



# College Park Strategic Plan Final

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## Welcome Message from Mayor and City Council

We are pleased to share the city's strategic plan with you and are ecstatic that you are interested in learning more about the city's history, where we are today and where we are headed with our present and future employees and citizens.

Since 1895 College Park has been advancing the quality of life for its citizens and visitors. Today, College Park enjoys a position of strength unparalleled in its long, rich history. It serves as a catalyst agency to promote, facilitate and lead economic development activities. Currently, the City of College Park initiates project recruitment, expansion and retention of businesses, which, in turn, creates opportunities for job growth.

Our strategic plan reflects the thoughts, feelings, ideas and desires of the citizens, staff, Mayor and Council. A significant amount of conversation and discussion was conducted to create this document. However, more often than not, the development of the plan was less complicated than its implementation. Therefore, we have included in this document a section on how we intend to implement the plan.

Implementation pulls this plan apart and diffuses it throughout the organization. Every department and division within the organization must then accept the goal of this plan, agree to its direction and implement specific actions over the next 3-5 years.

Since the City of College Park's inception, investment of our citizens and their wellbeing has persisted as a primary goal. As part of this aim, we currently are focusing on revitalization efforts — the elimination of blight and the creation of jobs that support and uplift diversity, urban renewal, residential vibrancy, sound economic investments and financial prosperity. Our past, current and future development projects and initiatives are the vehicles that will continue to steer both commercial and residential growth and renewal.

As we enter the next phase of our city's growth, the Mayor, the City Council and staff are eager to implement this strategic work plan to guide our city forward into its deservedly bright future.

Thank you for joining with us on this journey. We appreciate your interest and participation in continuing to make College Park a great place to live, work and play.



Strategic Planning Committee:

Mike Hicks, Chief Information Officer and Committee Chairman

Mercedes Miller, Executive Director of Georgia International Convention Center/Gateway Center Arena at College Park

Jackson Myers, Special Projects Administrator

William Benifield, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Artie Jones III, Director of Economic Development

Ferman Williford – Police Chief

Chris Cook, Director of Administrative Services

## The College Park Team

### City Council Team

The City Council is dedicated to living out a set of operational and relational values to help advance our current working climate and help create a better city. The Council's operating values are:

- Respect
- Humility
- Serving Employees
- Leadership
- Quality Customer Service

Jack P. Longino, Mayor



***"The meaning of respect is the admiration someone has for another human being due to their abilities, qualities or achievements. I value respect for all employees in all levels of the organization, because no one person can manage the city. However, each person plays their part (big or small) because of what they have to offer."***

The affairs of the city are conducted by a Mayor and Council consisting of five members. Under the City's Charter, all corporate powers are vested in the Mayor and the Council.

Mayor Jack Longino is the chief executive officer of the city. The Mayor presides at all meetings of the Mayor and Council and has a vote only in the case of a tie vote by the members of the Council.

Ambrose Clay, Ward I



***"For a councilperson to be most effective, the well-being of the community and staff must take precedence over the desire for personal aggrandizement or enrichment."***

Ambrose Clay was sworn in as Ward I Councilman on Monday, January 7, 2008. Councilman Clay is no stranger to politics, having served as a school board member of the Glen Ellyn School District 89, of DuPage County, Illinois. He was later elected president of that board.

Councilman Clay holds a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from M.I.T., a Master of Business Administration from the University of Chicago and has numerous hours of post-graduate management training.

Derrick Taylor, Ward II



***"I believe in employees because valuing our staff promotes long-term happiness for everyone residing in College Park. I value the employees that give of their time to help our community achieve these goals. I believe in employees because teamwork is essential in creating a cohesive environment in College Park."***

Derrick Taylor took the oath of office January 4, 2018, amongst family, friends and former co-workers. Taylor has volunteered with College Park Recreation as a coach, referee and mentor. Taylor is a husband, father and grandfather. His interest in preserving and uplifting the community is born out of early family influences.

Taylor is an Atlanta native and has long committed himself to the mission of service to the community. He believes in the beauty of College Park, and that the most effective way to manage the city is to work in unison.

Tracey Wyatt, Ward III



***"I believe customer service should be our biggest goal for College Park, and I'm committed to seeing it be world-class!"***

Tracey Wyatt is a member of the College Park City Council, representing Ward III, a diverse area which includes Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the Godby/Old National corridor and the portions of College Park located in Clayton County.

Councilman Wyatt serves on the board of directors for the Airport Area Kiwanis Club. Wyatt is also an active member of the Old National Merchants Association and has played a vital role with College Park's Business and Industrial Development Authority (BIDA).

