

**Actions Taken by Gwinnett County
As a Result of *Engage Gwinnett* Recommendations
Updated: July 2011**

This document lists Gwinnett County's actions to date in response to the Engage Gwinnett committee's recommendations. Five work groups made a total of 73 recommendations for a "status quo" scenario in which economic conditions stay as they were; 40 "declining digest" scenario recommendations for use if the tax digest declines dramatically over several years; and 9 general recommendations. All of the recommendations are in the text below with responses presented in italics.

Gwinnett County has considered all the recommendations, and, at this time, 43 are currently being acted upon and 63 have been completed. The County appreciates the hard work, effort, and dedication of the volunteer members of Engage Gwinnett throughout this ongoing process. In return, County management and staff are working to implement these recommendations prudently.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Status Quo – Health and Human Services

Recommendation: Protect the level of funding for HHS from further cuts. When possible, HHS should receive priority consideration for budgetary increases.

Action: *Complete. Health and Human Services staff is working towards increasing funding through other grants and foundations and increasing the number and services that professional volunteers are able to provide. In addition, Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services is a nonprofit collaborative partner that: raises funds to increase services such as senior meals, replaces the fleet of trucks used to deliver Meals on Wheels, acts as a pass-through for grants, has the dollars and funding available as needed for services, and provides funds for minor home repair and emergencies such as paying for medications, rent, utility bills, etc., when other resources are not available.*

- *Health and Human Services is seeing the following trends:*
 - *The Baby Boomer population continues to age and now is caring for a greater number of older people than children.*
 - *Boomers are willing and able to help share in the cost of services.*
 - *Waiting lists for support services in the home continues to grow.*
 - *The frailest are living longer and need additional services to stay at home.*
 - *Transportation to medical appointments and procedures are integral in keeping the aging community healthy.*
 - *The state continues to cut funding for services as they balance their budget.*
 - *Even if the county maintains the funding levels, HHS is not able to serve as many people. For example, raw food and transportation costs increase without corresponding budgetary increases.*

The County understands the desires of Engage Gwinnett to maintain the funding levels of HHS. As the County navigates through the upcoming and future financial planning processes, it will consider this recommendation. Through recommendations by Engage Gwinnett and improvements in our budget / business planning process, we acknowledge that any funding decisions have outcomes that relate to the services constituents need. In consideration of this recommendation, the Coalition for Health and Human Services received consistent funding in 2011 as compared to 2010. The County was able to move funding associated with Hi Hope and the Children's Shelter to federal programs, thus relieving the General Fund of these expenses. Although several of the other subsidized agencies did receive a reduction in funding in 2011, additional studies continue as to the impacts to our constituents as a result of these reductions.

At the May 17, 2011, Board of Commissioners meeting, GRN funding was reinstated in the amount of \$384,148 (this is the same amount that was funded in 2010).

Recommendation: Establish a more efficient granting process that meets the current needs and anticipates near-term future needs. This revised process for grant decisions should be results-based and strategic. It should consider appropriate accountability mechanisms, relevant needs assessments, and long-range strategic plans.

Action: Complete. *In past years, the County has aligned funding with strategic community needs as presented by the Coalition for Health and Human Services. The Coalition for Health and Human Services implemented its sixth comprehensive plan for children and families in July of 2009:*

- *Preparing the plan was an 18-month long process*
- *The plan is oriented around six strategic areas: basic needs; community relations and engagement; economic and financial stability; education; health and well-being; and safety*
- *Each of the six strategic areas are addressed within the specified target groups (individuals, families, communities)*
- *Activities within each area are classified using the "Seven Prevention Strategies for Community Change" to assess effort level and determine if additional support is needed to maximize benefits*
- *Through the careful process of identifying issues supported by intensive data analyses and bringing key partners together, the Coalition has consistently developed solutions to fill gaps in the community and demonstrated a positive impact on individuals, families, and entire communities*
- *http://www.gwinnettcoalition.org/pdf/Gwinnett_County_FY10_Three-Year_Plan.pdf*

In addition, during the 2011 business planning and budget process, work was done to further evaluate the subsidies to external agencies. Changes are included in the 2011 Budget.

At the May 17, 2011, Board of Commissioners meeting, GRN funding was reinstated in the amount of \$384,148 (this is the same amount that was funded in 2010).

Recommendation: Commission a study for senior service needs assessments and the appropriate funding levels to meet the anticipated needs.

Action: The Federal Administration on Aging is gathering community input to consider congressional reauthorization and amendments to the Older Americans Act. Staff from Community Services is participating in this process and will consider further action as this federal effort completes.

Recommendation: Advocate for state public health funding to be based on current population rather than 1970 population.

Action: This issue has previously been and will continue to be presented to the local legislative delegation. Per Senator Renee Unterman, discussions are being held to address this challenge. According to Dr. Lloyd Hofer (District Health Director, East Metro Health District), this formula has not been changed for almost 30 years and Gwinnett County has grown significantly during that time. Currently the public health funding formula improvement for populous counties like Gwinnett is on hold for implementation.

Declining Tax Digest – Health and Human Services

Recommendation: Protect the level of funding for HHS from further cuts. Even under the declining digest scenario we believe the current funding for HHS is inadequate to meet the existing needs or the anticipated needs over the next five years.

Action: Complete. Health and Human Services staff is working towards increasing funding through other grants and foundations and increasing the number and services that professional volunteers are able to provide. In addition, Friends of Gwinnett County Senior Services is a nonprofit collaborative partner that: raises funds to increase services such as senior meals, replaces the fleet of trucks used to deliver Meals on Wheels, acts as a pass-through for grants, has the dollars and funding available as needed for services, and provides funds for minor home repair and emergencies such as paying for medications, rent, utility bills, etc., when other resources are not available.

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recommendations by Engage Gwinnett and improvements in our budget / business planning process, we acknowledge that any funding decisions have outcomes that relate to the services constituents need. In consideration of this recommendation, the Coalition for Health and Human Services received consistent funding in 2011 as compared to 2010. The County was able to move funding associated with Hi Hope and the Children's Shelter to federal programs, thus relieving the General Fund of these expenses. Although several of the other subsidized agencies did receive a reduction in funding in 2011, additional studies continue as to the impacts to our constituents as a result of these reductions.

At the May 17, 2011, Board of Commissioners meeting, GRN funding was reinstated in the amount of \$384,148 (this is the same amount that was funded in 2010).

Status Quo – Library

Recommendation: Defer the construction of new library facilities for as long as possible.

***Action: Complete.** No "new" branch libraries are identified in the current capital program. The capital plan does include consideration of renovations/expansion/other improvements/and replacements for several branch libraries.*

Recommendation: Use SPLOST funds to renovate existing libraries in ways that result in operational cost savings.

***Action: Complete.** This initiative is consistent with County renovation plans for specified branch libraries. Two existing branches, Five Forks and Norcross, are proposed to be renovated using SPLOST funds. Renovations will be completed in such a manner as to result in more efficient facility operations.*

Recommendation: Maintain or reduce county contribution to the Library budget. The county contribution to the Library budget should not be increased.

