BUILDING IN HISTORIC SAVANNAH

Savannah is a city of long history. Designed in 1733, Savannah is one of the oldest planned cities in the United States, with a wealth of historic structures still standing on its historic squares, boulevards and streets.

Preserving the historic properties of our city is an important part of the development process, but it can also be perplexing to those new to Savannah. To help those wishing to build or modify structures in Savannah, please read over the following FAQs:

Is my property in a historic district?

There are two different kinds of Historic District: the National Register districts and Locally Designated districts. National Register districts (and there are many in Savannah and Chatham County) are recognized by the Federal government, but there are few (if any) impacts from National Register designation on development of a property. However, Locally Designated historic districts can and often do have restrictions on development, maintenance and building. There are several different Locally Designated historic districts in Savannah with different regulations that apply in each. Please see the map attached to find the boundaries. If your property falls into one of these Locally Designated historic districts, special conditions may apply to any construction or modification project you are considering.

My property is in a historic district. Does this mean I can't modify it?

No. However, the changes you can make to your building are subject to review and approval. Some changes can be approved at the staff level; others must be approved by a review board in a public hearing. All work that affects the exterior of buildings in a historic district must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be obtained.

What is a "contributing structure"? Is my building "contributing"?

When the historic districts were established, all of the existing buildings within each district were catalogued and evaluated. Contributing Structures are those that were deemed to be significant to the character of the district. Contributing Structures are given extra attention in the development process, and can only be altered or demolished after careful consideration.

Owning a Contributing Structure is a significant responsibility, but there are also rewards, including financial incentives to assist in repair and renovation.

To see if your building in a historic district is registered as "contributing," you can check the list for the appropriate district from this page: http://www.thempc.org/Dept/Hist. Or contact us if you have any questions!

I own vacant property in a historic district. Does this mean I have to build a house like my neighbors' houses?

No. New construction in the historic districts is not expected to be a copy of the architecture of the historic structures. New construction is required to conform to the character of the district in terms of scale, mass, lot standards and other criteria, but can be contemporary in design.

How long will the historic review take?

If a review can be completed by staff, review of construction projects in the historic district can be completed in a week or so (maximum 10 days) after a completed application is received. If a project must be reviewed by a review board, the case will be placed on the next possible agenda; this process may take up to 60 days.

How much will the review cost?

Many are free. Where fees are required, refer to the application form for specific fees that apply to your project.

How do I find out more?

The Historic Preservation Department of the Metropolitan Planning Commission is always available to answer questions. Additional informational brochures, ordinances, COA applications, and more can be found on our website at http://www.thempc.org/Dept/Hist.

Contact the Historic Preservation Department:
historic@thempc.org   or   912-651-1440

SAVANNAH
LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

mpc
CHATHAM COUNTY · SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION · GEORGIA 1955

SAVANNAH RIVER

TALMADGE BRIDGE

RIVER STREET

WEST BOUNDARY STREET

BROUGHTON STREET
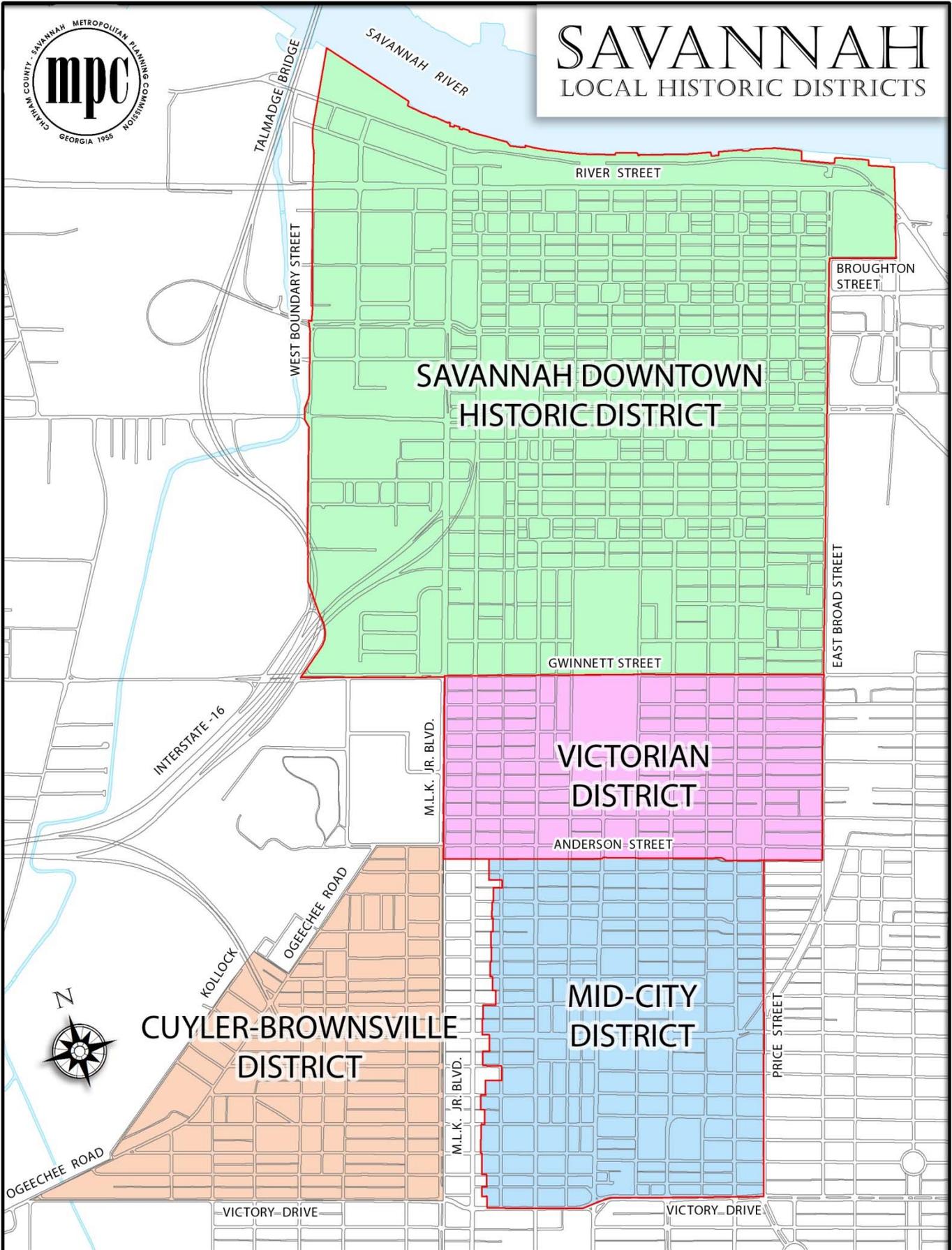
SAVANNAH DOWNTOWN
HISTORIC DISTRICT

EAST BROAD STREET

GWINNETT STREET

INTERSTATE -16

M.L.K. JR. BLVD.

VICTORIAN
DISTRICT

ANDERSON STREET

OGEECHEE ROAD

KOLLOCK

MID-CITY
DISTRICT

PRICE STREET

N

CUYLER-BROWNSVILLE
DISTRICT

M.L.K. JR. BLVD.

OGEECHEE ROAD

VICTORY DRIVE

VICTORY DRIVE