Roderick Gay, Ward IV



***"Leadership involves establishing a clear vision and sharing that vision with others. Knowledge of the vision therefore yields genuine support from the entire organization. We value leadership because, without it, the vision for the city is lost. All involved, likewise, should have a clear understanding of what the goals for the city should be."***

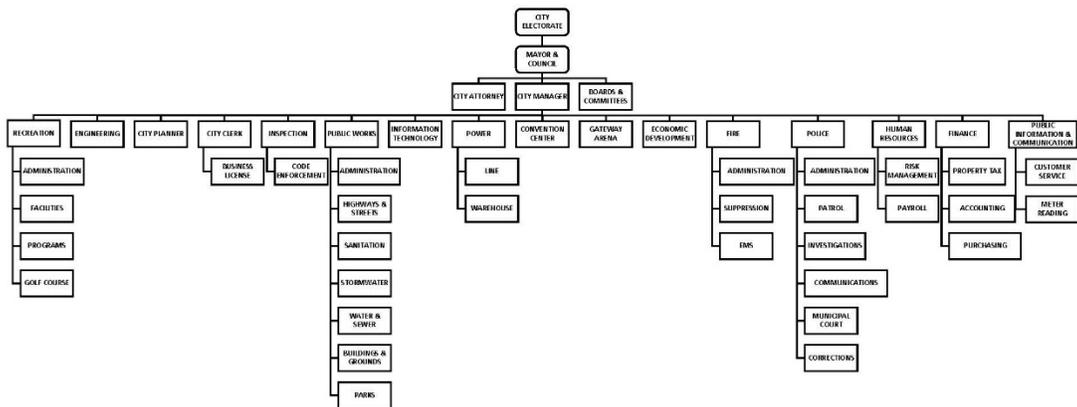
Roderick Gay was sworn in as Ward IV Councilman on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, in College Park Council Chambers.

The husband and father of three is an 18-year resident and has a deep family history in College Park which includes his great-grandmother and grandfather, who were loyal citizens. Gay holds a Bachelor of Science from Tuskegee University and a Master of Public Administration from DePaul University. He serves as executive director of a nonprofit and teaches on a part-time basis.

His interest in public service stems from his desire to solve the needs of the local community, while offering guidance to maintain a credible, visionary outlook for the city as a whole. Councilman Gay was re-elected in November 2018 to continue his work as the voice of the Ward IV community.

## City of College Park Organizational Chart

### City of College Park Organization Chart



### Administrative Team Structure

The City of College Park operates on an annual budget of over \$100,000,000, while managing a number of enterprise funds and traditional departments that serve its people. With the presence of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the city boasts a number of unique enterprise businesses that allow it to operate in a more robust fashion compared to other small cities. College Park’s administrative team is comprised of a group of professional managers and leaders who possess extensive experience in their designated areas of expertise. The team reports to the City Manager.

# Where We Want to Go

As a result of this strategic plan, College Park is now squarely focused on building and facilitating a new kind of community – one where people can live, work and play all in one place. This will be a place where diversity still stands as a healthy cornerstone and where families, individuals and businesses *choose* to move to our city and call it home.

The City Council, leadership team and staff are all focused on making this new vision and mission a reality.

This is our intended focus of this amazing city.

## Vision Statements

- Be regionally, nationally, and globally recognized as a community template for harmony, hospitality, and hope for residents and businesses alike
- Be a 21<sup>st</sup> century global city unified with a passion for education
- To eliminate a culture that simply focuses on what we have accomplished by creating a clear image of who we are, what we believe, and why we belong

## Mission

To cultivate a community where businesses, families, and individuals can work, play and live in a safe and diverse environment.

## Core Values

The city desires to promote and behave according to a set of values that will help the city succeed. It will be incumbent upon each staff member, citizen and elected officials to live out these values and “call out” friends when they do not live out these values. The core values are:

### Harmony

As a City Council and staff team, we commit to work in a way that creates harmony. We will emphasize dignity, listening well to others, respect and being open to new ideas.

## **Hospitality**

We are a hospitality city and desire to act and function in a way that emphasizes the importance of the people we are serving. We commit to serve others promptly, courteously and professionally. We want visitors and citizens to feel welcome and a deep sense of belonging.

## **Advancement**

We value advancement for the city as a whole and advancement on a Council and staff basis as well. We want to be future-oriented and open to advance the city, our citizens and staff team.

## **Leadership**

We believe our success depends on our ability, as leaders, to listen to the needs of the community, focus on excellence, set and address big goals, to serve others, and equip our employees to succeed.

## **Professionalism**

If we do not invest in the Council and Staff team's professional growth, the team will stifle and not successfully advance the cause of the city. We commit ourselves to the professional development and professional actions of the team. We will act in a professional way in which we serve the city before ourselves.



# Where We've Been and Where We Are Today

## Where We've Been - History of College Park

The community we now know as College Park was first called Atlantic City, founded in 1890 as a depot on the Atlanta and West Point railroads. Later, it became known as Manchester. And then, in 1896, it was renamed as The City of College Park due to its serving as the home of Cox College (where City Hall and other buildings now stand) and Georgia Military Academy (now Woodward Academy).



