



*Embracing the Past
Celebrating the Future*

2026

State of the City

January 29, 2026



2026 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

ORDER OF THE PROGRAM

Welcome

Brian West, Mayor

Swearing-In Ceremony

Steven Scheer, Municipal Court Judge

Reflection on Accomplishments

Bret Bell, City Manager

Special Video Presentation

State of the City Address

Brian West, Mayor

Adjournment

*Following the event, please join us for a reception at
The Chapel by the Sea, 1114 US 80*



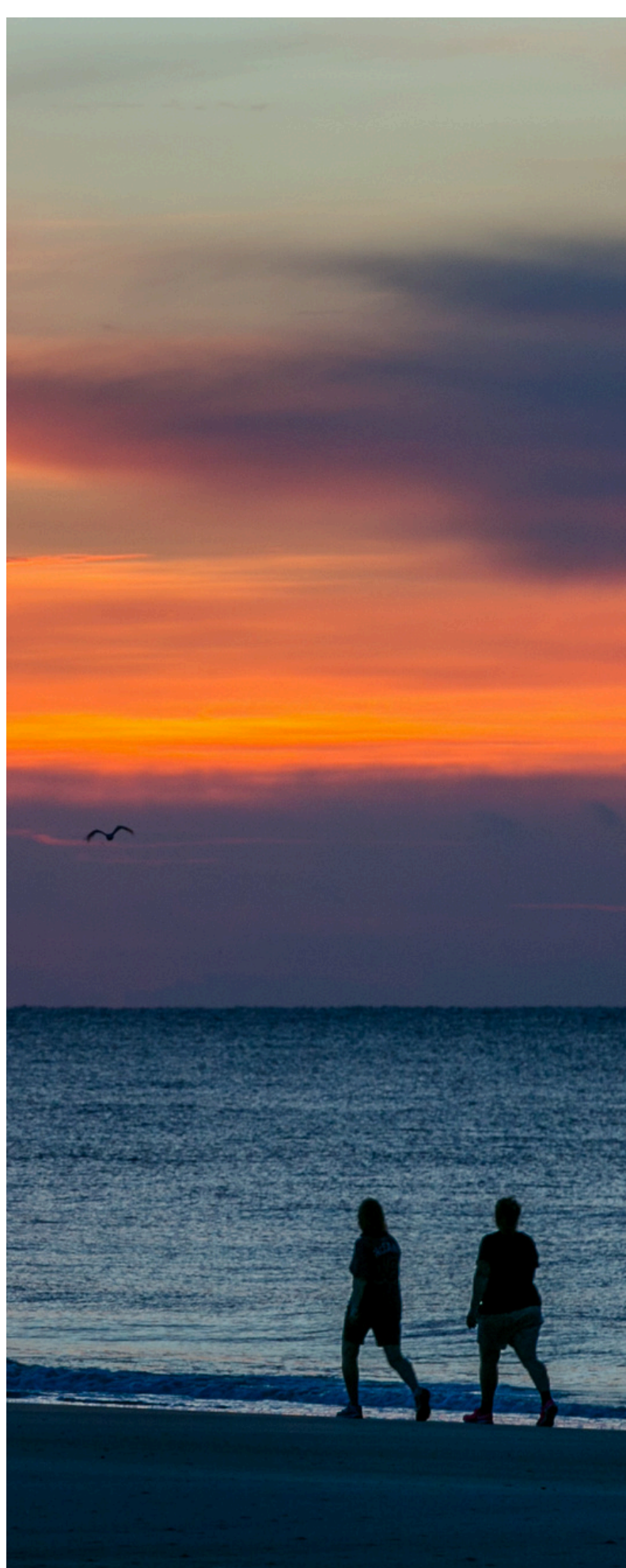
What We Value

VISION

Our vision is to make Tybee Island the premier beach community in which to live, work, and play.

Mission

The City Council's mission is to provide a safe, secure and sustainable environment by delivering superior services through responsible planning, preservation of our natural and historic resources, and partnership with our community to ensure economic opportunity, a vibrant quality of life, and a thriving future.



