



City of Savannah

Invites your interest in the position of
**Chief of Planning and Economic
Development**



Recognized as one of the “World’s 30 Friendliest Cities,” Savannah’s accolades include:

- "The South’s Best Cities 2023" (#2) Southern Living, April 2023
- "15 Favorite Cities in the U.S. of 2023" (#4) Travel & Leisure, July 2023
- “25 Best Weekend Getaways in the South” (#1) Travel & Leisure, January 2023
- Environmental Impact Award, Pratt Industries, October 2023
- “The Best Cities in the US:2023 Readers’ Choice Awards” (#5) Condé Nast Traveler, October 2023
- “Travelers’ Choice Award” (Olympia Café) Tripadvisor, January 2023
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation (40th award), 2023
- Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA (38 years) 2023
- "Best Airports in the U.S." (#1) Condé Nast Traveler, 2023
- “Top 25 Cities for Retirees” Forbes, May 2023

Are you an experienced planning and economic development professional with a strategic mindset? Do you have the expertise and experience to support innovative planning and economic development efforts for a growing city with metropolitan needs? The City of Savannah, Georgia, seeks a proactive and creative collaborator for a new and pivotal position, **Chief of Planning and Economic Development (Chief)**.

As part of Savannah’s executive realignment, the *first* **Chief of Planning and Economic Development** is charged with expanding the city’s tax base, shaping development and tourism, creating economic opportunities, preserving protected historic landmarks, and ensuring sustainability. This **Chief** will join a city committed to enhancing and sustaining its residents' quality of life and well-being through these efforts while implementing smart growth initiatives and shaping development to meet the needs of the entire community. The **Chief** will also help to address critical community challenges such as affordable housing.

Reporting directly to the City’s chief executive officer, the City Manager, the **Chief of Planning and Economic Development** serves as an executive manager and successfully collaborates with various internal and external entities, including the Savannah Economic Development Authority, the Metropolitan Planning Commission and MPO, local chambers of commerce and other industry partners, state and federal agencies, and others to proactively address the city's planning and economic development needs.

About the Community:

As America's first planned city, Savannah boasts one of the nation’s largest National Historic Landmark districts, filled with historic architecture, squares and parks. Savannah has a government culture that aims to build upon its early success in providing superior planning, infrastructure, and services for its citizens and visitors. Located approximately 250 miles southeast of Atlanta, GA; 140 miles north of Jacksonville, FL; and 110 miles southwest of Charleston, SC, the City of Savannah covers 108.7 square miles.

In addition to its assets as a city, Savannah offers excellent weather, nearby beaches, and a tradition of hospitality and cultural offerings. Savannah is home to a vibrant arts and cultural scene that hosts over 200 festivals each year focused on various themes, including music, food, and film. A growing Savannah Music Festival has garnered international acclaim as performers from Savannah and worldwide showcase talent in various musical genres. The city is committed to promoting numerous festivals and special events throughout the year and is particularly known for its St. Patrick’s Day celebration.

Savannah is the center of a diverse economy consisting of tourism, regional medical services, military, manufacturing, and the nation’s third largest container port and one of the fastest growing seaports in the world, which drives economic development across the southeast US. Retail and service businesses are also important sectors. Savannah's warm weather allows participation in outdoor activities year-round. The city has more than 100 public recreational neighborhood parks, 13 swimming pools, more than 70 athletic fields, more than 75 basketball courts, 50 tennis courts, two public golf courses, and a marina.

For boating, fishing, and swimming enthusiasts, Savannah offers marinas throughout the 420 miles of navigable waters and 87,000 acres of tidal marshland, and the Intercoastal Waterway. Tybee Island is Savannah's public beach, approximately 20 minutes east of downtown.

Savannah is a splendid spot for sightseeing with its well-preserved history, fascinating architecture, natural beauty, unique squares, and mild climate. Savannah boasts the nation's most extensive National Historic Landmark District.

With over 148,000 year-round residents, the population of Savannah also includes the students of four colleges and universities offering bachelor's, master's, and professional or doctoral degree programs: Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Savannah State University, and South University. Tourism is a major economic driver, with six distinct historic districts, coastal beaches, and a globally recognized food and art scene. Savannah's economy is diverse and robust - home to the Port of Savannah, nearby Fort Stewart-Hunter Air Base, International Paper, Gulfstream Aerospace, Titlemax, and others. Just 25 minutes from downtown Savannah, Hyundai Motor Group recently broke ground on an electric car manufacturing center, which is the largest economic development project in the history of the State of Georgia. Between Hyundai and their suppliers, this project will produce more than 18,000 new jobs to the Savannah area.

