

Development and Infrastructure Work Group

Recommendations for Status Quo

Planning and Development

Observations

- County is perceived to be more pro-residential and anti-business development
- Conflicting policies in planning and development
- State responsibility of all roles of planning and development, Board of Commissioners and planning commission
- Planning and development department is and should be about generating revenue
- Planning and development is tasked with the future of Gwinnett County
- No near-term demand for outsourcing
- What are the current service levels?

Considerations

- Consider opportunities to combine departments (cross-train)
- Policy and procedures should be business friendly because businesses generate revenue. Our tax base is too heavily weighted to residential vs commercial.
- Can permits and inspection be combined with license and review (consideration)

Recommendations

- Board of Commissioners to maintain current permitting, processing and plan review service levels – keep us competitive when growth returns
- Department evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that they align with Partnership Gwinnett goals
- Fast track renaming the Planning and Development department to Planning and Economic Development
- Do not outsource (outside contracting) any essential Planning and Development functions
- Consider updating the recommendations made by the Matrix Consulting Group
- Implement interventions of the 2030 Unified Plan
- License and Review: County should look into ways to identify non-licensed and non-compliant businesses operating in the county
- Planning and Development should re-evaluate its fees on an annual basis
- Offer all forms of payment options with a fee for credit card for all county services

Transportation

Observations

- Public transportation system serves less than (0.5% - what % is this available to?) of population in Gwinnett
- Roads: SPLOST is capital only, not for operating
- Great strides in efficiencies and cost-cutting (maintenance)
- Centralized facility functional and efficient
- Everything stops at the county line – no coordination with the other counties

- The oversupply of parking raises the impact of stormwater runoff and discourages the use of transit services
- Cuts have already been made to some bus routes. Can any more cuts be made?

Considerations

- Will stimulus funds save costs on traffic lights? How much, now and in the future?
- 21st Century traffic control training (more efficient) – need more training
- The department of transportation has managed well within the box – time to consider a new box.
- What role would technology play if starting a department from scratch?
- What are the consequences of privatizing the airport? What is the impact?
- Transit
 - Add Wi-Fi to express buses
 - Create “intra-county” express routes with fewer stops to increase ridership
 - Quantify the market penetration on existing routes. What if ridership increases by 15%?
 - What if weekly or two-week transit passes are offered?
 - Increasing commuter ridership requires more Park-and-Ride capacity
 - The Unified Plan is a long-term plan and vision for Gwinnett County. Revitalization needs density and density requires transit.
 - Transit also carries an impact on economic development (developments of regional impact).
 - Can transit be dropped to a minimum?
 - Continue to monitor ridership
 - Can route patterns be further altered?

Recommendations

- Do a better job of marketing transit service, including providing schedules in community centers, libraries, grocery stores, etc.
- Ensure we’re maximizing our use of technology
 - Staff trained and knowledgeable in its use
 - Develop plans and strategies
 - “Smart” technology
- Independent expert review of county’s use of technology and facilitate integration across functions (e.g., traffic lights, public safety)
- Third party facilitation/review of inter-departmental coordination
- Transit
 - Complete 5-year transit master plan
 - Offer weekly passes in addition to monthly
 - Market to potential riders of necessity for local routes to increase ridership
 - Assess market penetration in areas currently served and develop strategies to increase ridership to break-even status from general fund standpoint
 - Evaluate the return on investment and funds from MARTA (Breeze Card program)
 - Generate revenue through ad sales for the buses
 - Eliminate the cost of printing transit brochures by making them available electronically or outsourcing the printing to libraries

Water and Sewer

Observations

- Goal is to pay as you go and reduce debt
- No more bonds – Water department has determined that it's their goal to no longer issue bonds to finance future projects and to maintain a triple-A bond rating
- Operates on an enterprise fund, which means it pays for itself through user fees. Therefore, it receives no income from the general fund.
- Costs more to treat sewer than water (60% more)
- Storm water is on property tax bill – funding is approximately 50% of what's needed. Department is researching alternative technologies to reduce costs.
- Implemented collection agency to improve collections by ___ / to ___ % of collectables

Considerations

- How do we address the storm water infrastructure failing? (cost)
- Shortfall in revenue from fees

Recommendations

- Continue following the current policy of department operations and financing.