Figure SEQ Figure \\* ARABIC 1: Cox College and Conservatory - 1900

In 1963, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was constructed by the City of Atlanta. One third of the airport is located within the City of College Park city limits. As a result of a 1966 Federal Housing study, large tracts of property in College Park were purchased in the 1970s and 1980s using information detailed in the airport's Noise Land Reuse Plan. This plan allowed the airport to apply for federal funding to purchase property deemed to fall in so-called "noise land."

In 1978, concerned citizens founded the College Park Historical Society in order to combat northward expansion of the airport. The society successfully lobbied against and cancelled proposed flight paths over the neighborhood colloquially known as Historic College Park. In addition, it protected swaths of homes and the Main Street commercial district by registering them with the National Register of Historic Places. This eventually resulted in the establishing of the College Park Historic District.

Between the 1980s and the early 2000s, as part of continued implementation of the Federal Aviation Administration's noise abatement program, the City of Atlanta and the FAA purchased roughly 320 acres of property (containing residential structures, churches and some small commercial buildings) immediately adjacent to the west side of downtown College Park. This caused a multitude of properties to sit abandoned for decades. These blighted properties have been named as a major player in shaping a negative public image of the city, second only to the perception of the area's crime.

The city, between 2006-2007, purchased much of this land (across from the Georgia International Convention Center – GICC) where the Airport City development is being proposed today.

Today, the city is home to 13,942 residents, covers 11.01 square miles, contains multiple world-class organizations — such as Woodward Academy and the headquarters for Chick-fil-A — and features more than 853 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The town's avenues and streets derive their names from Ivy League colleges and influential College Park residents.

Notable one-time College Park citizens include hip hop artist Ludacris, Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Cam Newton and Atlanta Hawks player Josh Smith.

Source: Partial history data from College Park Wikipedia article.

## Where We Are Today

The City of College Park has a significant number of positive elements already in place. It sits near Downtown Atlanta and features a MARTA Rapid Rail station. These unique and valuable attributes provide a strong foundation upon which College Park can build its future.

Some of the interesting and valuable facets of College Park include:

- Home to the largest private school in the Continental U.S. (Woodward Academy)
- Home to HJAJA - World's Busiest Airport - 11 consecutive years
- Steward of more than a dozen different enterprise funds offering diversity in revenue streams
- Fourth-largest Georgia urban Historic District, which adds to the charm and character of the city
- Sits on the MARTA Rapid Rail line, making it convenient for travel and commuting; College Park Station is the second-busiest MARTA Rapid Rail Station. Also, the City features 11 MARTA bus routes serving Fulton and Clayton counties
- Owns and manages a world-class convention center – Georgia International Convention Center, notable as the only convention center in the country connected to an airport – the worlds' busiest – by SkyTrain
- Will operate The Arena @ College Park Gateway Center, a multi-purpose arena which will host the Hawk's Development League team
- Home to major organizations such as:
  - BMW International
  - Sysco (\$1.3 billion annual sales from this location)
  - Chick-fil-A (corporate headquarters)
  - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

To assist in developing this strategic plan, a wide range of College Park stakeholders from the various parts of the community were interviewed, including faith leaders, business owners, civic stakeholders, citizens, the Council, the Mayor and Senior Staff Leaders. The interviews were conducted to gain insights into the city's past, present and future.

The following formal and informal survey questions were asked:

- Do you live in College Park? If not, why not?
- What do you like most about College Park?
- What are the greatest hindrances to College Park's success?
- How do you describe the social divide in College Park?
- How do you define success?
- How do we attract more businesses to College Park?
- How do we improve the quality of life in College Park?
- How do we best commit to and communicate the strategic planning goals?

The answers to these questions provided the city with a broad sense of the current dynamics in the community as well as what attempts to stand in the way of our success.

### **What some of our local organizations say about College Park**

The city enjoys the support of civic, faith and business organizations that call College Park home.

- "For 10 years, I have had the good fortune of living, working and worshiping in College Park. Each year gets better, as residents, city officials, and business leaders realize the potential of the area to make this city one of the gems of Georgia. With the goals of this strategic plan, I am as bullish on College Park as I have ever been, and I cannot wait to see what the next 10 years bring for our community." - ***Dr. Stuart Gulley, President of Woodward Academy***
- "Diversity is one of College Park's greatest strengths. As part of the faith community, we seek to offer events and opportunities that bring different people from around the entire city together. We are excited for a future that helps us tap into our diverse gifts and resources to make College Park a growing and vibrant 'small town in a big city.'" - ***Pastor Katy Hinman, College Park First United Methodist Church***
- "We value our long-term partnership with College Park and see a great future for the city as they continue to invest in key areas to support growth. College Park has so much going for it — a great location, proximity to downtown and the airport, access to MARTA, local charm and an openness to the business community. We fully support the city's desire to grow and bring more homes, families and businesses to the area." - ***Mike Hazelton, SVP Corporate Services, Chick-fil-A, Inc.***
- "The importance of being heard and being made aware of city initiatives as a business owner is key to making this a better city." - ***Dr. Frank D. Butler, DMD, PC, Butler Dentistry***