A Message From Mayor Brian West



Mayor Brian West

Greetings Residents, Businesses and Visitors of Tybee Island.

It is truly an honor to serve as mayor of the easternmost land in Georgia, our beloved Tybee Island. Just three miles wide with five miles of beautiful beach, Tybee may be small in size, but its impact is enormous. To some, it's Savannah's beach. To others, Chatham County's beach, Georgia's beach, or even America's beach—welcoming visitors from every state in the nation each year. Though we are home to just over 3,000 year-round residents, on a holiday weekend our population swells to more than 80,000 people. Annually, over 2 million visitors come to Tybee Island, generating \$500 to \$600 million in regional economic activity, more than \$20 million in tax revenues, and supporting over 8,000 jobs—nearly 1,900 of them right here on Tybee. What makes this even more remarkable is that every hotel, restaurant, and shop on our island is locally owned, making authenticity one of our greatest strengths.

Increased visitation strains Highway 80, our infrastructure, and our public safety resources. Yet throughout it all, Tybee has remained resilient thanks to our citizens, city employees, city council and state and federal partners, all working together for the betterment of the community. As this report shows, we have made great strides towards in protecting, preserving and enhancing our island.

Preserving Tybee is essential to our future. I'm grateful to Governor Kemp, the Georgia Legislature, and the Department of Natural Resources for their partnership as we move forward with a \$20 million beach renourishment project that protects both our shoreline and our economy.

Locally, our \$17 million city budget reflects difficult but responsible choices, strengthening dunes, supporting ocean rescue, maintaining public safety, and upholding a high quality of life.

Growth on Tybee does not mean more buildings. It means welcoming people who choose to live like locals by respecting the island's character and community. With limited land, strict height limits, and flood protections, growth also means protecting Tybee's unique character and ensuring sustainability.

Tybee is a beautiful place where you can wake up to ocean sunrises, wind down with sunsets over the marsh, and enjoy world class local seafood and entertainment. Remember, Tybee Island belongs to all of us. As you can see, together we are ensuring it remains a gem on Georgia's coast for generations to come.

City Council



Brian West

MAYOR

Brian West was raised in Savannah and moved to Tybee Island in 2010. He was first elected to council in 2021, and became mayor in 2023. He has a background in business operations and point of sale systems.



Michael "Spec" Hosti

MAYOR PRO TEM

Spec Hosti has lived on Tybee Island for more than 60 years and retired from the National Park Service where he worked in maintenance and facility management at Fort Pulaski. He was first elected in 2019 and has served continuously since then.



Nicholas Hale

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Nick Hale was elected to city council in 2025 and sworn in on Jan. 2, 2026. A Savannah native, he moved with his family to Tybee Island in 2022 and presently works in the insurance industry.



Cam Jackson

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Cam Jackson is a Tybee Island native whose family roots date back many generations to include Tybee Island's last lighthouse keeper. He is a private mortgage banker by profession and elected to city council in 2025.

City Council



Tony Ploughe

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Tony Ploughe has lived in the Savannah and Islands communities since 1996, moving to Tybee in 2011. An aerospace engineer for three decades, Councilman Ploughe was sworn in for his first term in 2024.



Nick Sears

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Nick Sears retired to Tybee Island full-time after practicing law in the Atlanta area for many years. He was elected to his first term on city council in 2023 and began serving in 2024.



Kathryn Williams

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

A retired educator and former Tybee Island restaurateur, Kathryn Williams has lived on Tybee Island since 1981. She has served multiple terms on city council with her most recent term beginning in 2024.



Fabian Mann

CLERK OF COUNCIL

Fabian Mann joined the City of Tybee in 2025. He coordinates city council meetings, agendas, minutes, public notices, open records requests and administrative operations for the council.

