



## Public Meetings Report

### Feb. 18-25, 2010

Engage Gwinnett, the citizens committee on the future of Gwinnett County, held four public meetings in different parts of Gwinnett County on Feb. 18, Feb. 20, Feb. 22 and Feb. 25. The purpose was to report to citizens what Engage Gwinnett had learned since it began its work in October, tell citizens what preliminary recommendations it had reached, ask citizens what they thought of these ideas and ask them what ideas they would offer.

The meetings attracted 112 citizens, not counting Engage Gwinnett members, staff and facilitators. There were 17 citizens at the Duluth meeting, 32 in Lawrenceville, 21 in Snellville and 42 in Norcross. In the meetings, citizens were welcomed by Engage Gwinnett Co-Chairs Mike Levengood and Bill McCargo, shown a video about Engage Gwinnett's work, and heard brief presentations from each of Engage Gwinnett's four work groups.

Citizens were then asked for their thoughts. The meeting process changed slightly after the first meeting in Duluth. In Duluth, citizens were asked which of Engage Gwinnett's preliminary recommendations they agreed with and which they disagreed with. Then they were asked which of the county's current services they would be willing to do without, and which they would pay more to retain. Finally, they were asked for their own ideas. After the Duluth meeting, participants were not asked about the ideas they agreed with or disagreed with (although many volunteered that information). Rather they were asked to focus on services they would be willing to sacrifice or pay more for. In every meeting, citizens were asked for their own ideas.

### Major Themes

There was **little disagreement with Engage Gwinnett's preliminary recommendations**. One that generated some disagreement was the idea of charging parking fees for Gwinnett's parks and recreational facilities. Some thought using an "honor system" for collecting parking fees would not work. Other citizens liked the idea of charging for parking and had suggestions for making it work better.

There was **consistent support for charging more user fees** of all kinds – for court costs, parks and recreation, and other government services. Some citizens suggested new user fees – for library usage and support of animal control, among others. (In Lawrenceville, one group of citizens suggested "fees for computer usage at the library." In Snellville, one group urged the county to charge a "small annual fee for 'media use' (library card)." In Norcross, a group suggested a "fee to pet owners to pay for animal control – dog/cat license.")

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There was also **clear support for staggered or different hours at library branches** as a way of saving money – although one citizen at the Snellville meeting stressed that “we should have no libraries without books.” (This was apparently based on the fear that the library system might turn some branches into computer centers only.)

When citizens were asked which **services they would be willing to sacrifice**, there were numerous suggestions that **bus transit** be reduced (particularly those routes that are less heavily used) and that **parks and library services** be reduced.

When asked **which services they would pay more to retain**, many cited **law enforcement, fire and EMS services and code enforcement**. Some cited **infrastructure**, such as water, roads and bridges.

## Citizen Suggestions

Engage Gwinnett sought citizens’ ideas about ways of reducing government costs or increasing revenues. The notes below include numerous suggestions, but here are some that seemed most notable, sorted by Work Group area:

### Development and Infrastructure

- Water Services: can we offer our water facilities for use to other counties for revenue generation?

### Fire and EMS

- Fire inspections – How much time is being spent on this? Can we charge for it? Can it be moved to another department (Planning & Development), or would it be better privatized? Can we train more employees to do it?

### Community Services

- Municipalities and communities “adopting a library” – they can help with personnel and other volunteering/funding issues.
- Community “homeowners” association required to maintain certain services at the park – tax incentive
- Make it easier to volunteer at libraries and with other county services. Libraries turn volunteers away instead of welcoming them.
- Libraries use volunteers more – if a user fee is charged, volunteers could get discount.
- Consider naming rights for libraries and parks to increase revenue.
- Pay for an annual pass to use public parks, especially parks that have pools
- Explore sponsorships for recreational fields and parks – athletic leagues have sponsor banners
- Coordinate more free clinics to help alleviate the pressure on hospital emergency rooms

### Law Enforcement and Judiciary

- Correctional facility: study on-going, re-evaluating. Labor work force correctional – increase maintenance of parks/recreation where cuts have affected.
- Better maintenance/refurbishing on county/law enforcement vehicles – not replacements. School system does this. They have buses that are quite old but put time and money into upkeep and refurbishing because it’s cheaper than always buying new ones.
- Cut number of police and expand Sheriff department – why two systems of law enforcement – operations department and Sheriff department

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- Fee to pet owners to pay for animal control – dog/cat license

#### Miscellaneous

- Chamber help with coordinating a “Volunteer Gwinnett” where people commit to volunteering for a whole year instead of a day.

#### Revenue Suggestions

Citizens were not asked to suggest which revenue sources they would increase, if needed. But many offered their ideas. The **most popular idea was to raise fees for users** – court fees, user fees at parks, and so on.

A number of citizens suggested **raising the sales tax and reducing the property tax in part**. In Lawrenceville, one citizen mentioned a bill in the General Assembly known as LOST II, which would allow counties to raise the sales tax by 1% and reduce property taxes by half the value of the sales tax yield. The citizen said, “Support LOST II – a way to reduce property tax increases and add to the county revenue.” In Snellville, a citizen echoed that idea: “Willing to pay a 1% sales tax or more in exchange for a 50% reduction in property tax.”