- “By making Old National safer, easier to navigate, more family-friendly and growth-oriented, it can become more of the College Park we all dream of.” - **Norman Krueger**, **General Manager, CH Powell Company**



# Strategic Focus Areas

## How We Will Reach the Vision

### Strategic Focus Areas of Investment

Based on the interviews with city residents, businesses, staff and Council, there emerged four distinct focus areas that encompass where the city needs to place additional effort, personnel and resources.

These four areas of strategic focus will require additional intentionality, commitment and further analysis, and each area must be advanced in the next 2-4 years for the city to reach its ultimate purpose or mission.

- **Invest in Creating a World-Class Council and Staff Team**

Without a robust, engaged, cooperative and professional team, goals are merely talking points with no real traction or possibility of success. The city will focus on investing in its people, teams and employee and citizen engagement in order to secure success.

- **Invest in Expanding the Economy**

College Park is in the early chapters of a significant new growth phase. Airport City, development of a vibrant downtown and renewal of the once-thriving economy of Old National are significant economic goals which require investment and focus.

- **Invest in Improving Quality of Life**

The quality of life in College Park can be significantly improved with a focus on expanding housing options, enhancing education, reducing crime, adding downtown and city-wide activities and other community-wide experiences. We will work with citizens, staff and the corporate community to bring about change in this important area.

- **Invest in Remaking the City Image and Brand**

The City of College Park features abundant resources to offer potential residents. Yet, the perception of College Park is far different from its reality. The City will invest in a range of activities that will change the public image of College Park and help brand the city through an overall focus on quality and service to others.



## **What Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Does the City of College Park Face?**

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The following analysis provides a summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the City of College Park, Georgia, around the strategic initiatives created in this plan.

Strengths and weaknesses refer to existing conditions of the city which either help or hinder the achieving of the strategic plan’s goals. Strengths are favorable conditions that need to be built upon, whereas weaknesses are unfavorable conditions that need to be considered relative to the execution of the strategic plan.

Opportunities and threats refer to potential conditions that might impact the city. Opportunities are potential improvements and favorable conditions that the city will seek to achieve. Threats are the potential barriers that may impede the realization of the strategic plan. Opportunities need to be prioritized and optimized, whereas threats need to be countered or minimized.

## Focus on Creating a World-Class Council and Staff Team

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses	External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deep sense of care for the city from staff and Council</li> <li>● Financial capacity to invest in people and processes</li> <li>● Experienced team, Mayor and Council</li> <li>● Strong desire amongst staff to improve and become more efficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High staff turnover at Director level</li> <li>● Lack of leadership and team training at department level</li> <li>● Understaffed in many key positions within departments as a result of 2009 downturn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local business and education talent available to assist city</li> <li>● Community willing and eager to participate in the development of team</li> <li>● Use local and regional talent base of highly qualified applicants to fill vacant and additional staff positions</li> <li>● Highly desirable location of city is very attractive to potential employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council turnover at next election leading to loss of knowledge base</li> <li>● Need for further education of citizens to help elect qualified candidates</li> <li>● Future economic downturn</li> <li>● Difficult hiring market with high employment levels</li> </ul>

### Focus on Expanding the Economy

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses	External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GICC and airport as city anchors</li> <li>● Strong economic development leadership currently in place</li> <li>● World-class businesses headquartered within city</li> <li>● Recent land acquisitions to increase available development inventory</li> <li>● Financial capacity to invest in expanding economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of easy access to downtown from hotels to create more vibrancy</li> <li>● Need of project management resources in Economic Development office</li> <li>● Lack of parking in downtown area</li> <li>● Inability to effectively market and promote strengths to change perception of city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Airport City project</li> <li>● New arena</li> <li>● Projected growth in region to year 2030</li> <li>● Favorable tax and incentive environment for business relocation to Georgia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A significant downturn in the economy</li> <li>● Reputation amongst developers based on past experience</li> <li>● Continue to be in the shadow of Atlanta and airport as they expand</li> <li>● Loss or relocation of existing headquartered employers to another location</li> </ul>

