



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
*Planning the Future - Respecting the Past*

**TO:** The Mayor and Aldermen, City of Savannah

**FROM:** The Planning Commission

**DATE:** July 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** First Reading of resolution permitting transmittal of the Chatham County-Savannah *Plan 2040* Comprehensive Plan  
Jackie Jackson, MPC Director of Advance Planning & Special Projects

**ISSUE:** Approval of a resolution permitting transmittal of the Chatham County-Savannah *Plan 2040* Comprehensive Plan.

**BACKGROUND:**

MPC is requesting the approval of a resolution allowing the transmittal of the draft city of Savannah *Plan 2040* Comprehensive Plan to the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

A digital copy of the City's updated Comprehensive Plan can be downloaded using this link:  
<https://www.thempc.org/docs/lit/compplan/2021/Plan2040Draft.pdf>

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

1. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that local governments update Comprehensive Plans every five years and provide progress reports on an annual basis. Pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act (OCGA 45-12-200, et seq., and 50-8-1 et seq.), The city of Savannah must maintain a Comprehensive Plan that meets the 'minimum standards' as set forth by DCA in order to achieve 'Qualified Local Government' (QLG) status.
2. MPC staff have been working on the Comprehensive Plan since August 2020. This plan provides a unified, long term vision for the city of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County in the topics of land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resources, and quality of life.
3. A widespread community participation effort was used to gather public input which influenced this plan. MPC staff coordinated closely with local partners to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the vision and goals of the Savannah Forward Strategic Plan

and other currently adopted plans.

4. On May 27, 2021, and June 11, 2021, a presentation was made at a City Council public meeting, regarding the Comprehensive Plan by Melanie Wilson, the MPC's Executive Director, and Jackie Jackson, the MPC's Director of Advance Planning and Special Projects.
5. On June 29, 2021, after completion of a 3-month MPC subcommittee review process, the Metropolitan Planning Commission recommended approval of the draft Comprehensive Plan for submittal to the Savannah City Council for action.
6. In order to achieve "Qualified Local Government" Status, the City must submit the draft Comprehensive Plan to the CRC and DCA to initiate a review of the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Upon review of the draft Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the CRC and/or DCA may have comments that will require additional updates to the draft Comprehensive Plan originally submitted. Any changes to the Plan requested by the State will trigger another series of updates by the MPC with a second request for Board acceptance and resolution permitting transmittal of the amended document.

#### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

In order to achieve Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, the city of Savannah must adopt a Comprehensive Plan which meets the standards set by DCA. The plan before you meets this requirement. In addition, this plan has been crafted to incorporate widespread public input and feedback.

QLG status is required to access a variety of state programs, grants, and loans which can leverage local investment. These include: Continuum of Care, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), OneGeorgia Programs, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, Redevelopment Fund, and Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources programs. A detailed list can be viewed using this link: [https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_linked\\_to\\_qlg.03092018.pdf](https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/programs_linked_to_qlg.03092018.pdf)

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve signing of the resolution to transmit the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan.
2. Do not approve signing of the resolution to transmit the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Alternative #1 is recommended.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Aldermen approve a resolution allowing the transmittal of the draft city of Savannah *Plan 2040* Comprehensive Plan to the Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).