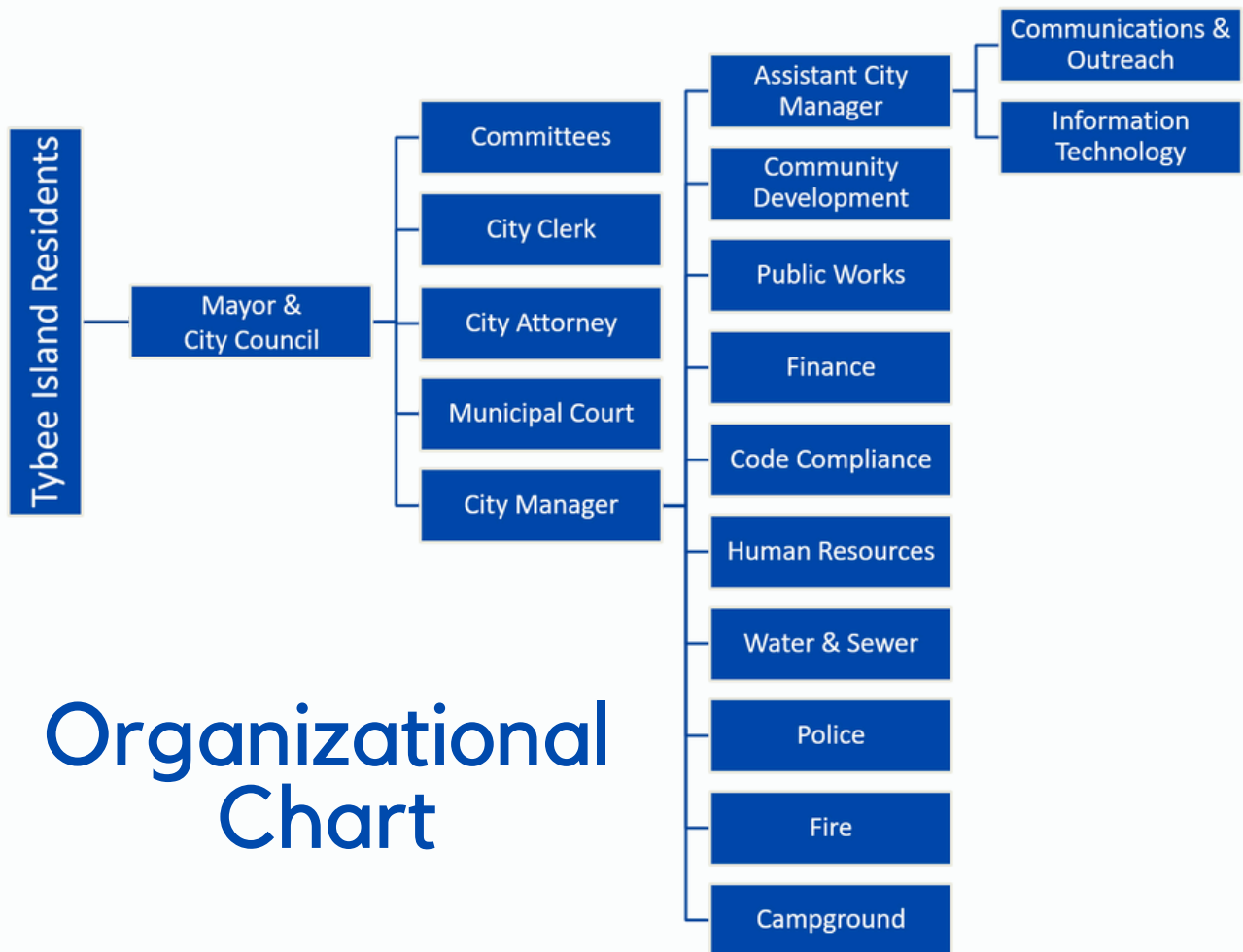
Executive Staff



Bret Bell
City Manager



Michelle Owens
Assistant City Manager



Directors



Jen Amerell
Finance



Rachel Combs
Human Resources



Pete Gulbranson
City Engineer



Kim Hallstein
Municipal Court



Tiffany Hayes
Police Chief



Sgt. Walter Hattrich
Code Compliance



Brent Levy
Public Works



Daryl McCorkle
Water-Sewer



Justin McMillian
Fire Chief



Jamey Rabun
Campground



Patricia Sinel
Community Development

Public Safety

Keeping our community safe is the core mission of the city. While all departments help fulfill this goal, our firefighters, lifeguards, police and code compliance officers are at the heart of this mission. With a new fire chief and newly established Public Facilities and Building Authority, the city acquired property in 2025 to build a \$12 million fire station to replace the existing, aging station.

