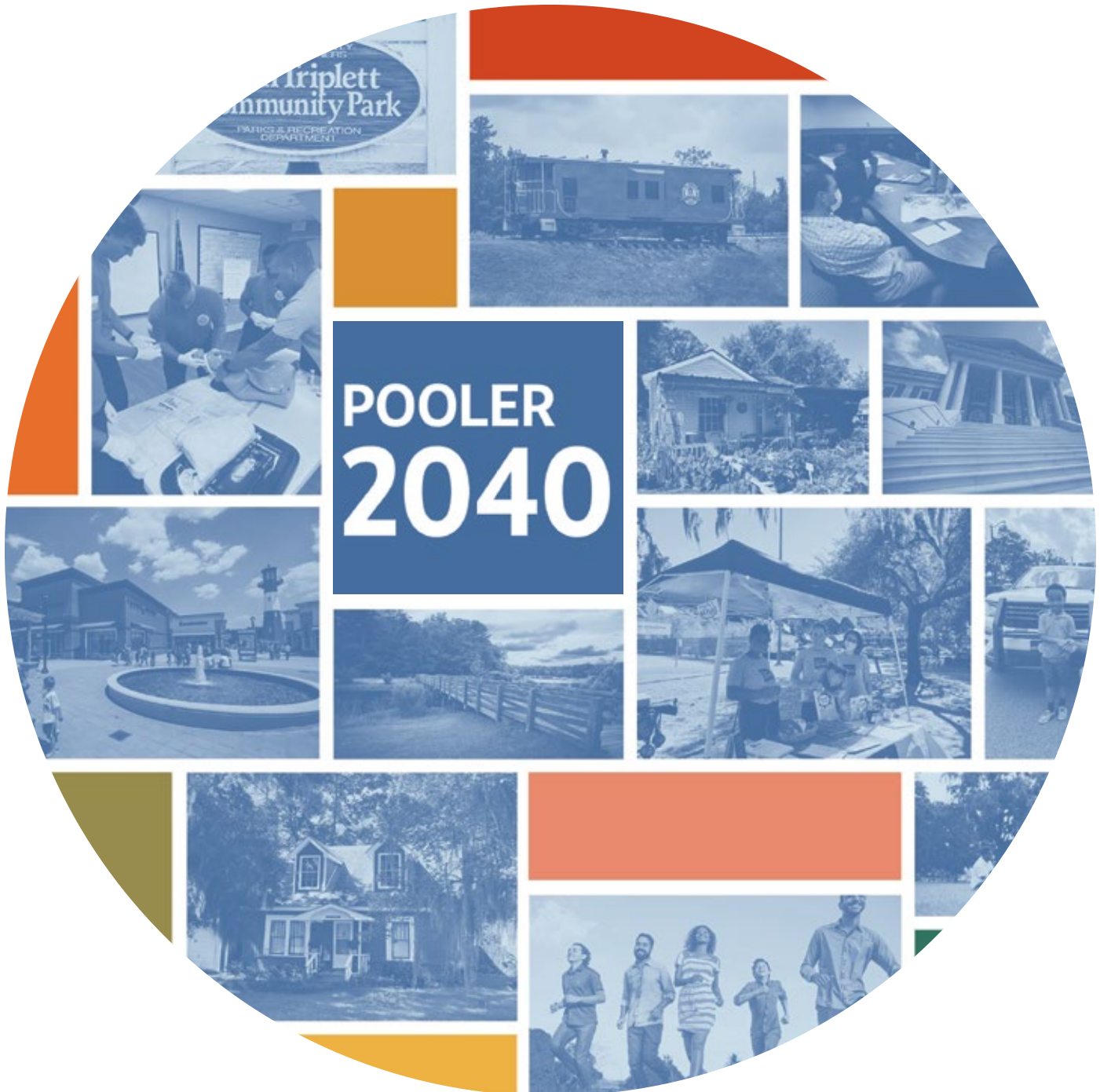


# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040

CITY OF POOLER

2020 UPDATE



Adopted by Pooler City Council  
October 18, 2021



POOLER  
**2040**

**ADVANCING TOGETHER.  
REDEFINING TOMORROW.**

**RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION  
BY THE CITY OF POOLER COUNCIL**

**Whereas**, the last full Comprehensive Plan was developed in 2006 and then updated in October 2016; and

**Whereas**, since the issues and challenges facing the community continue to change from when the Goals and Objectives were updated in the last 2016 Comprehensive Plan; and