***Action: Complete.** In consideration of this recommendation, the 2011 budget was adopted and reduced contributions to the library by 15 percent, or \$2.8 million.*

Recommendation: Leverage Board of Commissioners' influence to encourage the Library Board to:

- Increase user fees (e.g., late returns) to result in an increase to five percent of the total budget.
- Muster a volunteer recruitment, training, and placement campaign, aggressively increasing volunteer hours at all libraries with a five-year target goal of 100,000 volunteer hours per year.
- Implement a flexible library system with the target of saving 10 percent, or \$1.8 million, of the County's share of the library's budget. Such a system should leverage existing "bricks and mortar" facilities, avoid the construction of new facilities, and fully leverage technological advancements.
- Maximize new technologies in manners where operational efficiency, not new services, can be realized.

- Re-engineer the model of maintaining degreed personnel to accomplish tasks that could be accomplished by non-degreed staff or volunteers.

Action: Complete. *The 2011 budget reduced the County’s contribution to the library by 15 percent. The library has made and is making many changes to the way it delivers library services to reflect this reduction in funding.*

- *The library has continued to develop a staff model that most efficiently uses the staff resources available while delivering quality library services to the community*
- *The library has identified automated systems and other technologies that will aid in keeping up with an ever-increasing demand on finite and shrinking staffing resources*
- *The library continues to review ways to add revenue*
- *Initial FY11 numbers show a 46% increase over FY10 in the number of volunteers donating time and a 33% increase in the number of hours donated.*

	# Volunteers	# Hours Donated	Average Monthly Hours
FY09	2218	20,594	1,716
FY10	2613	26,513	2,209
FY11	3817	35,308	2,942

On February 1, 2011, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners passed a request for a MOE (Maintenance of Effort Waiver) resolution (the waiver request related to State funding is necessary as a result of the 2011 funding reduction to the library) which stated, among other things, the County’s support of the Engage Gwinnett recommendations. Further, the Board of Commissioners encouraged the Gwinnett County Public Library to “...fully explore the recommendations of Engage Gwinnett, and to the extent possible, implement the recommendations which continue to promote the Library’s purpose while reducing expenses.”

Additionally, at the Library board meeting in early March 2011, there was a discussion regarding efforts to gain private support to help offset this loss of funding during these difficult economic times particularly as library use continues to soar.

Declining Tax Digest – Library

Recommendation: Reduce the county contribution to the Library by \$6.5 million or approximately 33 percent from current levels. We anticipate this recommendation will require:

- Immediate transition to a flexible library system that innovatively leverages existing “bricks and mortar” facilities without adding new facilities.
- The closure of four library branches across the system. We recommend these closures should be equitably spread across the county geographically. We suggest closing one library in each of the four commission districts.
- Closed libraries should be either:
 - Converted into meeting space to generate rental revenue.

- Sold or leased.
- Used for other government purposes where needed.

• Significant increases in user fees for past due books, inter-library exchanges, and room-cleaning fees.

Action: The 2011 budget was adopted and reduced the County's contribution to the library by 15 percent, requiring services to be reduced accordingly. A cleaning fee for use of the meeting room was introduced in 2010. A fee for inter-library loans was also introduced.

At the Library board meeting in early March 2011, there was a discussion regarding efforts to gain private support to help offset this loss of funding during these difficult economic times particularly as library use continues to soar.

Recommendation: We also urge the Library Board to aggressively leverage the opportunity for sponsorship and naming rights at libraries that remain open.

Action: The library has used sponsors and partnerships in the past for various programs and will continue to use these important community connections to assist in providing library services.

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At the Library board meeting in early March 2011, there was a discussion regarding efforts to gain private support to help offset this loss of funding during these difficult economic times particularly as library use continues to soar.

Recommendation: Finally, we augment our previous recommendation related to increasing volunteer hours and recommend that the target be increased to 200,000 hours within five years.

Action: Initial FY11 numbers show a 46% increase over FY10 in the number of volunteers donating time and a 33% increase in the number of hours donated.

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At the Library board meeting in early March 2011, there was a discussion regarding efforts to gain private support to help offset this loss of funding during these difficult economic times particularly as library use continues to soar.

Status Quo – Parks and Recreation

Recommendation: Defer the construction of new park and recreation facilities for as long as possible. When new parks must be constructed under SPLOST requirements, engage surrounding communities to cover some or all of the operating expenses associated with these new facilities.

Action: *Complete.* Many capital projects were delayed in 2010 and significant changes were made in the Parks & Recreation 5-year capital program with the approval of the 2011 Budget. The 2011 Budget did not include any additional operations funding resulting from the capital program but, rather, realigned resources and implemented new revenue sources to cover costs. The County understands the operating impact of capital projects and this recommendation is consistent with the County's ongoing fiscal philosophy.

Recommendation: Use SPLOST money to renovate parks that will result in future operational cost savings. This may include natural landscaping, artificial turf, and "smart" lighting systems.

Action: *Complete.* Three renovation projects were adjusted in 2010 to fit this recommendation:

1. reforestation project at Graves Park
2. renovation master plan for Vines Gardens
3. artificial turf field project at Cemetery Field

In addition, specific projects planned for 2011 include:

- *Collins Hill Aquatic Center new filtration system.*
- *Renovation of indoor and outdoor existing aquatic facilities at Collins Hill Aquatic Center, Lenora Park Pool, and Mountain Park Aquatic Center.*
- *Renovation of Mountain Park Park tennis complex.*
- *Renovation of Bethesda Park Senior Recreation Center.*

Recommendation: Recover more of the operating costs for active recreational facilities. This would involve additional user fees for active fields and facilities. Youth Athletic Associations should pay the full variable costs associated with their use of the fields (e.g., electric costs for operation of lights, field maintenance, etc.). Other groups (e.g., traveling teams, for-profits, adult athletics) should be charged market rates.

Action: Complete. 2010: Revenue was increased by an annualized \$15,000 as a result of adjustments made in 2010. Increases in non-resident fees generated \$175,244 above 2010 revenues.

2011: Revenues will be increased by approximately \$254,125 through the following revenue streams:

- Filming/Photography - \$8,000 above adopted 2011 Budget
- Gwinnett LIFE Advertising - \$16,000 above adopted 2011 Budget
- For-profit Trail Rental Increases - \$4,000 above adopted 2011 Budget
- Senior Trip Fees - \$3,000 above adopted 2011 Budget
- Percentage of Cap/Instructors - \$5,000 savings
- Group Camping Fee Increased - \$1,125 above adopted 2011 Budget
- Lighting Use Fees – Youth Athletic Association – 2011 Budget = \$150,000 (the first bills for January Use have been sent out with 50% collection to date)
- Concession Stand Fees – Youth Athletic Association – 2011 Budget = \$17,000
- Non-Resident Fee increase for 2011 \$50,000 above adopted 2011 Budget

Decreases in expenses have been identified through the use of contractual services for recreation programs:

- Tennis Tournaments rental format – (Expense decrease of \$38,782)
- Pee Wee Sports – (Expense decrease of \$1,220)

Recommendation: Increase coordination with Gwinnett County Public Schools for use of ball fields, pools, etc.