We launched a designated driver campaign to reduce the growing number of DUI arrests, and deployed drones and license plate readers to enhance policing. Most notably, the city ended 2025 with a 40 percent decrease in the most serious Part 1 crimes.



Part 1 Crimes:

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Arson	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total Part 1
2025	1	0	0	3	1	36	0	0	41
2024	0	3	0	9	3	51	0	0	66
2023	0	0	1	5	2	44	0	0	52
2022	0	0	0	2	1	24	1	1	29

Infrastructure

Strong infrastructure keeps the city and the beach running. City Council started 2025 by authorizing a 10-year capital improvement program and funding plan to replace antiquated water and sewer infrastructure located throughout the island.

After historic summer rainfall revealed flaws that allowed infiltration and inflow (I&I) into the sewer system, the city reprioritized projects to rehabilitate 27 manholes and a mile of critical sewer lines in the southern and mid-island sections of Tybee.

In addition, the city initiated the replacement of old sewer lines on the north end that date back more than a century when Fort Screven was a developing military installation.

We also initiated a \$300,000 island-wide re-paving program to improve our road network and provide a better driving experience.



Resiliency & Sustainability

Tybee Island is a unique coastal habitat that must be preserved for generations to come. To accomplish this, the city created Tybee Island's first Sustainability Plan in 2025, and the City Council appointed members to a Sustainability Committee to help implement the plan.

We secured a \$250,000 grant to expand our recycling program, re-started a glass recycling program, and expanded our conservation efforts with beach and dune renourishment efforts to earning a Bee City USA designation.

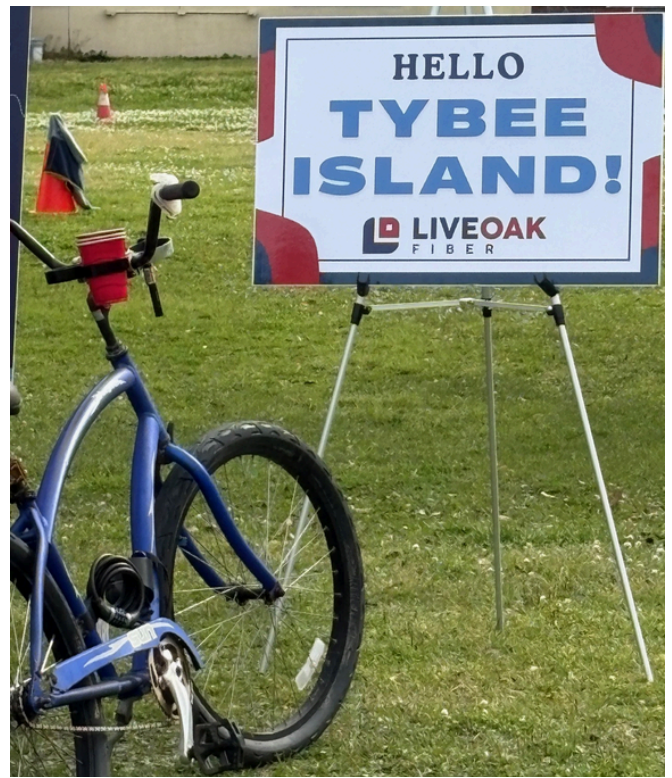
The city also partnered with Tybee Clean Beach Volunteers to expand its Turtle-Friendly Business Program, providing \$10,000 in funding to incentivize business use of sustainable products. By eliminating harmful supplies and embracing sustainable practices, businesses can help protect endangered sea life and earn the coveted designation.