**Whereas**, community input was gathered by the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission through virtual meetings, community events, social media, websites, a public online and written survey, and other channels to gauge the public's priorities for Pooler; and

**Whereas**, the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission updated the Comprehensive Plan to address economic development, land use, transportation, housing, and quality of life elements; and

**Whereas**, those Goals and Objectives have been incorporated into the Work Program of the Comprehensive Plan for Pooler, Georgia; and

**Whereas**, the Department of Community Affairs requires written notice that the Comprehensive Plan for Pooler, Georgia was adopted;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, that the City of Pooler Council does hereby adopt the Pooler Comprehensive Plan and authorizes the City Manager to transmit the Resolution of Adoption to the Coastal Regional Commission and Department of Community Affairs as required by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

Adopted this 18<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021

POOLER, GEORGIA

By: Rebecca Benton

Rebecca Benton, Mayor

Date: Oct 18, 2021

Attest: Philip Claxton

~~Kiley Fusco, Clerk~~

Philip Claxton

Date 10/18/2021

\_\_\_\_\_

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Introduction

Pooler 2040 is the culmination of collaboration over this past year and would not have been possible without the time, knowledge and energy of those persons listed and to the hundreds of community members who came to events, participated in virtual public meetings, attended steering committees, answered our survey and provided their invaluable input.

The Chatham County—Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) would like to thank the City of Pooler City Council for engaging our organization in this important project. The continued support and participation of these community leaders is vital. Our sincere appreciation is expressed to these individuals. The MPC was pleased to have the opportunity to assist and support the community in developing the City of Pooler's Comprehensive Plan update.

## City of Pooler's Mayor & Council Members

**Rebecca Benton**—*Mayor*

**Shannon Black**—*Council Member*

**Aaron Higgins**—*Council Member*

**Tom Hutcherson**—*Council Member*

**Stevie Wall**—*Council Member*

**John Wilcher**—*Council Member*

**Karen Williams**—*Council Member*

## Pooler Staff

**Robert Byrd, Jr.**—*City Manager*

**Matt Saxon**—*Assistant City Manager*

**Phillip Claxton**—*Planning Director*

**Kimberly Classen**—*Zoning Administrator*

**Steven E. Scheer**—*City Attorney*

## Stakeholder Committee

**Rebecca Benton**—Mayor  
**Shannon Black**—Council Member  
**Aaron Higgins**—Council Member  
**Tom Hutcherson**—Council Member  
**Stevie Wall**—Council Member  
**John Wilcher**—Council Member  
**Karen Williams**—Council Member

## Planning & Zoning Board Stakeholders

**Phillip Claxton**—Chairman  
**Kim Classen**—Secretary  
**Ashley Brown**—Commission  
**Shirlenia Daniel**—Commission  
**Chelsea Henneman**—Commission  
**Falgun Patel**—Commission  
**Wade Simmons**—Commission  
**John Winn**—Commission  
**Pete Chaison**—(Alternate)

## Technical Assistance

### Chatham—Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff

**Melanie Wilson**—Executive Director MPC  
**Pamela Everett**—Assistant Executive Director  
**Jackie Jackson**—Director of Advance Planning  
**Lara Hall**—Director of SAGIS  
**Marcus Lotson**—Director of Development Services  
**Leah G. Michalak**—Director of Historic Preservation  
**Mark Wilkes**—Director of Transportation

**David Ramsey**—Information Services & Mapping  
**Debbie Burke**—Natural Resource Planner  
**Nic Fazio**—Senior Planner  
**Kait Morano**—Planner  
**Aislinn Droski**—Assistant Planner  
**Asia Hernton**—Assistant Planner  
**Kiakala Ntemo**—Contract Planner