Action: Complete. Staff continues to work with the Board of Education in the shared use of public facilities; however, funding for the Community School Program was eliminated during the 2009 Service Value and Responsibility process.

Recommendation: Privatize, sell, or outsource operations of select active recreation facilities (e.g., county pools) or increase user fees so they are completely self-supporting, including future capital costs not covered by SPLOST.

Action: Complete. The outsourcing of recreational services for 2011 in adult athletics, tennis, and sports tournaments will result in the elimination of two full-time parks and recreation staff positions. These reductions are included in the 2011 budget.

Recommendation: Develop and implement a workout strategy for the golf course to alleviate future risk associated with the county's debt obligation.

Action: Complete. The Board of Commissioners approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Springbrook Golf Commission on December 14, 2010. This IGA facilitates the golf course becoming an asset of the County and a responsibility of the Recreation and Parks division of Community Services. At this same meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved an agreement for an outside company to manage the facility.

Declining Tax Digest – Parks and Recreation

Recommendation: We recommend that the Recreation Fund millage rate be reduced to 0.8 mills. We estimate this will result in a 19 percent reduction, or \$7.9 million, from the current Parks and Recreation budget. This includes the \$2.9 million from the reduced value in the digest and an estimated \$5 million from the millage rate reduction. We anticipate this recommendation will require:

- The indefinite deferral of the construction of new parks or the expansion of existing parks.
- The closure of county swimming facilities or increased fees to ensure they cover all operating costs. If facilities are closed, they should be sold where allowable by law.
- An aggressive campaign to initiate sponsorship of park, trails, etc., at county facilities. We note that recently the state initiated such a campaign for Georgia parks and we believe that this may also be successful at county facilities. We note the success the County has already seen in this regard at the Environmental & Heritage Center and Coolray Stadium.
- The closure of parks. When necessary, we recommend these closures be equitably distributed among commission districts.
- Significant increases in exchange revenue in areas or programs where fees are charged.
- A significant and sustained effort to engage volunteer groups for park maintenance and improvements.

***Action:** The tax digest is projected to decrease a combined total of 17.9 percent for 2010 and 2011, and the tax millage for the Recreation Fund is capped at 1 mill. Therefore, significant reductions in parks and recreational services have been proposed. In addition, the 2011 budget proposal includes further cost savings (reductions in expenditures and revenue enhancements) to meet forecasted needs.*

Community Services General Recommendations

Recommendation: Continue salary freezes for all staffing levels at all departments.

***Action:** Complete. No salary increases were given in 2010 or 2011. In addition, 4 budget-necessitated furlough days were approved for 2011.*

Recommendation: Initiate 10 percent salary reductions for all county employees making above 1.5 times the median county employee salary.

***Action:** On March 1, 2011, the County eliminated compensation in the form of holiday pay for the following holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Day before Christmas. These same dates were established as furlough days for exempt employees (those paid on a salaried basis). Additionally, budget reductions in the salary and benefit accounts in an amount equal to the elimination of the pay associated with the previously mentioned holidays were completed. Further, the 2011 Employee Benefits and Compensation Task Force has been created to study the County's financial position and make recommendations on all aspects of employee compensation.*

Recommendation: Increase the General Fund millage rate by 0.5 mills.

Action: This recommendation is under review as a way to impact the county's 5 year financial forecast.

Recommendation: Decrease the Recreation Fund millage rate by 0.2 mills (from 1.0 mill to 0.8 mill) to partially offset General Fund millage rate increase.

Action: This recommendation is under review. However, significant cost reduction and revenue enhancements have already been implemented, which have improved the County's five-year financial forecast for the Recreation Fund.

Recommendation: Increase impact fees for new residential developments.

Action: This recommendation is under review as a way to impact the county's 5 year financial forecast.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Status Quo – Planning and Development

Recommendation: Board of Commissioners should maintain current permitting, processing, and plan-review service levels. Keep us competitive for the time when growth returns.

*Action: **Complete.** The Planning and Development Department plans to maintain current staffing and service levels that were established after reductions in workforce over the past few years.*

Recommendation: Retain Planning and Development's strategic core staff functions while evaluating the outsourcing of non-core functions, such as permit reviews and inspection services.

*Action: **Complete.** The department has studied various outsourcing scenarios and will continue to look at how outsourcing future increases in workload will assist in meeting future demands. This will allow the department to staff for existing volume, while still incorporating the flexibility to meet market demands when and as they grow.*

Recommendation: The department should evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that they align with Economic Development and Partnership Gwinnett goals.

*Action: **Complete.** Departmental staff meets with PG staff on a regular basis and believes current policies and procedures do closely align with PG. However, staff will continue to place an emphasis on this item to ensure current future synergy with PG.*

Recommendation: Rename the Planning and Development Department to the Planning and Economic Development Department to make its responsibilities clearer.

Action: The department continues to evaluate this proposal and anticipates a 2011 action on this item.

Recommendation: Consider updating the recommendations made by the Matrix Consulting Group.

Action: *Complete.* The majority of the recommendations from the Matrix study have been implemented by the Planning and Development Department and fully integrated into our daily operations. Due to budget constraints, the department does not believe the benefits of a new or updated study would outweigh the costs at this time.

Recommendation: Implement the interventions of the 2030 Unified Plan.

Action: *Complete.* Two items that could be considered extensions of the Unified Plan and perhaps even a part of the implementation are the development of a revised Zoning Resolution/Unified Development Code and the Water and Sewer Master Plan. Each of these items will serve to reinforce and build upon the recommendations and planning concepts brought forth by the 2030 Unified Plan.

Recommendation: License and review – The County should look at ways of identifying non-licensed and non-compliant business operating in the county.

Action: *Complete.* The County entered into a contract with a private vendor in February 2010. This vendor has been successful in finding approximately \$1 million in revenue owed to the County over the past 3 years.

Recommendation: Planning and Development should re-evaluate its fees on an annual basis.

Action: *Complete.* Fees were studied and restructured in 2010. The review of revenues, particularly those associated with “Charges for Service” and “Licensing and Revenue”, will be completed on a regularly scheduled basis moving forward.

Recommendation: Offer all forms of payment options with a fee for credit card use.

Action: *Planning and Development staff and Information Technology staff have initiated a project to implement the convenience fee portion of this recommendation. Several forms of online payment currently exist.*

Declining Tax Digest – Planning and Development

Recommendation: Eliminate personal use of county vehicles by staff (commuting to/from home).

Action: *Complete.* The only approved take home vehicles are for public safety and on-call personnel.

Recommendation: Freeze salaries.

Action: *Complete.* No salary increases were given in 2010, and none are planned for 2011. In addition, a 2011 Employee Benefits and Compensation Task Force was created to study the County’s financial position and make recommendations on all aspects of employee compensation.

Recommendation: Reduce salaries and/or impose furloughs.