### Focus on Improving the Quality of Life

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses	External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Financial capacity to invest in staff</li> <li>● Location relative to City of Atlanta and HJAI</li> <li>● Ample land for new housing developments</li> <li>● Access to public transportation via MARTA stations</li> <li>● Thriving parks and recreation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of housing density to support retail development</li> <li>● Zoning ordinances consistent with efforts to expand housing options</li> <li>● Lack of needed staff to impact quality of life issues</li> <li>● Lack of housing options and price ranges</li> <li>● High crime in certain areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Downtown revitalization by attracting restaurants and needed services to keep residents and visitors engaged</li> <li>● Leverage parks and walking trails</li> <li>● New MARTA renovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of political will to solve issues</li> <li>● Noise from airport</li> <li>● Low-performing schools</li> <li>● Perception of crime</li> </ul>

## Focus on Investing in Marketing the City

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses	External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication platforms through website and social media</li> <li>● Financial capacity to invest in customer service, rebranding, messaging and media</li> <li>● Ample messaging opportunities of good news throughout the city (location, MARTA, GICC)</li> <li>● High-traffic corridors available to project messaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current branding, messaging and collateral</li> <li>● Tied too closely to HJAlA and City of Atlanta</li> <li>● Lack of cohesive messaging to external communities</li> <li>● Proliferation of unbalanced social media input</li> <li>● Customer service culture of excellence needed through training and expanding resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Projected growth in region to year 2030</li> <li>● High demand for housing and business relocation</li> <li>● Stable region with longstanding employers</li> <li>● Strategic relationships with key employers doing business in the city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Heavy media competition from surrounding communities</li> <li>● Continual bad press around crime in surrounding areas</li> <li>● Negative perception of community by other parts of Atlanta</li> <li>● Rising cost of media buys in competitive market.</li> </ul>

This analysis is most effectively read as a short guide to understanding the conditions already known to the City of College Park, Georgia. There may be overlap among these topic areas as one topic’s strength may be another topic’s weakness. It is not intended to provide full details of each issue, but rather to provide a brief synopsis of the strengths to be built upon, potential weaknesses to be dealt with, opportunities to be capitalized on, and threats to be either minimized or treated in the creation of the strategic plan.

In the development of the Strategic Initiatives that follow, a TOWS analysis was utilized with the SWOT analysis to suggest ways for the city to take action based on the following questions:

- Strengths and Opportunities (SO) – How can the city use its strengths to take advantage of opportunities?
- Strengths and Threats (ST) – How can the city take advantage of its strengths to avoid real and potential threats?
- Weaknesses and Opportunities (WO) – How can the city use its opportunities to overcome the weaknesses it is experiencing?

- Weaknesses and Threats (WT) – How can the city minimize its weaknesses and avoid threats?



# Strategic Initiatives

## Strategic Initiatives That Will Move the Needle Forward

The areas of investment and initiatives listed below will require prioritization, ownership by a department, person or group and, in some cases, additional budget to become a reality.

Once this plan is published, the city will turn to prioritization, development of project level details and the creation of measurable goals and milestones. This initial detailed strategic planning work will occur in September 2019 as part of an overall strategic performance process within the city staff and Mayor/Council.

### Invest In Creating a World-Class Council and Staff Team

#### Replace Culture of Fear with Humility, Civility, Service & Collaboration

- The city will invest in a number of training initiatives to help bridge the attitude and civility gap that exists in the city's Mayor/Council and leadership team
- This training will address the prevailing conflict occurring between Council members and staff and between Mayor/Council members themselves
- The attitudes that create disharmony in public (and private) meetings tarnish the city's reputation, perception and interest from developers and others. It also sullies internal staff leadership and cooperation

#### Alter Structure of City Government

This plan recommends changes be made in reporting structure, authority and in employment on-boarding.

- Disconnect Council from Operations
  - This plan recommends measures to disconnect the Council from day-to-day operations so that the Manager and staff can operate in a healthy manner with clear lines of authority
- Add a Deputy City Manager
  - With the size of the city budget (over \$100M), the city will pursue adding a Deputy City Manager (which College Park had prior to 2009)
  - City Manager would focus on Mayor and Council strategic issues while Deputy City Manager would focus on Department Heads and day-to-day operations

### **Develop Community Stakeholder Accountability Teams**

The city will create a team of business and civic leaders that will meet with Mayor/Council and staff to receive reports on the strategic goals progress, ask questions and offer assistance related to those hurdles that impede achievement. This new level of cooperation will help ensure the plans implementation.

### **Implement Leadership and Management Development Training**

The city will invest in team training and leadership training so that its leaders have the skills and insights to lead their teams well and create a smooth day-to-day functioning government.

Part of this training will focus on helping leaders to better understand how to engage their teams, how to build strong morale, how to remove day-to-day roadblocks and how to recognize employees so that they provide exceptional effort.

### **Implement Customer Service Culture**

The city will embark on a Customer Service training initiative that will seek to reform what service means in the city. Each team member will learn and begin to implement ideas and principles that make service to others the foundational support for all activities.

### **Implement a Performance Management System to Ensure Major Goals are Achieved**

A world-class city team must be focused on servant leadership, supporting their teams and achieving results.