## Special Thanks

**Patty McIntosh, AICP**—Contract Editor



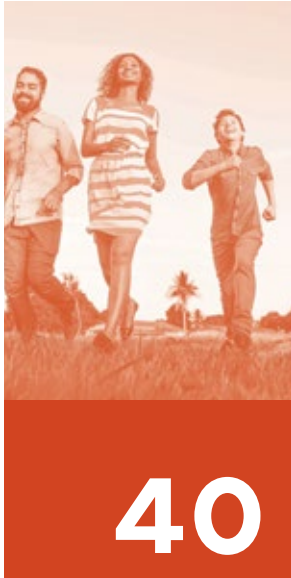
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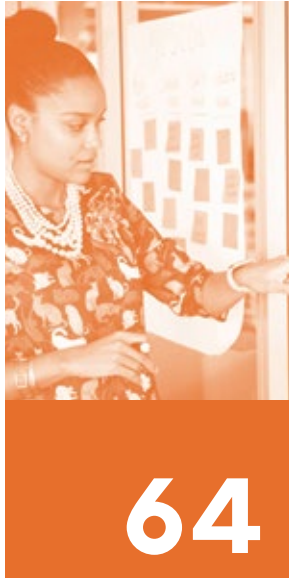
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## A photograph of a busy intersection with traffic lights and cars. The image shows a multi-lane road with several vehicles, including a dark SUV in the foreground and a white sedan to its right. Traffic lights are visible on poles, and a 'STOP' sign is mounted on a pole in the background. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the road.

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# WELCOME LETTER

## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



**Rebecca Benton, Mayor of Pooler**

*Rebecca C. Benton*

This update is the product of a multitude of different types of public engagement endeavors and careful consideration by City staff and our City Council. An approved update is critically needed to ensure Pooler is able address the challenges and opportunities that we face today.

We recognize that in a time of crisis, such as COVID-19, while tracking and responding to immediate needs, considering the broader goals and vision of the city is challenging. Hence, the Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan will serve as that reminder and guide, as we all come together to work toward a more equitable and resilient city than ever before.

Public engagement has been a hallmark of the Comprehensive Plan update process. Through various engagement events and venues, the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), as the agent for this update process, has heard from both residents and stakeholders.

The update that we submit to you today reflects the best analysis, policies, and actions that will prepare Pooler to manage the change ahead with an eye toward equity, resilience, and shared prosperity. On behalf of the entire City Council, I want to express our gratitude and reaffirm our support as we continue to move Pooler forward together.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Pooler 2040

Pooler's Comprehensive Plan 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 jurisdiction. The Comprehensive Plan lays out the desired future for Pooler, and relates how that future is to be achieved. The plan serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by projecting how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved. In short, Pooler's Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide for consistent policy direction.

The City of Pooler's City Council and local community leaders will use the Pooler 2040 Comprehensive Plan in the following ways:

### **The Future Land Use Map shall be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions:**

It provides a representation of the community's vision helping to guide development based on community preferences and also indicates character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted.

### **The Comprehensive Plan provides policies that help guide day-to-day decisions:**

These policies are reflections of community values identified through public outreach efforts. These policies will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions and other capital investment decisions.

### **The Comprehensive Plan includes an Implementation Program that will direct public investment and private initiative:**

Plan implementation is carried out through the adoption and revision of regulations, including zoning and development codes, and through the completion of projects and programs outlined in the Community Goals and Community Strategic Plan and Work Program. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document and should be updated regularly as conditions change and shifts occur in public policy.

The following pages describe the results of public participation that informed and guided the development of this planning document.