Action: *Complete.* On March 1, 2011, the County eliminated compensation in the form of holiday pay for the following holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Day before Christmas. These same dates were established as furlough days for exempt employees (those paid on a salaried basis). Additionally, budget reductions in the salary and benefit accounts in an amount equal to the elimination of the pay associated with the previously mentioned holidays were completed.

Recommendation: Don't proceed with the Matrix Study update.

Action: *Complete.* The County has acted on this recommendation. Planning and Development has implemented most of the recommendations from the 2005 Matrix study; proceeding with an update of this study would be too costly for current economic realities.

Recommendation: Revise the sign ordinance – the banner resolution reduces sales, and therefore reduces sales tax revenues. Allowing banners would increase sales tax collections and permit fees.

Action: *The Department of Planning and Development has recently initiated a project (Unified Development Ordinance) to study, revise, and consolidate several ordinances and regulations into one unified document. The current sign ordinance will be included in this project.*

Status Quo – Transportation

Recommendation: DOT has an underused state-of-the-art control infrastructure. It needs to increase capacity by training internal resources to fully reap the benefits of its technology. Develop strategies for dealing with specific detour scenarios to be implemented when needed.

Action: *Complete.* Both the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Information Technology worked together on the master plan for the Traffic Control Center (TCC). During 2010, DOT implemented a new program called GC SmartCommute that uses the new Traffic Control Center (TCC) and its current technology to share real-time traffic information with citizens. DOT is committed to take advantage of any enhancements as they become available to further utilize the TCC and staffing needs in the future.

Recommendation: Department should consider hiring a well-qualified, third party consultant to review the operations of the department and recommend efficiencies, organizational improvements, reduction, restructuring, and/or outsourcing.

Action: *DOT will certainly be open to and consider a third-party should funding become available. The department has worked with the Performance Analysis Division on some efficiency and operational improvements in 2010.*

Recommendation: This consultant should also review the County's use of technology and facilitate greater integration/inter-departmental coordination across departments (e.g., allowing the Police Department to better manage accidents, events, and detours).

Action: *Ongoing efforts are underway from this recommendation. With the expansion of the Traffic Control Center and GC SmartCommute, greater innovation and interdepartmental coordination is expected.*

Recommendation: Commission a study for developing the best business model for the transit system. We recommend strategies to increase ridership and revenues to get the transit system at or near a “breakeven” point (closing the gap between federal and state funding and the fares paid by riders and the subsidy paid by the County’s general fund).

Action: DOT is continually working to maximum efficiency of routes and trips with the Operator. The Transit Development Plan is nearing completion and we are looking at additional revenue such as advertising. The importance of this recommendation was acknowledged again during the 2011 business and budget planning process.

Recommendation: Eliminate costs of printing transit brochures and schedules by having them distributed electronically or by outsourcing the printing to the libraries.

Action: Complete. After this recommendation came from Engage Gwinnett, DOT immediately worked with the contractor on limiting color printing and going to more electronic publishing and referral to the website. This recommendation also led DOT to work closely with the contractor on real time notification of incidents, delays and schedule changes thru social networks which has been received positively by the passengers.

The Department of Transportation is looking at more black and white printing and has increased electronic communications such as Facebook and Twitter, particularly regarding incidents and notifications.

Recommendation: Pursue the sale of advertising space on the exterior and interior of Gwinnett Transit buses. In order to preserve Gwinnett County Transit’s current maroon/gold/white livery, consider using advertising “wraps” over the windows.

Action: The Department of Transportation has identified in the Transit Development Plan the opportunity for increasing revenue. DOT, along with the Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board, is studying a potential revenue and market for advertising on the Transit system.

Declining Tax Digest – Transportation

Recommendation: Eliminate personal use of county vehicles by staff (commuting to/from home).

Action: Complete. Take home vehicles for DOT employees were eliminated in June 2009, and the only approved take home vehicles are for public safety, on-call personnel, and where contractual agreements exist.

Recommendation: Freeze salaries.

Action: Complete. No salary increases were given in 2010, and none are planned for 2011. In addition, a 2011 Employee Benefits and Compensation Task Force was created to study the County’s financial position and make recommendations on all aspects of employee compensation.

Recommendation: Reduce salaries and/or impose furloughs.

Action: Complete. On March 1, 2011, the County eliminated compensation in the form of holiday pay for the following holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Day before Christmas. These same dates were established as furlough days for exempt employees (those paid on a salaried

basis). Additionally, budget reductions in the salary and benefit accounts in an amount equal to the elimination of the pay associated with the previously mentioned holidays were completed.

Recommendation: Promote an adopt-a-road program to reduce landscape/median maintenance cost.

Action: *Complete. The Department of Transportation will continue to work with Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful on the Adopt-a-Road program. This program is currently being marketed through community presentations at civic, homeowner and business meetings, printed flyers and “adoption packets” that are distributed at community events, periodic E Blasts, website promotion, newspaper articles, Facebook postings, recognition awards and certificates for participants, roadside signage recognizing participating groups, community call to action for roads that need some extra TLC, teacher trainings, environmental and service club presentations at public and private schools, and one on one citizen calls and emails.*

Recommendation: Implement recommendations for the status quo.

Action: *The County agrees with this recommendation. Staff implemented a “status quo” philosophy for its 2011 budget, with targeted service and fiscal reductions.*

Status Quo – Transit

Recommendation: Conduct a study to determine the best business model for the transit system. Include strategies for increasing ridership and revenues so that the system no longer requires subsidies from the County’s general fund.

Action: *The Department of Transportation continues to look at ways of minimizing county subsidy and maximizing ridership/efficiencies.*

Recommendation: Pursue the sale of advertising space on the exterior and interior of Gwinnett Transit buses.

Action: *The Department of Transportation has identified in the Transit Development Plan the opportunity for increasing revenue. DOT, along with the Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board, is studying a potential revenue and market for advertising on the Transit system.*

Recommendation: Consider feasibility and cost savings of eliminating local routes while retaining express routes.

Action: *Complete. The Department of Transportation has investigated and found the reimbursements to the FTA would far exceed the cost savings currently and in future years. DOT is continuing to review and look for efficiencies and better performance of local routes. No local routes were eliminated for 2011, but DOT is currently reviewing existing local routes to identify greater efficiencies.*

Recommendation: Complete a five-year transit master plan.

Action: *The five-year Transit Development Plan is currently in the final stages of completion.*

Recommendation: Eliminate the cost of printing transit brochures by making them available electronically or outsourcing the printing to libraries.

Action: *Complete.* After this recommendation came from Engage Gwinnett, DOT immediately worked with the contractor on limiting color printing and going to more electronic publishing and referral to the website. This recommendation also led DOT to work closely with the contractor on real time notification of incidents, delays and schedule changes thru social networks which has been received positively by the passengers.

The Department of Transportation is looking at more black and white printing and has increased electronic communications such as Facebook and Twitter, particularly regarding incidents and notifications.

Status Quo – Water Resources

Recommendation: We fully support the department's plan of avoiding future bond funding by financing all capital projects on a "pay-as-you-go" basis.

Action: *Complete.* This recommendation was implemented in 2010 and no additional W&S debt is planned. Countywide, the pay-as-you-go philosophy is supporting 99.58 percent of our five-year capital plan.