The city will implement a performance management system that will help it identify, measure and track strategic goal progress.

## **Invest In Expanding the Economy**

The economy of College Park stands on the verge of a significant growth phase. Yet, the city's structure and staff looks nearly identical how they did in 2009 after a significant headcount reduction. This plan recommends several changes and a refocusing of College Park's economic engines.

### **Increase Resources in Economic Development**

- Maintain and aggressively support the Airport City Development

- Develop downtown College Park for retail and restaurants
- Redevelop the Old National / Godby area so that it thrives
- Develop other vertical services businesses such as grocery stores

### **Increase Housing Options**

Establish goals to work more closely with developers to increase the price range and types of housing units in College Park.

Work to build housing stock in the \$150k-\$250k price range for entry-level homeowners.

### **Add Resources for the Economic Development Team**

Add in-house team members (and possibly outsourced resources) to the Economic Development team; the projects with which they are involved are critical to the city's overall success. Hire specialty employees in the following areas:

- Marketing and Recruitment
- Focus on existing redevelopment projects
- Expansion of existing businesses

### **Leverage and Improve Existing Economic Engines**

#### Leverage Existing Businesses

- Better leverage existing businesses to assist in any number of strategic projects for the city. For example, engage the city's educational institutions in developing mentor programs for the elementary schools, particularly in the areas of reading and math. Involve them for ideas on how to build parent involvement in education
- Leverage the skills and proprietary know-how of corporate partners, for example, leveraging Chick-fil-A's world-class customer service training

#### Leverage GICC/The Arena @ College Park Gateway Center

- Leverage the GICC and The Arena @ College Park Gateway Center to attract wholesome activities and businesses

### **Stimulate Downtown Economy**

- Stimulate downtown economy by developing innovative ways to transfer hotel guests, GICC guests and future Airport City guests to downtown businesses

(bikes, horse-drawn carriages, 6-7 seat golf carts, 20-passenger buses, scooters, vans, trollies and autonomous vehicles)

- Improve Downtown Parking
  - Work with area businesses to improve way-finding signage and lighting for existing parking in downtown
  - Consider conducting parking study to determine if parking is limiting business success
- Focus on Collections of Enterprise Funds
  - Analyze Enterprise Funds revenue streams to ensure appropriate funds are flowing into each fund

### **Continue Capital Projects**

Continue to manage and facilitate a smooth project flow of major capital projects:

- Bike path and walking path projects
- Walking bridge over Camp Creek Parkway - DOT INFRA funding application potential
- Overhaul of MARTA station
- Develop citywide fiber ring to support business around Airport City
- Complete The Arena @ College Park Gateway Center



Future Airport City Project planned for 2019-2021 on land City purchased in 2006-2007

### **Invest in Improving Quality of Life**

Like other cities, College Park has the opportunity and need to improve the quality of life for its citizens and visitors. Developing a sense of community and addressing the perceptions and realities of crime are critical to making the city a success moving forward.

Following are the strategic initiatives that address quality of life improvements in the City of College Park.

#### **Implement Initiatives to Become “One” College Park**

While College Park is diverse, it is not, in many aspects, unified. College Park is divided geographically, racially, socially and economically. Yet, its diversity is one of its major assets. Hence, the city desires to develop social and outreach programs and events to bring the city together.

#### **Create an Active Community That Promotes Participation**

There is a need to develop internally, or in conjunction with the community, a series of festivals and community activities in which the entire city can participate. These public

events include arts, crafts, gifts, culture and sports, all of which can play a part in uniting the city, as well as making it a more engaging place to live.

### **Improve Communication to Citizens, Businesses and Overall Community Stakeholders for General and Strategic Updates**

There is a need to ensure the city communicates regularly with key stakeholders and citizens on topics important to them. Housing development updates, for instance, can be sent to businesses interested in housing for their employees, while civic events can be communicated to residents. Opportunities to engage and get commitment from various stakeholders should not be missed during this time of rapid development in College Park.

### **Develop Initiatives to Improve K-12 education Within City**

The long-term success of College Park lies not in its financial or geographical strengths, but in the success of its people. This plan recommends that teams of people from inside city government and within the community join together to better understand educational needs and then create a plan. The city will establish goals and programs to improve the reading and math proficiencies of students in elementary school. This multi-year strategic objective is vital to the long-term success of the city and area.

### **Implement Park Improvements, More Walking and Bike Trails, Better Street Lighting, Improved Sidewalks and Aesthetics**

The city will create a number of beautification, health and safety projects that increase the quality of life. While many of these initiatives are underway, we recommend that a team of citizens and city employees meet to discuss new ways to address quality of life issues including sidewalks, park improvements, signage, lighting, street repaving and beautification initiatives.