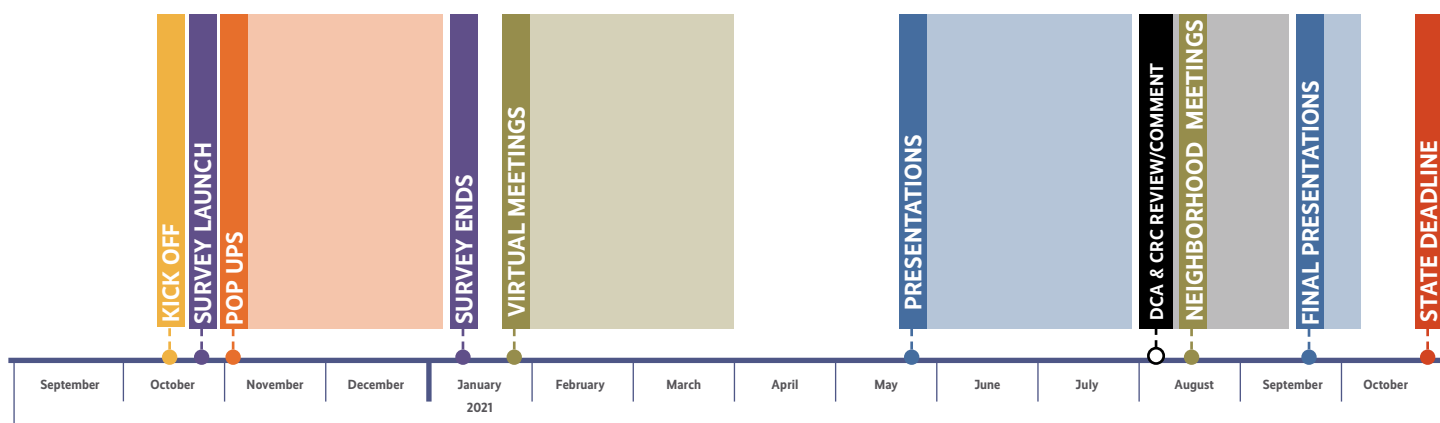


# PLAN SCHEDULE

The comprehensive planning process required approximately eighteen months to complete. From March 2020 to October 2021, the MPC worked closely with city planning staff, City Council, and citizens of Pooler to identify issues, share strengths and develop visions, goals, and strategies for this Plan.

City Council along with various stakeholders regularly reviewed planning concepts, and provided feedback on critical issues.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE



### UNDERSTAND & EXPLORE

- Project Launch & Work Plan
- Background Review & Research
- Survey Launch
- Comment Mapper Launch
- Pop-ups Begin

### ENGAGE & DEVELOP

- Draft Element Visions & Goals
- Draft Short Term Work Programs
- Public Engagement Evaluation
- Virtual Meetings
- Subcommittee Meetings