County savings realized from June/July refunding:

- *The purpose of the refunding was to advance refund callable maturities of Series 2003B Water & Sewer Revenue Bonds which resulted in a present value debt service savings of approximately \$9.43 million.*
- *Our credit rating coupled with the underwriters work resulted in a true-interest cost of 2.89%.*
- *We will achieve a present value level of savings of 5.5% of the refunded bonds.*

Recommendation: The department needs to develop a plan for funding the cost of repairing and replacing portions of stormwater infrastructure that are expected to fail within the next 10 years. The Work Group recognizes this means incurring significant additional costs.

Action: *A financial pro-forma is being developed to determine funding levels required for future years in order to meet the planned repair/replacement schedules for the next 7 years. Once the pro-forma is completed, staff will work to strategically address options and recommendations to finalize a plan to provide resources which meet needs.*

Recommendation: The department should engage a collection agency to improve its water and sewer fee collections.

Action: *Complete.* This has been implemented. Over \$1 million has been collected to date.

Development and Infrastructure General Recommendations

Recommendation: Freeze salaries.

Action: *Complete.* No salary increases were given in 2010, and none are planned for 2011. In addition, a 2011 Employee Benefits and Compensation Task Force was created.

Recommendation: Reduce salaries and/or impose furloughs.

Action: *Complete.* On March 1, 2011, the County eliminated compensation in the form of holiday pay for the following holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Day before Christmas. These same dates were established as furlough days for exempt employees (those paid on a salaried basis). Additionally, budget reductions in the salary and benefit accounts in an amount equal to the elimination of the pay associated with the previously mentioned holidays were completed. In addition, a 2011 Employee Benefits and Compensation Task Force was created.

Recommendation: Change the retirement plan from a defined-benefit plan to 401(k) retirement plan going forward (i.e., service credits).

Action: *Complete.* A 401(a) defined contribution plan has been offered to appointed employees and elected officials since 2000. Between 2000 and 2007, new hires were given the choice of the defined contribution or defined benefit plan. The pension plan was closed to new employees in 2007, requiring all new employees to join the defined-contribution plan.

Recommendation: Eliminate personal use of county vehicles by staff, and no police and sheriff cars outside Gwinnett County.

Action: *The only approved take home vehicles are for public safety and on-call personnel.*

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Status Quo – Fire and Emergency Services

Recommendation: We are very cautious in recommending changes because we are concerned about unintended consequences. Therefore, we recommend that all proposed changes in the funding and operations of Fire and EMS be subjected to an intense review and analysis process which fully examines all possible consequences and balances the projected benefits with the potential risk associated with the proposed changes.

Action: *Complete.* We agree with the need to give deliberate and judicious consideration to changes and have attempted to apply this philosophy not only in the Fire and Emergency Services Department, but throughout the organization.

Recommendation: Our priority recommendation is to continue the good work underway by the department and to maintain the current service levels.

Action: *Complete.* The department continues to reassess its service levels in order to provide the highest degree possible while maintaining its fiscal responsibility.

Recommendation: Maintain the department's current practice of providing emergency medical transport services. As determined by research performed by the County and staff from Georgia Gwinnett College, eliminating ambulance crews from the department's staffing plan would actually increase the overall cost of providing Fire and EMS services. (For more information, refer to the "Fire and Emergency Services Committee Research Report" on the Engage Gwinnett website.)

Action: *Complete. With this recommendation in mind, the County has continued providing emergency medical transport services.*

Recommendation: In addition to comparing itself against its own past performance, we recommend that the department identify appropriate communities and fire departments to use for benchmark purposes. Comparisons with these peer communities and organizations should be an ongoing and formalized process. While we acknowledge that such comparisons are difficult and imperfect, we believe that it is important to demonstrate how Gwinnett County Fire and EMS stacks up against other departments across the country.

Action: *Complete. The Fire Strategic Planning and Management Section conducts an annual comparison to other Georgia counties and other cities including Jacksonville, Florida; Columbus, Ohio; and Phoenix, Arizona.*

Recommendation: Identify and evaluate best practices from other progressive fire departments, including how these departments are addressing cuts in funding.

Action: *Complete. The Fire Strategic Planning and Management Section conducts an annual comparison to other Georgia counties and other cities including Jacksonville, Florida, Columbus, Ohio, and Phoenix, Arizona. The department will continue to use information obtained from these jurisdictions and agencies in identifying best practices, but also if and when service or budget reductions are necessary.*

Recommendation: Focus immediate attention on preparing for the upcoming ISO rating process, which we understand is imminent. Once ISO has released its updated rating and related evaluation comments, use these as a source of information for identifying areas where efforts should be concentrated in the future.

Action: *Complete. With the opening of three stations in November 2010, 98 percent of county residents live within five miles of a station. The department's growth projection and the updated rating information will continue to be used for staffing and planning. The ISO review began March 28, 2011 with anticipated results expected late 2011.*

Recommendation: Use the research report prepared for this Work Group to explain the potential financial impacts on homeowners and businesses of ISO rating changes, as well as to compare these with budgetary increases required to maintain/improve existing ISO rating. Have this research performed annually, so that up-to-date information is available each year. Publish the annual research results in a manner that makes them easily available to the public.

Action: *We agree and will use the ISO report as a communication/education device to keep the public informed. Once the ISO report has been completed it will be incorporated into the department's strategic plan.*

Recommendation: As funding allows, add stations, equipment and staffing to maintain and improve coverage across the county, especially in areas with longer response times or greater service demands.

Action: *Complete. Three new stations opened in November 2010: 18, 29, and 30. Current planning calls for future stations and relocations as budget availability allow in order to increase our capability for providing Fire and EMS services.*

Recommendation: Focus on efforts to reduce community risk through education and outreach. Expand use of volunteers and coordination with other organizations in order to make the most of available resources and to reach the greatest number of people.

Action: *Complete. The Community Risk Reduction Division is dedicated to this initiative. They have partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and Gwinnett Medical Center to offer programs that will help reduce risk. In addition, volunteers provide over 175 hours of service per month in community-related efforts. We will reflect the volunteer initiatives in our Balanced Scorecard.*

Recommendation: Address outdoor burning issues through education initially, but consider the possibility of more stringent regulation where warranted based on risk.

Action: *Complete. This topic was researched and changes will be incorporated into the Fire Ordinance scheduled to be presented to the Board of Commissioners in 2011.*

Recommendation: Proceed in timely fashion with the re-writing of existing code(s) and regulations to clarify and simplify their use by staff, regulated parties, and the citizens.

Action: *The Fire and Emergency Services Department continues to work toward this recommendation. An updated code draft has been offered that, if accepted in 2011, may potentially bring in an additional \$250,000 in revenue.*

Recommendation: Identify and access code adjustments likely to have the greatest impact on fire risk and management. The benefits to be derived from strengthening code requirements should be balanced with the cost to property owners and the community.

