—(July 19)
- Garden City's City Council Meeting—(TBD)

## Public Meetings

- Garden City Public Meeting—(December 9, 2020)
- 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)
- Virtual Meeting—(April 9)



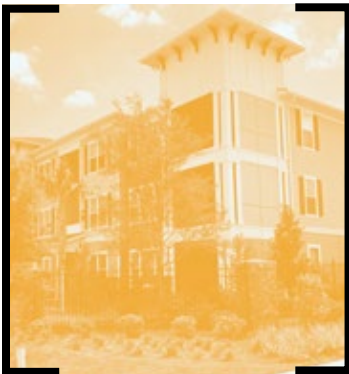


# NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES



## QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Needs:**
  - Increase and improve lighting
  - Improve streetscape beautification
  - New holiday street lights needed
  - Need gateway signage and beautification
  - Need another grocery store
  - Increase supply of commercial businesses
- City needs more opportunities for community outreach
- Need better access to farmer's markets
- Need to address issues with trash and litter
- **Opportunities:**
  - Great police force, Garden City feels safe



## HOUSING

- **Needs:**
  - First-time home buyers and senior housing should be the city's top priority
  - Not enough diversity of housing
  - More single-family housing is needed
  - More dedicated senior housing communities
  - Age in place housing is needed
- **Opportunities:**
  - Expand the interest in tiny homes
  - City is doing a good job at eradicating condemned and blighted housing



## LAND USE

- **Needs:**
  - The city needs an "anchor"
  - More "Mom & Pop Stores" and less big box
  - More park spaces
  - Interest in small business
  - City lacks a "sense of place"
- **Opportunities:**
  - Make Garden City a "destination"
  - Creation of an entertainment district