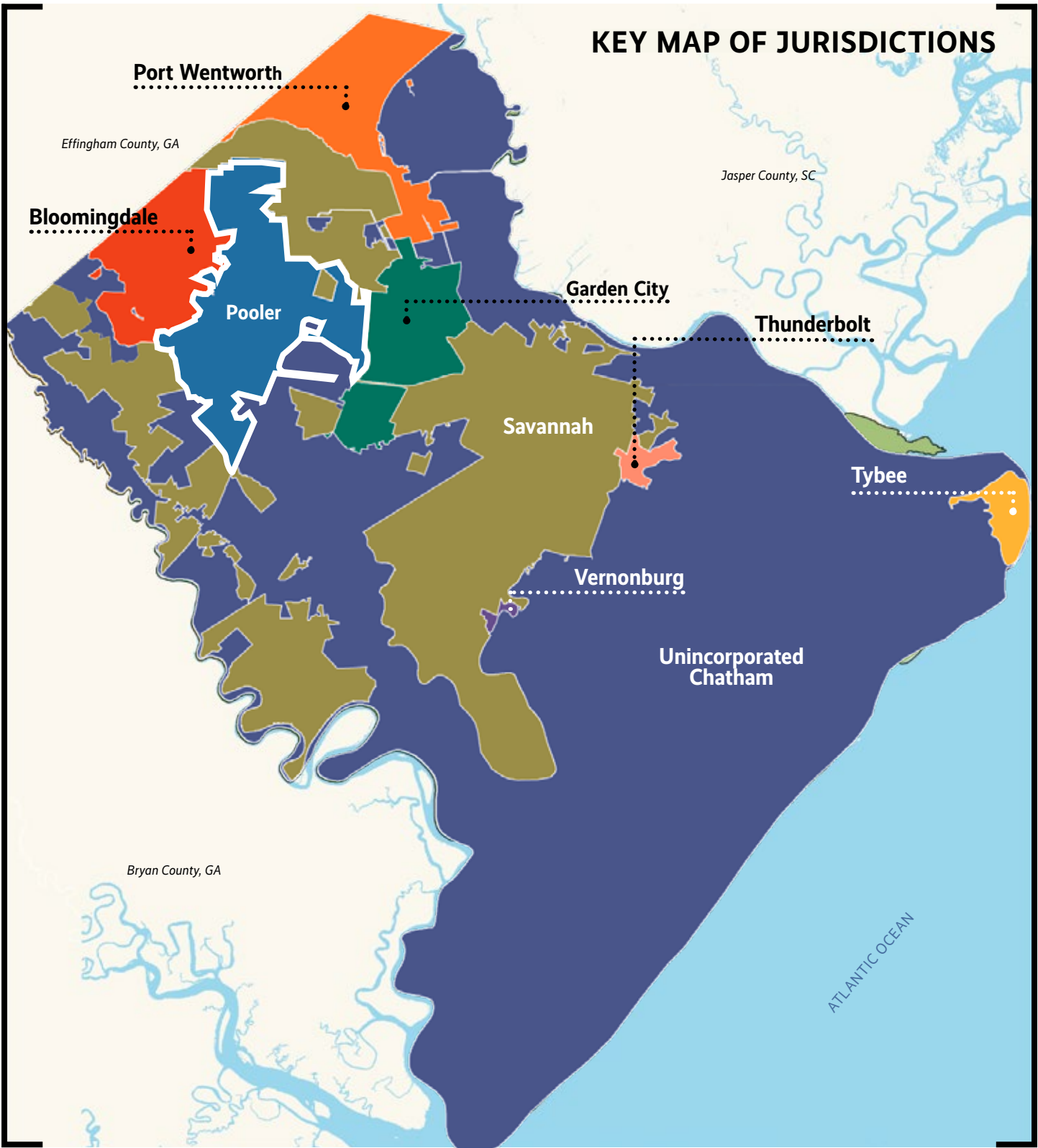
### REFINE & FINALIZE

- Draft Plan Development
- Plan Refinement
- Draft Presentations
- DCA & CRC Review
- Final Presentation & Adoption

### FINAL PLAN

## PLANNING PHASES

# KEY MAP OF JURISDICTIONS



# WHY DO WE PLAN?

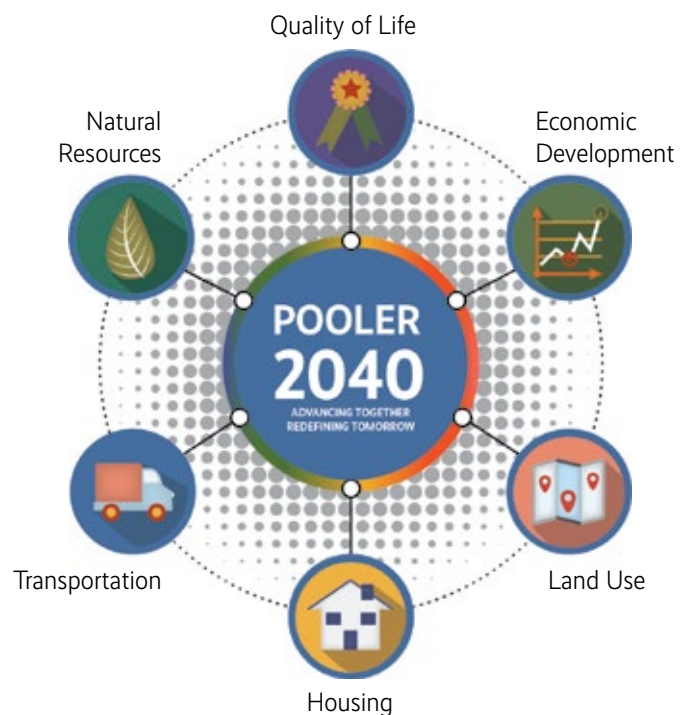
The Georgia Planning Act requires that cities and counties maintain comprehensive plans that help shape future growth. These plans generally recognize the physical, economic, social, political, and aesthetic factors of a community and are developed in a process that includes thoughtful analysis and robust public engagement.