About the Organization, Department and Position:

The City of Savannah operates under a Council/Manager form of government with a [budget of \\$560M](#) and over 2500 employees working across 26 departments. A citywide leadership initiative and a cohesive management plan that maximizes collaboration and interdepartmental resources support the city's budget priorities.

The **Chief of Planning and Economic Development** oversees 213.60 FTE staff, including 7 direct reports, and manages a budget of \$47M (General Fund: \$23,417,945 and Parking Services Fund: \$23,636,325). This **Chief** manages the operational activities of the following assigned departments: Development Services, Planning & Urban Design, Economic Development, Parking Services, Transportation, Special Events, Film & Tourism, and Environmental Services & Sustainability. The **Chief**, along with the City Manager, is the liaison with the city's economic development authority which is organized by the state (independent of the city) and impacts education, planning, and economic development across 16 counties within two states. In addition to forging a proactive path of collaborative agreement on goals, processes and decisions, the **Chief** will focus on improving working relationships with stakeholders and partners.





Key Position Priorities:

- With thorough community and organizational immersion, research, and evaluation,
 - develop an actionable plan to manage Savannah's unprecedented growth that advances commerce and fosters greater connectivity, appropriate housing density, upward mobility, historic preservation, and sustainability.
 - Identify and develop actionable plans to better address poverty and provide more effective onramps for economic stability and independence for lower-income residents.
 - Identify and address the current and future needs of the city and develop innovative and sustainable approaches that consider and address human design and economic development/impacts; and,
 - Develop regionally focused strategic plans and priorities integrating social justice with economic development, transportation, mobility and transportation services, and sustainability.
- Facilitate conversations and initiate opportunities for real estate development and redevelopment - investigating and strategizing methods for financing, leasing, and selling real estate and exploring opportunities within historic districts for redevelopment and preservation to ensure sustainability and financial gain.
- Identify and implement strategies to improve and support effective development permitting and reviews, improve transit and multimodal transportation planning and implementation, as well as lead the City's Vision Zero initiative.
- Serve as the chief advisor to the City Manager on all matters of planning, land use, and economic development.

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree (master's degree *preferred*) in Public Administration, Business Administration, Planning, Engineering, or Economic Development supplemented with ten (10) years of responsible management experience in a public agency ***is required***, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

The Successful Candidate is:

- Extensively knowledgeable of economic development, comprehensive planning, real estate development, historic preservation, permitting, zoning rules and regulations, land use, sign codes, affordable housing, and other critical planning competencies;
- Knowledgeable of the activities of the departmental functional areas: Development Services, Planning & Urban Design, Economic Development, Parking Services, Transportation, Special Events, Film & Tourism, and Environmental Services & Sustainability;
- Skilled in applying principles of management, supervision, budgeting, governmental finance, and personnel principles and practices;
- Skilled in solving complex problems, seeking goal-oriented win-win outcomes, advising on technical matters, and utilizing advanced mathematical operations, methods, and complex variables in real estate and economic development processes;
- Excellent written, verbal and visual communication skills; adept in writing business plans, memoranda, policy recommendations, etc.; adept in presentation skills and demonstrates an understanding of the process of developing and approving such communication materials
- Experienced with meaningful and authentic community engagement, collaboration and partnership.
- Experienced in long-range planning, ordinance development, and implementing comprehensive plans;
- Effective in interpersonal, and presentation competencies to effectively engage clients, community members and groups, staff, and city leadership;
- A highly effective decision-maker who exercises substantial discretion in the decision-making and conflict-resolution process and effectively engages and communicates with all necessary staff and stakeholders in the process;
- An empowering manager dedicated to retaining and enhancing a cohesive culture and supporting the development of individual employees; and,
- A leader who values accountability while holding realistic and fair expectations of self and others.





Salary and Benefits:

The hiring range for the position is \$165,000 – \$199,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Savannah offers a comprehensive benefits package, including health insurance, retirement options, and relocation expenses, which can be found [here](#).

To apply, please visit

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/developmentalassociates> and click on the **Chief of Planning and Economic Development – City of Savannah, GA** title.

- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the city's employment application portal or any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **February 18, 2024**, to be considered during the first round of reviews.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **March 28 - 29, 2024**. Candidates are encouraged to reserve these dates for virtual meetings should they be invited to participate.
- Direct all *inquiries* to hiring@developmentalassociates.com.

The City of Savannah, GA, is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Developmental Associates, LLC manages the recruitment and selection process for this position. To learn more about our selection process, visit <https://developmentalassociates.com/client-openings/>, select "*Client Openings*," and scroll down to "*Important Information for Applicants*."