### **Additional Investments in Crime Reduction**

The City of College Park has an elevated crime rate for a city its size, but not necessarily an elevated rate when considering the number of people flowing into the town during daytime hours. Nighttime population is 15,000 while daytime population soars to over 100,000 due to the presence of 18 hotels and the airport.

Based on the feedback from staff, citizens and stakeholders, crime and the perception of crime are major hindrances to the success of the city. As such, the plan recommends several items related to public safety:

- Additional policing staff to prevent crimes

- Continued strategic policing each month
- Improved lighting around business and city facilities
- Improved education of the public and businesses on crime prevention methods for their homes and businesses
- More creative solutions around crime prevention at hotel parking lots with regards to more visibility
- Consideration of a staffed video analysis center to observe video activity as it occurs

### **Investing in Marketing the City – Inside and Outside Community**

#### **Launch New Branding**

The city needs to rebrand itself to appeal to a newer, more modern public. The plan recommends creating and launching a modernized branding for the city to move it from an airport-centric brand to a more inclusive brand identity. Market by creating a valuable reality each consumer will see and be willing to exchange their resources to obtain.

#### **Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Plan**

Create a written plan that provides the city with a roadmap to follow for messaging (live, work and play, parks, MARTA, location), targeted audiences, vehicles for communicating the message, and other critical visual elements like signage.

Research, create, design, integrate and develop a plan that will change how the city is perceived and received.

#### **Invest in Informing Citizens**

Create a communication plan that includes all messaging topics and all potential audiences, as well as an outline of how and when each audience is communicated to. This will ensure that citizens, visitors, businesses and employees are well-informed.

This will provide increased revenue and deepen the relationship with current and potential residents of the city.

- Signage

- Implement signage and brand identity in multiple venues, both internally and externally
- Directional, informational and psychological signage will change and engage the region, state and nation
- Include the city's motto on city vehicles, including police and fire vehicles
- Advertising and Public Relations (PR)
  - Create an advertising and PR plan to promote the City of College Park to the select audiences it desires to reach, for example:
    - Messaging and vehicles to address the overall image of the city
    - Messaging and vehicles to address the crime perception
    - Messaging and vehicles to address other challenges

### **Make Service King**

Reimagine the employee, customer and citizen experience so that customers, citizens and visitors sense the warmth and charm of College Park. This includes training for not only Customer Service employees, but all employees, so that the feeling of being valued and served well is foremost in everyone's mind.

When service is minor, issues will be major. This will force a change in community, staff, and perception.



# Departmental Initiatives That Support the Strategic Plan

## Departmental Initiatives that Support Strategy

A number of projects and goals will be set around each of the strategic focus areas. In addition to that, however, each department is actively working on several key goals in 2019, including:

- Airport Affairs
  - Maintain open lines of communication between the City of College Park departments and the City of Atlanta's Department of Aviation (DOA) in areas of business licenses of concessions; payments of utilities due and funds transfers; noise mitigation programs; potential environmental impacts of DOA projects and development of airport-owned tracts within the City of College Park
  - Maintain open lines of communication between the City of College Park and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), making sure the FAA understands the potential impacts of any FAA policy change proposals
  - Advocate for change in FAA guidelines that may need updated study, or that may conflict with evolving airport area development goals
  - Ensure that College Park and the DOA are aware of FAA guidelines that impact the City of College Park
  - Ensure that ATL/DOA staff and College Park staff comply with all legal agreements between the two entities
  - Actively work to limit any potentially negative environmental and/or economic impacts of the ongoing development of the airport
  - Advocate for ongoing funding of noise mitigation, including second-round insulation
- Customer Service and PIO
  - Implement city-wide Customer Service training
  - Establish new processes and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at Customer Service
  - Hire social media and graphics person to better report on city progress and activities for citizens

- Implement a prepay system for citizens
- City Clerk
  - Document and address work flow processes
  - Develop a robust records retention program
  - Improve operations through revising policy and SOPs
- Economic Development
  - Complete Airport City project
  - Focus on developing Old National / Godby areas
  - Continue growth of single-family homes
- Finance Department
  - Conduct Audit of city financial records
  - Develop smooth 2019 budget process
  - Finance departmental organization
- Fire Department
  - Complete Safer Grants for additional 21 staff at minimum
  - Work with Airport City developers to ensure smooth development
  - Design and build fourth fire station, to keep up with the additional development in the city
- Georgia International Convention Center (GICC)
  - Complete construction of new arena
  - Negotiate naming rights to arena
  - Replace entrance signage / lighting