Pooler 2040 serves as the comprehensive plan for the city of Pooler. The plan follows the minimum standards and procedures for local government planning set out in O.C.G.A. 50-8-7.1(b), reflecting the principles of partnership and the unique needs, conditions, and aspirations of the community.

To ensure that public participation in the planning process will result in meaningful implementation through zoning and other administrative mechanisms, a policy of "consistency" was discussed at public meetings. This proposed policy was strongly endorsed by the public. The policy of consistency requires that policies adopted in Pooler 2040 will be reviewed and amended prior to amending zoning or other implementing ordinances. In other words, official policy established in Pooler 2040 will become the basis for zoning amendments.

The six planning elements shown below are highlights of Pooler 2040.

- Quality of Life
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Natural Resources



# COMPONENTS OF POOLER 2040

Pooler 2040 is to be a tool used in evaluating future proposals and policy changes to ensure consistent decisions are made. Each element is comprised of a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies to accomplish the vision. These terms, often used to describe policy recommendations are described below:

**ELEMENT:**

These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's Comprehensive Plan

## VISION:

Each element contains a vision statement that is supported by multiple goals. A vision statement can become a compass, pointing the way to a common direction.

## GOAL:

General overarching, broad statements describing the direction that a community wants to go.

## OBJECTIVES:

Express the kinds of action that are necessary to achieve the stated goals without assigning responsibility to any specific action.

## STRATEGIES:

Statements of specific actions that should be taken, identifying the responsible party/parties, the time frame within which the action should occur, and other details needed for implementation to occur.



## HOUSING

## In 2040...

*Pooler is a Safe, Family-Oriented and Business Friendly Community.*

## GOAL:

1. Improve neighborhood stability where all residents, regardless of income, can occupy, maintain and improve their homes without undue financial hardship

## Objectives:

- A. Assist households annually avoid eviction, foreclosure, property loss or homelessness

## Strategy:

- i. Survey and designate historically significant industrial buildings, complexes, and other at-risk infrastructure.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following words may be seen throughout the document and are defined by the State of Georgia (O.C.G.A. 50–8–1, et seq).

	Definitions
<b>Character Areas</b>	<p>A specific geographic area or district within the community that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has unique or special characteristics to be preserved or enhanced,</li> <li>Has Potential to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development,</li> <li>Requires special attention due to unique development issues.</li> </ul> <p>Each character area is a planning sub-area within the community where more detailed, small-area planning and implementation of certain policies, investments, incentives, or regulations may be applied in order to preserve, improve, or otherwise influence its future development patterns in a manner consistent with the Community Goals</p>
<b>Community</b>	Local jurisdiction (county or municipality) or group of local jurisdictions (in the case of a joint plan) that are preparing a local plan
<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	<p>A plan meeting the Minimum Standards and Procedures.</p> <p>The comprehensive plan must be prepared pursuant to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for preparation of comprehensive plans and for implementation of comprehensive plans, established by the Department in accordance with O.C.G.A. 50–8–71(b) and 50–8–72</p>
<b>Comprehensive Planning Process</b>	Planning by counties or municipalities in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Procedures in O.C.G.A. 50–8–71(b) and 50–8–72
<b>Conflict</b>	<p>Any conflict, dispute, or inconsistency arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented</li> <li>Between or among plans for any regions, as proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented</li> <li>Between or among plans, or components thereof, for any counties or municipalities and plans for the region which include such counties or municipalities, as such plan are proposed, prepared, proposed to be implemented, or implemented</li> </ul>

Each shall have the meaning shown unless the context does not permit such meaning.

