



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"*

M E M O R A N D U M

**TO:** CITY OF SAVANNAH MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

**FROM:** HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**DATE:** August 8, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah

**Re:** Amendment to Chapter 1, Purpose and History and  
Amendment to Chapter 6, Murals  
MPC Staff Reviewer: Caitlin Chamberlain,  
Senior Planner

### **ISSUE:**

A petition to revise the Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah by amending the language and format of third paragraph of Chapter 1 (page 5), Purpose and History, to present more clarity about the review process for historic markers, monuments, murals, and public art; and to add language in Chapter 6 (page 39), Murals, to further clarify the application guidelines for rotating murals.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission (HSMC) was established in 1949 through the Georgia Legislature (Georgia Act No. 229, Senate Bill No. 68) for the purpose of marking, caring for, restoring, and repairing historic sites and monuments in the City of Savannah and Chatham County. The Commission consists of five members, appointed by the Mayor and Alder people, who serve five-year terms. In addition, the Chairperson of the Park and Tree Commission serves as an ex-officio member of the Commission. The Commission meets on the first Thursday of every month at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (110 East State Street) at 4:00 PM. The meetings are open to the public.

The Commission is charged with establishing procedures for receiving and processing applications and with creating guidelines by which to evaluate applications for both the City of Savannah and Chatham County. The Commission makes recommendations to the Mayor and Aldermen based on the City's Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines (Master Plan and Guidelines).

### **FINDINGS:**

Within the Master Plan and Guidelines, the third paragraph of Chapter 1 (page 5) is confusing for applicants to fully realize what types of proposed projects must be reviewed by HSMC. Revising the language and formatting it from a single paragraph to three bullet points will clear up any confusion.

In addition, Chapter 6, Murals (page 39) is written in a way that leaves an opening for artists to continually change a mural that was not approved as a rotating mural. The addition of an explanatory sentence will clarify the rotating mural process.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

1. Taking no action leaves room for loopholes and misunderstanding of the Master Plan and Guidelines.
2. Ongoing review, evaluation and updates for the Master Plan and Guidelines strengthens the protection of historic monuments, markers, murals, and public art and is consistent with the policy of preserving the City's historic resources.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Recommend approval of the request to amend as proposed.
2. Recommend an alternate amendment.
3. Recommend denial of the request.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Historic Sites and Monuments Commission recommends approval to City Council to **amend** the language and formatting of the third paragraph of Chapter 1 (page 5), Purpose and History to clarify the application and review process, and **amend** Chapter 6 (page 39), Murals, Rotating Murals to include verbiage stating that rotating murals must be declared as such at the time of application.

MW: LGM: cc

**Note:** This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the meeting. Final decisions will be made by the Commission at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff recommendation.

## **Proposed Mural Master Plan and Guidelines Changes Historic Site and Monument Commission (Chapter 1, page 5)**

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission was established in 1949 through the Georgia Legislature (Georgia Act No. 229, Senate Bill No. 68) as a department of the City government. The Commission consists of five members, appointed by the Mayor and Alder people, who serve five-year terms. In addition, the Chairperson of the Park and Tree Commission serves as an ex-officio member of the Commission. The Commission meets on the first Thursday of every month at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (110 East State Street) at 4:00 PM. This meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of the Commission is to ensure that existing markers, monuments, and works of art are restored and/or repaired, and that new appropriate markers, monuments, and works of art are erected in the City of Savannah. The Commission is charged with establishing procedures for receiving and processing applications and with creating guidelines by which to evaluate applications. The Commission makes recommendations to the Mayor and Aldermen regarding these matters.

*The third paragraph of Chapter 1 (page 5) is confusing for applicants to fully realize what types of proposed projects must be reviewed by HSMC. Changing the language and formatting from a single paragraph to three bullet points will clear up any confusion.*

~~The Commission reviews all applications for markers, monuments and works of art erected on public property within the City of Savannah and makes recommendations to the Mayor and Aldermen regarding their appropriateness. The Commission also reviews and makes decisions regarding all markers, monuments, and works of art (greater than 27 cubic feet) erected on private property, visible from the public right-of-way and located within a locally designated historic district. The Commission reviews and makes decisions on all murals on private property visible from the public right-of-way within City limits.~~

### **Review is required by the Historic Site and Monument Commission if:**

- **A marker, monument, or public art (excluding murals) is on public property within the City of Savannah.**
- **A marker, monument, or public art (greater than 27 cubic feet) is on private property, is visible from a public right-of-way (streets, sidewalks, lanes), and is within a local historic district in the City of Savannah.**
- **A mural is on public property within the City of Savannah.**
- **A mural is on private property, is visible from the public right-of-way, and is within the City of Savannah.**

## **Rotating Murals (Chapter 6, page 39)**

*For Chapter 6 (page 39), Murals, the way the section about rotating murals is written leaves an opening for artists to continually change a mural that was not approved as a rotating mural. The addition of an explanatory sentence will allow this to be clearly understood.*

Upon approval from the HSMC of the location and process for rotating murals, (in which the petitioner plans to apply more than one mural to the same wall within a year), staff may review the individual submissions. A posting 15 days in advance is required, and a public hearing shall

be held if requested within the 15 days. Rotating murals must be noted at the time of the initial application, otherwise any new designs at the same location are subject to a new application.