Action: *The Fire and Emergency Services Department continues to work toward this recommendation. An updated code draft has been offered that, if accepted in 2011, may potentially bring in an additional \$250,000 in revenue.*

Recommendation: Evaluate existing level of cooperation between the Fire Marshal's Office and Planning and Development Department and identify any areas where change may be beneficial to the departments or their customers.

Action: *The Fire and Emergency Services Department continues to work toward this recommendation. An updated code draft has been offered that, if accepted in 2011, may potentially bring in an additional \$250,000 in revenue.*

Recommendation: Consider increasing the frequency of fire hydrant inspection and maintenance.

Action: *The Fire and Emergency Services Department recently renewed a contract for this service, which will be managed by Water Resources. A new memorandum of understanding with Water Resources has been completed; maintaining current hydrants due to budget constraints. Discussions with DWR and Corrections have begun in order to determine if inmate crews can perform maintenance.*

Recommendation: Search for other opportunities for outsourcing and contracting functions, and evaluate these opportunities to determine viability and benefits.

Action: The Fire and Emergency Services Department currently reviews all contracts on an annual basis. One example is the EMS billing contract currently being evaluated for additional opportunities. The department will incorporate this philosophy into our business practices and, where possible and feasible, review our operations for outsourcing and contracting activities.

Declining Tax Digest – Fire and Emergency Services

Recommendation: To ensure that a range of options was considered, we first looked at what spending cuts would be required to offset the revenue loss if no revenue increases were possible. In our brainstorming about possible spending cuts, we came up with the following list of possibilities:

- Delay opening of new and re-located stations (re-located station #18, new station #29, and new station #30). This would result in a 10 percent budget decrease equivalent to 1.5 to 2.0 stations, depending upon apparatus assigned.
- Cut existing personnel by eliminating/removing from service some apparatus.
- Reducing salaries by up to 10 percent on a temporary basis.
- Close currently operating stations.

Taking this approach was very difficult for the group since there are no easy reduction targets and the potential consequences of the necessary reductions are not desirable. Nonetheless, the action alternatives for spending cuts identified by the group are discussed below.

Option A – Avoid incurring costs that cannot be sustained:

Option A should be considered if the further loss of tax revenues is identified prior to the opening of the three stations currently completed but not yet occupied: re-located station #18, new station #29 and new station #30. With the idea that postponing the hiring of additional staff is preferable to having to lay off employees, our group suggested that costs that cannot be sustained over the long run should not be incurred. Thus, the opening of some combination of the three stations yet to be occupied should be delayed. One possible combination likely to generate sufficient savings is described below:

- Open new station #29
- Open relocated station #18 but without the new ladder company. (Est. savings: \$1.5 million)
- Delay opening of new station #30, which has both engine and ladder companies. (Est. savings: \$2.8 million)
- Cuts in operating expenses other than personnel costs. (Est. savings \$0.4 million)

Option B – Reduce personnel costs through a combination of temporary pay cuts and elimination of positions.

Option B would be employed in the event the decline in the tax digest occurs after the three completed but unoccupied stations have already been opened. While we believe that salary reductions and layoffs should be considered only in the direst of

circumstances, we understand that it is the only feasible approach if the stations are already opened. With such a large portion of the budget for Fire and EMS, 90 percent or more, dedicated to personnel costs, there is no way to cut the department's budget by \$4.7 million without reducing personnel costs.

Accordingly Option B is based on instituting some combination of salary reduction and cutting existing personnel, including eliminating and/or taking out of service selected fire apparatus. One example would include an across-the-board temporary salary reduction of 2.5 percent coupled with layoffs and other cost savings associated with removing equipment from service. The estimated annual savings amounts that can be realized by removing equipment from service are shown below, along with the number of each type of equipment now in service:

- Ambulance: \$700,000 (23 units in total)
- Engine: \$1.3 million (28 units, one in each station)
- Ladder \$1.5 million (8 units in total)

We would suggest relying on the fire chief to select the specific equipment to be taken out of service, based on minimizing the unavoidable impact on the ability to deliver service.

Caution: In order to achieve substantial cost reductions in Fire and EMS, cuts would have to be made to personnel. This would likely have a negative effect on the ISO rating which could potentially cause an increase in the cost of property insurance for homeowners and businesses.

Action: Should the Fire and Emergency Services Department be required to reduce our budgetary appropriations or staff, an in-depth impact study would be required to determine which units to eliminate. A static plan developed today may become outdated based on the environment at the time of implementation and changing call patterns/volume.

On March 1, 2011, the County eliminated compensation in the form of holiday pay for the following holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Day before Christmas. These same dates were established as furlough days for exempt employees (those paid on a salaried basis). Additionally, budget reductions in the salary and benefit accounts in an amount equal to the elimination of the pay associated with the previously mentioned holidays were completed.

Recommendation: Revenue options

Property tax increase: In looking at a solution to the budget shortfall in this exercise, we could not ignore the potential effect of staffing reductions on the ISO rating and the impact that a worse ISO rating has on property insurance premiums. Gwinnett is scheduled this spring for its first ISO rating process in over 20 years, so this is of immediate interest. If the rating worsens by even one level, the impact of the resulting increase in insurance premiums for most homes would likely be larger than the additional taxes (0.20 mill increase) required to maintain sufficient funding for Fire and EMS.

Here's how to think about the tradeoff between a millage increase and an increase in homeowner insurance rates:

- If the county's ISO rating worsens, homeowner insurance premiums for a home valued at \$200,000 would likely rise by more than \$50 a year. Should

the millage rate be increased by 0.20 mills (enough to cover a shortfall in Fire and EMS services, if the tax digest declines by 10 percent this year), the increase in property taxes would be \$15 or less.

- Thus, \$15 a year increase in property taxes could save the owner of a home valued at \$200,000 \$50 a year in added insurance premiums, resulting in a net savings of about \$35.

Action: The ISO review began March 28, 2011 with anticipated results expected late 2011.

Sales tax: While a local-option sales tax for county operating expenses cannot happen soon enough to help with budget shortfalls in the next few years, it bears further exploration as an overall option in the future.

Action: Staff is currently reviewing and studying the County's options associated with Local Option Sales Tax and plans to present their findings to the Chairman and Board of Commissioners during fiscal year 2011.

User fees and other fees for services: We encourage Fire and EMS to continue actively searching for user fees that may be appropriately used in conjunction with the services provided by the department. We also recommend that the County adjust its existing fee schedule periodically to reflect market forces and the actual cost of providing services. However, we have not identified any fee increases that appear productive at this time, so we are not recommending an increase in fees for Fire and EMS services now. Here are our reasons:

- Current fees (mostly related to ambulance transport) presently account for 15 percent of the department's budget.
- There are limits to collecting higher fees for ambulance transport services due to reimbursement maximums imposed by Medicare, Medicaid and insurance companies.
- Even doubling these fees would not generate substantial funds since amounts above these limits will often end up uncollected.
- Gwinnett is already at the high end of EMS transport rates.
- Amounts raised through potential new user fees would be negligible, difficult to administer and would not yield enough additional revenue to make a difference.

Action: Complete. On February 1, 2011 the BOC approved increasing the EMS transport rate to \$975.00 from \$750.00. This change was based upon the cost to transport a patient and metro area market research. Based upon the payer mix, collection rates, and number of transports this change should result in approximately \$1.5M in added revenue.