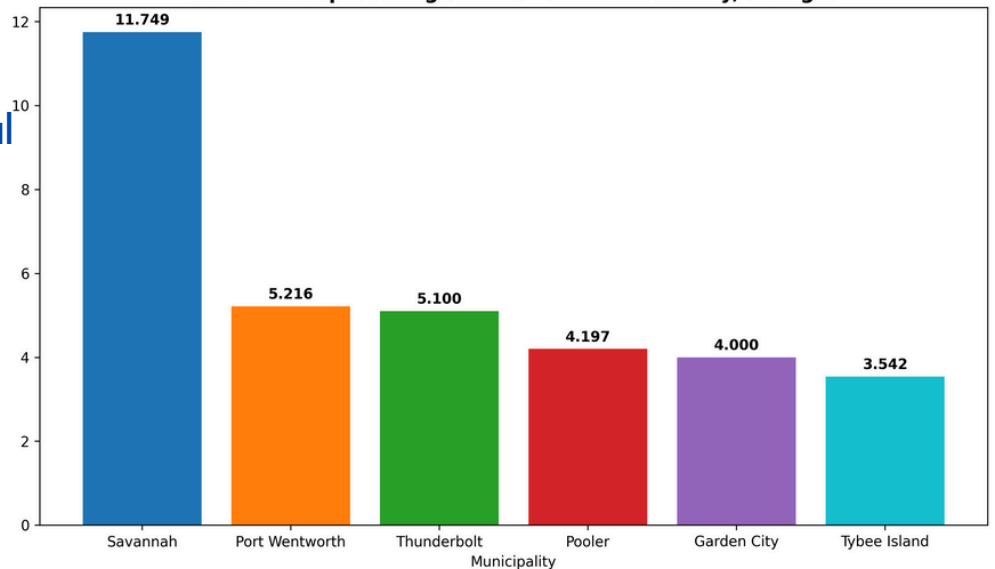
Quality of Life

Quality of life means creating a safe and attractive community where residents, visitors and local business owners thrive. That is why the city, in 2025, launched a major update to the Land Development Code, enacted new laws to combat blight and passed one of the lowest property tax rates in Chatham County. Embracing the digital age, we partnered with Live Oak Fiber to deliver the fastest fiber internet speed ever available on the island, including free public wi-fi in our city parks and at the pier.

For customer convenience the city introduced a digital parking pass that can be purchased online and linked to a license plate, eliminating the need to obtain a window decal in person.



2025 Municipal Millage Rates - Chatham County, Georgia



Parks & Recreation

Our parks are beautiful, natural spaces where the community gathers, making maintenance and enhancement a high priority.

In 2025, the city planted Tybee's first community fruit orchard, developed plans for a new park on Solomon Avenue, improved Jaycee Park, and refurbished the dog park for our furry friends. We also developed a long-term vision for future uses in our signature greenspace, Memorial Park.

Visitors to the award-winning River's End Campground enjoyed more fun activities than ever before, with tie-dye lessons and paint nights. For its hard work in 2025, the campground earned an Award of Excellence from the Outdoor Hospitality Industry.



Economic Development

Economic Development keeps our city vibrant. This year, we worked to boost Tybee business with programs that attract visitors during the slow season.

The city offered half-price, off-season parking rates, free parking from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, and a forgiveness program to dismiss first-time parking citations.

We also launched a colorful, quirky mobile visitor center and beautified the South End Business District with new lighting and streetscaping. The city enlivened Tybee with magical holiday events including a holiday market, an ice-skating rink on the Walter Parker Pier overlooking the ocean, and our biggest ever night-time parade of lights.



feedback@cityoftybee.gov
(912) 786-4573

www.cityoftybee.gov
www.talktyb.org
www.resilienttybee.com
www.tybeeislandmainstreet.org

If you would like to learn more about city operations scan the QR code to read the city manager's weekly status reports to City Council.