	Definitions
<b>Core Elements</b>	<p>Community, Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and Community Work Program.</p> <p>These are the primary elements that must be included, at a minimum, in each community's comprehensive plan</p>
<b>County</b>	Any county of this state
<b>Days</b>	Meaning calendar days, unless otherwise specified
<b>Density</b>	An objective measurement of the number of people or residential units allowed per unit of land, such as dwelling units per acre
<b>Department</b>	Department of Community Affairs established under O.C.G.A.50–8–1
<b>Governing Body</b>	Board of Commissioners of a county, sole commissioner or a county, council, commissioners, or other governing authority of a county or municipality
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Man-made structures which serve the common needs of the population, such as: sewage disposal systems; potable water systems; potable water wells serving a system; solid waste disposal sites or retention areas; stormwater systems; utilities; piers; docks; navigation channels; bridges; roadways
<b>Qualified Local Government</b>	Any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of the state
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization, a federally designated agency created in urban areas containing more than 50,000 people that are charged with conducting comprehensive, coordinated planning processes to determine the transportation needs of their respective constituencies, and prioritizing and programming projects (bicycle and pedestrian projects) for federal funding
<b>Minimum Standards and Procedures</b>	Minimum Standards and Procedures, including the minimum elements which shall be addressed and included, for preparation of comprehensive plans, for implementation of comprehensive plans, for updates of comprehensive plans including update schedules, and for participation in the coordinated and comprehensive planning process



## Definitions



## Precedents



## PLAN 2040 Survey



## Facts

	Definitions
<b>Mediation</b>	The process to be employed by the Department and Regional Commissions for resolving conflicts which may arise from time to time in the comprehensive planning process. Procedures and guidelines to govern mediation are as established by the Department pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-8-7. I(d)
<b>Municipality</b>	Any municipal corporation of the state and any consolidated government of the state
<b>Plan</b>	The comprehensive plan for any county or municipality
<b>Plan Amendment</b>	A change to the adopted plan that occurs between plan updates. Amendments of the adopted plan are appropriate when the conditions, policies, etc., on which the plan is based, have significantly changed so as to materially detract from the usefulness of the plan as a guide to local decision making, or when required by the Department as a result of changes to the Minimum Standards and Procedures
<b>Plan Update</b>	A more or less complete re-write of the plan, which shall occur approximately every five years, in accordance with the recertification schedule maintained by the Department
<b>Planning</b>	The process of determining actions which state agencies, Regional Commissions, and local governments propose to take
<b>Qualified Local Government</b>	A county or municipality that adopts and maintains a comprehensive plan as defined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures.
<b>Regional Commission</b>	A Regional Commission established under O.C.G.A 50-8-32
<b>Regional Plan</b>	The comprehensive plan for a region prepared by the Regional Commission in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the Department

	Definitions
<b>Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria</b>	Those standards and procedures with respect to natural resources, the environment, and vital areas of the state established and administered by the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, including, but not limited to, criteria for the protection of water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains and protected river corridors.
<b>Service Delivery Strategy</b>	The intergovernmental arrangement among municipal governments, the county government, and other affected entities within the same county for delivery of community services, developed in accordance with the Service Delivery Strategy law. To ensure consistency between the plan and the agreed upon strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The services to be provided by the local government, as identified in the plan, cannot exceed those identified in the agreed upon strategy</li> <li>The service areas identified for individual services that will be provided by the local government must be consistent between the plan and Strategy</li> </ul> As provided in Code Section 36-70-28 (b)(1), Service Delivery Strategies must be reviewed, and revised if necessary, in conjunction with county and municipal comprehensive plan updates
<b>Supplemental Planning Recommendation</b>	The supplemental recommendations provided by the Department to assist communities in preparing plans and addressing the Minimum Standards and Procedures. The plan preparers and the community are encouraged to review these recommended best practices where referenced in the Minimum Standards and Procedures and choose those that have applicability or helpfulness to the community and its planning process.
<b>Update Schedule</b>	The schedule or schedules for updating comprehensive plans on an annual or five-year basis as provided for in paragraph (2)(b) of Section 110-12-1-.04. The term "Update Schedule" also means an additional schedule for the review of Service Delivery Strategy agreements by counties and affected municipalities on a ten-year basis in conjunction with comprehensive plan updates