INTERNAL SERVICES

Status Quo – Internal Services

Recommendation: We are very concerned about how much additional work the Internal Services departments can handle without serious threat to their abilities to function. Therefore, we recommend that proposed changes in the funding and operations of Internal Services departments be subject to an intense review and analysis process. All

possible consequences should be fully investigated, and projected benefits should be carefully balanced with the risks associated with the proposed changes.

Action: *Complete. These changes have been implemented with great care, incorporating multiple perspectives when changes have been considered. Continuing to shift the cost of health and retirement benefits to employees is one such example where internal service departments help to drive better fiscal policies. As part of the 2011 business planning and budget process, internal service departments had the opportunity to review the plans and budgets of all other departments to assess any potential impact to the services each department provides to them and adjust their plans accordingly.*

Recommendation: In fact, we believe that the Internal Services areas may have been cut to a point at which their ability to support the rest of County government may be in jeopardy. Accordingly, we recommend that the County closely examine the potential shortfalls in service which are likely and the impact these will have on other County operations.

Action: *Complete. The Internal Services departments met together as a group during the 2011 budget process in order to ensure that all considered changes and their impacts were discussed and planned. Examinations of potential shortfalls in service will continue. Although the Internal Service departments operate independently, their core missions to support the organization are consistent. Synergies among these departments will be explored in the future to align improvements and efficiencies across all support functions.*

Recommendation: We urge that the County consider continuing with technological improvements that have been delayed, since the improvements would allow some Internal Services areas to accomplish more with their existing staff. This would be particularly helpful for Finance and HR.

Action: *Complete. Technology and innovation remain critical to the building blocks for efficiencies and coordinated efforts in 2010 and beyond. A technology plan has been implemented and improvements to SAP are currently being studied.*

Recommendation: We recommend that the Internal Services departments identify appropriate localities and organizations to use for benchmarking purposes. Comparisons with these peer localities and organizations should be an ongoing and formalized process. While we acknowledge that such comparisons are difficult and imperfect, we believe that it is important to demonstrate how Internal Services areas in Gwinnett County government compare with their counterparts across the country.

Action: *This recommendation is under review. While staff concurs with the recommendation and the ability to gain information from peer organizations for both benchmarking and best practice identification, resources are not yet available to dedicate to this project.*

Recommendation: As part of this benchmarking effort, we urge the Internal Services departments to identify and evaluate the best practices of other progressive Internal Services departments, including how these departments are addressing cuts in funding.

Action: *This recommendation is under review. While staff concurs with the recommendation and the ability to gain information from peer organizations for both benchmarking and best practice identification, resources are not yet available to dedicate to this project.*

Recommendation: We are alarmed by the level of risk associated with production of the County's tax digest under current economic and regulatory conditions, especially when coupled with the shifting of some appraisal functions to external firms. To allay potential problems, we recommend that the County assign additional staff with needed background and experience to manage the contractual relationships and to perform quality control for the entire appraisal process. This should be done even if it can only be accomplished by hiring additional experienced staff or contracting for quality-control services.

Action: Complete. *Gwinnett County was the first county in Georgia to get its digest approved in 2010. The state Department of Audits "Sales Ratio Study" results for 2010, using 2009 data, put Gwinnett at 38.63, well within the 36-44 range. For 2010 our appraisal staff reviewed all valid sales and made adjustments to properties where needed. Also for 2010, over 140,000 assessment notices were sent. Of these notices we had 9,915 appeals with 47 remaining open, most of which are now moving into Superior Court. We fully expect to be within the state-mandated range again for the 2010 data. Additionally, we are meeting the requirements for SB 346 by: utilizing technology to enable filing of returns electronically and managing data more effectively; implementing LEAN process improvements to increase throughput; launching a communication strategy to tax representatives and the public on how the process has changed and aiding their education; managing contractors so that flexibility in staffing needs is available dependent upon actual volumes of appeals received.*

Recommendation: We recommend that the County carefully monitor the volume of appeals and other activities associated with the production of the tax digest and be prepared to provide additional resources to the Tax Assessors Office in the form of temporary staff or contractual services should these be necessary.

Action: Complete. *The Tax Assessor's Office has handled their increased workload through contracted services. This approach will continue into 2011, with expanded contracts to manage a greater amount of activity and the requirements attributable to new legislation.*

Recommendation: We recommend that the Board of Tax Assessors assume a leadership role in determining the resources needed by the Tax Assessors Office and seeking these from the County.

Action: Complete. *The Board of Assessors has been briefed and officially approved and adopted the Office of the Tax Assessors' business plan for 2011, which includes all the enhancements being implemented.*

Declining Tax Digest – Internal Services

Recommendation: Establish minimum levels that must be maintained for certain services, without which fundamental operations cannot continue. For example, the County must produce payroll checks and meet payroll reporting requirements set by the federal and state governments.

Action: Complete. *The reductions in support departments that occurred in 2008, 2009, and 2010 will continue into 2011. Additional reductions in these areas will handicap these departments from being able to provide core services.*

Recommendation: Involve the other departments, which are customers of the Internal Service areas, in determining internal services that can be eliminated or reduced. This may involve a poll or roundtable discussions to identify the services that each County department is willing to give up.

Action: Roundtable discussions are under consideration. Although this was conducted during the formulation of the 2011 budget process and resulted in some adjustments, it has not been completed for existing service levels.

Recommendation: Analyze fully any proposed changes for the potential risk associated with the change, as well as the possibility of unintended consequences that may negate or offset the savings projected to be generated by the change.

Action: Complete. During the business planning and budget preparation process, the back office departments met as a group to go over all of the requests for service enhancements and reductions. An analysis was conducted of the impact any changes would have on the organization. This type of collaboration and analysis will continue moving forward.

Recommendation: Work through this process and develop the plan for reductions in advance so that implementation is not delayed should reductions be necessary.

Action: Complete. The 2011 General Fund budget was adopted with a \$38 million deficit. As part of the financial management plan, staff deployed a very organized mission to engage all service delivery areas in discussions about additional expenditure reductions and revenue enhancements. Meetings were held, and continue to be held, to discuss the current financial position of the County and to discover ways in which we can continue to prepare for our financial future. Although fiscal year 2011 has been effectively balanced, the Board of Commissioners and staff continue to find ways in which the County's five year financial plan can be improved. Efforts have shifted from our current fiscal year deficit to the forecasted and projected deficits of fiscal year 2012 through 2016. Staff will continue to incorporate the Engage Gwinnett recommendations into how we work towards a balanced financial future.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIARY

Status Quo – Law Enforcement and Judiciary

Recommendation: The Work Group recognizes the potentially tremendous detrimental impact that reductions in the Law Enforcement and Justice System would have on our community. We recommend maintaining all current service levels.

Action: Complete. The 2011 budget was adopted at an amount that maintains the current level of service. Subsequent actions by the Board of Commissioners to balance the 2011 budget can be found at www.gwinnettcounty.com.