- Upgrade internal visitor Wi-Fi network for faster speed
- Human Resources
  - Implement paperless technology to reduce costs/time
  - Improve lines of communication throughout city
  - Help employees better understand the value of benefits
  - Consolidation of teams for service delivery
  - Training of teams to reduce turnover
- Information Technology
  - Establish fiber network to connect city offices and other areas later
  - Update email systems
  - Implement utility software
  - Make other software upgrades, including a new GIS system, to better steward assets and reduce time and costs of managing assets
- Legal Department
  - Implement training to improve Open Records Act response
  - Improve effectiveness of weekly legal meeting with staff
  - Achieve favorable results in outstanding litigation matters
- Planning and Growth Management
  - Support Airport City development through pro-active rezoning recommendations and providing analysis DRI process
  - Provide resource links and additional "FAQs" regarding zoning and site development matters on the webpage

- Add transparency by uploading zoning, variance and annexation applications to the web page
- Assess how well the zoning ordinance enables desired development and periodically report findings to Council
- Facilitate new development delivery of public amenities (sidewalks, public green spaces) as appropriate through rezoning and permit review process
- Police Department
  - Staff Police Department to full strength
  - Revise pay plan relative to surrounding communities to keep current officers
  - Put programs in place to attract better Police Officer candidates
- Power Department
  - Reactivate the Apprentice and Journey Lineman Training and Incentive Program
  - Enact measures to improve system reliability through technology
  - Implement a prepay system for citizens
  - Improve Power Department communication with citizens
  - Research rate changes that are more in line with surrounding communities
- Public Works Department
  - Reorganize the department organizational chart and pay scale for non-management positions to create advancement opportunities
  - Evaluate the services provided by the Department of Public Works in order to meet the needs of a growing community
  - Continue with the assessment of the city's infrastructure in order to make improvements to meet current and future demands
  - Increase the number of annual street paving projects

- Construction of a new Public Works office building and maintenance facility
- Upgrade existing sidewalks and promote new sidewalks installation in needed areas for pedestrian safety
- Recreation and Cultural Arts
  - Plan and make Brady Center improvements
  - Focus on creating unity of programming within departments
  - Implement new technology within recreation programs to reduce time and costs to manage program and improve ease of use for citizens
- Special Projects Department
  - Complete intersection at Camp Creek and Airport Drive for Airport City development
  - Complete pedestrian bridge over Camp Creek Parkway
  - Complete construction of The Arena @ College Park Gateway Center (\$9M cash project)
  - Complete design and upgrade of MARTA Station
  - Complete design and construction of bike & walking path projects



# How the Strategic Plan Will Be Implemented

## Implementing the Strategic Plan

The city will incorporate several processes and initiatives to help it achieve the goals in this strategic plan. Some of them are:

### 1. Implement Citywide Performance Management System

- The city will implement a process and system to help track progress toward the strategic goals; a dashboard and system to set, track and measure success toward key goals will be put in place and communicated to Council and the public. These goals will be reviewed at a Department and citywide level on a regular basis

### 2. Leadership's Public Support and Commitment to the Plan

- The City Council's commitment to this plan will greatly affect its potential outcome. Each councilperson's desire to see each of these goals met and to willingly promote and encourage success is key to the plan being implemented

### 3. Accountability Groups from Within Community

- The city plans to form a leadership team, made of business and civic leaders within the community, who will encourage City Council to show progress toward these strategic goals and enact measures to make them a reality

### 4. Implement Teamwork Training

- The city will invest in training for its teams to help them improve how they work together and accomplish major initiatives

### 5. Implement Internal Cross-Departmental Teams

- Many of the strategic plans are not oriented toward one department within the city. For instance, making improvements to elementary reading scores will involve individuals from many departments, as well as citizens. So, we anticipate forming and supporting many internal teams that will tackle large strategic issues

### 6. Develop and Implement A Marketing Plan

- Because the city suffers from a public relations challenge related to crime and the perception of crime, and because the city's image is so tightly associated

with the airport, the city must enact a Marketing Plan to help promote the city, which will have a large economic impact



# How Citizens Can Get Engaged and Be A part of the Solution

## How You Can Be a Part of College Park's Plans

The city wants citizens to be engaged and involved in the process of implementing these strategic plans. Citizen input and participation is desired and is critical to the city's success. Some of the ways citizens can participate are outlined below.

- Join a Committee
  - The city will be forming several committees and groups to create change. The city will promote these opportunities and looks forward to citizens being engaged in the process
  - For example, the city may create a volunteer group to help expand beautification efforts in the city
- Attend Council Meetings
  - The city continues to encourage citizens to participate in City Council meetings and ask questions about major initiatives and this plan
- Volunteer to Assist in Our Educational Improvement Efforts
  - Many of our strategic initiatives require hands-on help from citizens, including efforts to improve the educational output of the elementary schools in College Park
- Shop at Local Businesses
  - We encourage you to shop locally to support local businesses and to support new local businesses that emerge in College Park
- Crime Prevention Training and Awareness
  - Join the ongoing Police Citizen training program that has been operating for the past five years to help reduce crime in the city



Contact us for more information and learn how you can be a part of our exciting future:

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