Recommendation: The fees permitted by state law for such things as court filings do not come close to the actual costs of providing these services. While recovering the full costs is unlikely, and perhaps not desirable in some cases, fees should be increased to recover a larger portion of the cost of service delivery. Action by the Georgia General Assembly is required. We urge our local elected officials, including our state legislative delegation, to:

- Increase state-mandated fees to be more closely related to actual costs

- Add a technology surcharge to criminal fees to support technology improvements
- Authorize privatization of fee/fine collection including the collection of fines that remain unpaid upon the expiration of a criminal sentence
- Recategorize some minor misdemeanor criminal offenses and reduce the potential penalty in a way that would permit those cases to be resolved without a jury trial

Action: This recommendation has been accepted through multiple means. The County continues to work with our delegation to improve permissible cost recovery methods. Technology surcharges are being explored. The County drafted legislation in an attempt to establish a technology fee on all citations that are issued, however, the legislative delegation did not bring this item to the floor for debate. We will continue to educate the delegation on the benefits of such a fee, and work with them to try and get this moved forward for a 2012 vote. Georgia House Bill 1055 has allowed certain fees to be increased, and the County has done so where permitted. As a result of 1055, an additional \$1.5 million is projected to be received on an annual basis.

Recommendation: The current method of delivering indigent criminal defense services should be re-examined. Consideration should be given to finding an alternative to the current system of paying for those services on an hourly basis.

Action: The governing committee over indigent defense is discussing and looking into options.

Recommendation: We recommend that a process model for budgeting and staffing decisions be implemented that recognizes the highly interconnected and interdependent nature of the entire Law Enforcement and Justice System, a model that would also serve to promote efficiency and eliminate service duplication. This review should be led by the Performance Analysis Department and involve consultants, staff and citizens in its work.

Action: This recommendation is being integrated where possible. The change in philosophy is ideal to integrate service delivery across departments and offices within the organization.

Recommendation: The Law Enforcement and Justice System would benefit both in terms of reduced costs and greater efficiency from taking maximum advantage of technology. The Work Group supports implementing technological advances and innovative processes to increase productivity and transparency. This should include:

- Expediting implementation of the Criminal Justice Information System.
- Expediting a paperless system for courts, tickets, licenses and permits, police records.
- Providing online access or self-service kiosk for service delivery
- A case management electronic court filing system.
- Exploring a public-private partnership for self-service or paperless delivery of services.

Action: The County continues to strive toward this recommendation. As examples, the Police Department has implemented a self-service and paperless way to access accident reports. The Sheriff's Department has implemented several technology advances like automated license plate readers in patrol cars and automated inmate kiosks at the detention center. The courts are working on a new case management system. The Engage Gwinnett committee called "Excellence Through Innovation" delivered their recommendations to the Board in

May, and a number of initiatives with a technology focus are being evaluated that have the potential to create additional government operational efficiencies gained by business process changes and the use of technology to provide long-term improvements. Police implemented automated license plate readers in 3 patrol cars in June 2011.

Recommendation: Explore outsourcing operations for Corrections, GJAC entry (not courtroom) security, building maintenance, the animal control facility, process servers (civil).

Action: This recommendation is under review.

Recommendation: We recommend consolidation of certain services, including building maintenance, IT Services, other support services.

Action: Several initiatives are underway for 2011. The ITS department will absorb greater centralized functions. Support Services is studying centralizing county-wide facilities under their management for purposes of repairs and renovations. The warehouse operations for the Fire and Police departments were combined in 2010.

Recommendation: Organize and promote a “summit meeting” between municipal and Recorder’s Court officials regarding fines to ensure equitable fines among jurisdictions.

Action: We do a survey of other “traffic courts” in the area from time-to-time to see where our fine schedule is in relationship to the other courts. This includes not only the cities, but DeKalb Recorder’s Court and Cobb County State Court, traffic division.

Recommendation: Superior and State Court judges should consider appointing an administrative judge for each court to study, evaluate, and make recommendations to those judges with the aim of maximizing the delivery of judicial services at an affordable cost for the citizens of Gwinnett County.

Action: Complete. Both courts have recognized this point. In Superior Court, Judge Tim Hamil serves as the administrative judge and the State Court administrative judge is Chief Judge Robert Mock.

Recommendation: Implement an education initiative to leverage citizen volunteer capacity for community building to extend and compliment the service delivery of the Law Enforcement and Justice System.

Action: The Sheriff’s Department is leveraging citizen volunteers in three programs: Deputy Reserves, Seniors in Action, and Explorers. In addition, the County is currently working on a countywide webpage for citizen volunteer opportunities on its website at <https://www.gwinnettcounty.com/>. The Police Department initiated a Volunteer program in June 2011. Currently, there are 36 active volunteers assigned to various units at Police. Based on May’s year to date figures, there have been 705 hours worked by volunteers with an estimated value of \$15,075.

Recommendation: Explore and pursue state reimbursement for county services wherever possible.

Action: Complete. Wherever possible, special revenues are used to fund expenditures. For example, the Police Department will be using eligible funds for training purposes in 2011. The Sheriff’s Department currently utilizes Drug

Related Asset Forfeiture funds to cover county services whenever allowed by law. And the Courts continue to look at grants, grant electronic invoicing system for indigent defense, and drug court grants through the state.

Recommendation: If permitted by law, use SPLOST funds to fund the purchase of police vehicles before using General Fund revenues.

Action: *Complete. There is a plan to purchase pursuit vehicles in 2011 using SPLOST funds.*

Recommendation: Support efforts currently underway to evaluate the internal business process of county operations, to measure performance, and seek efficiencies. These efforts are valuable and should be encouraged.

Action: *The effort for continued efficiencies is ongoing.*

Declining Tax Digest – Law Enforcement and Judiciary

Recommendation: We would continue to recommend that the County maintain the current levels of service in the courts and law enforcement.

Action: *Complete. The 2011 budget was adopted at an amount that maintains the current level of service. Subsequent actions by the Board of Commissioners to balance the 2011 budget can be found at www.gwinnettcounty.com.*

Recommendation: If funding in this area of responsibility must be reduced, and reductions are made on a percentage basis, the percentage goal in this area should be set at the least proportionate reduction possible. We acknowledge that more limited cuts in this area might result in a need for greater percentage cuts in other less “core” service areas which is the intention of the recommendation. Within each official or department's budget and area of responsibility, the reductions should be prioritized by that official or department manager, that person being most familiar with the operations of the department and with a view towards impacting core services as little as possible.

Action: *Complete. Through the County's Business Planning Process, each agency and department has identified those core functions that must continue in order to maintain services at status quo. As a whole, County departments and agencies have also identified their own service and fiscal priorities, voluntarily offering \$5.7 million in reductions in 2011 on top of prior-year reductions already in place. Should reductions be required in this area, officials and department managers will be consulted so that the full impact of any funding decisions can be fully explored and evaluated prior to being implemented. The 2011 budget was adopted at an amount that maintains the current level of service. Subsequent actions by the Board of Commissioners to balance the 2011 budget can be found at www.gwinnettcounty.com.*