Other ideas included simply **raising the property tax**. “Raise property taxes,” one citizen said in Norcross. “Cutting services cannot attract new business.” A citizen in Snellville suggested **raising taxes on alcohol**.

#### Meeting Notes

Here are the citizen comments in each of the four public meetings:

#### Duluth Meeting

Feb. 18 • First Baptist Church of Duluth

#### Small Group 1

Observations: Community Services

- Private companies usually operate more efficiently – should look at.
- Partial private – i.e., tennis pro runs concession and gives money back.
- County has done great job of first class park system.
- Look at fee structure use in parks and recreation.
- Agree with restructure of how library is used and services and times.
- Libraries having different options.
- Use of parks and field use and how you reserve (online, phone, etc.)
- Privatization may make some parks/facilities less accessible (i.e., Stone Mountain)
- Disagree with using parking fees for parks/recs
- Do not wish to lose green space

Observations: Fire and Emergency

- Would not pay more to increase response time.

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- Do not build station until have money to staff it when it is completed.
- Energy efficient design to help drive the operating cost long-term.
- Disagree with building stations prior to being able to properly staff the stations.
- Disagree with raising taxes to improve response time.

Observations: Development and Infrastructure

- Agree Planning and Development should be about tax base – compound effect that starts with zoning and about encouraging business.
- How you develop affects how you grow.
- Smart planning of land use.
- Mixed use available – young professional and empty nester.
- Developers of S/D donate land, buildings, roads.
- Agree to privatization of airport.
- Agree with stormwater fee.
- Strategize to increase ridership or get rid of – conduct study on use.
- Look at routes of bus.
- Agree with policies and procedures for pro-business development.
- Disagree with creating more half-acre suburban lots.
- Disagree with current bus routes.

Pay/live with less:

- Cut government library service.
- Cut pay of court system.
- Cut everyone at GC bus system overtime (adjust schedule).
- Higher fee for out-of-county residents (libraries, parks, sports).
- Organize tournaments from out-of-town sports teams.
- Bus system (due to lower usage).
- Library services.
- Lower salary for government.
- Adjust schedules to lower overtime pay.

Pay more:

- Education.
- Not for house to burn – more fire stations, emergency services.
- Police/fire.
- Infrastructure.
- Raise court fees.
- Population-based counts.
- Traffic fees go up.
- Pay to attract more business tax credits for business.
- Corridor rail service.
- Increase fee for park use (especially large organizations).
- Community school.
- Higher fees for out-of-county visitors.

## Small Group 2

### Observations

- Federal grants researched?
- Water storage – storm water system – storm water fee not enough to cover system standards.
- What do citizens want with limited income factor – how will we pay for capital and operating? Not enough taxes – raise enough short term, long term.
- Challenge of financial 1-5 year and 2030 plan.
- Septic tank systems concern citizens, law.
- Parks/recreation quality – maintain usage.
- Add quality of life unit – neighborhood support, graffiti cleanup.
- Library system and education are interconnected – upgrade technology (currently, critically lacking) – fees reflection? Collaboration of fed, state, local.
- Government facility additions of support
- Parking payment (parks/recreation) vs. question raised about “paying” for fun/services – parking pas suggested, honor boxes.
- Must alleviate already crowded issue.
- Maglev- high-speed rail transportation
- Wider roads to accommodate green.
- MARTA is missing.
- Bus service is limited.
- Bicycle/alternative transportation.
- Library – resources and staffing deficiencies. Technology = cost/effect.
- How do you provide access on location, remote?
- Online technology concern.
- Facilities addition? May need to enhance technology.
- Integration? Board of education and technology in classroom – how is education integrating technology resources in classroom?
- Where is the money coming from? Library system – regulations of state.
- Quality of life: disagree to cut funding on services offered.
- Parks and Recreation – mowing/greenway – adopt Gwinnett.
- Police presence removal proposed – suggested volunteer force.
- More jobs, companies to county – add funding to bring more.
- Parks, fields – payment of user fee for athletic fields – lights, maintenance, organized.
- Would fee for parks and fields be a barrier?
- Animal control: propose stricter laws for control – spay/neuter.
- Correctional facility: study on-going, re-evaluating. Labor work force correctional – increase maintenance of parks/recreation where cuts have affected.
- If we can build effectively and enhance facilities – however, enhance current facilities first.
- Are we willing to stay local with library or go regional (better quality facilities)?
- Fire services: would prefer safety over cuts.
- Request for more education from county on what we do have – share with.

**Lawrenceville Meeting**  
**Feb. 20 • 12Stone Church**

**Small Group 1**

Infrastructure

- Water Services: can we offer our water facilities for use to other counties for revenue generation?
- Can we look at alterations for maintenance – e.g., cutting grass, wildflowers, using inmates as much as possible.
- Planning and Development: Can we ask developers what will bring development back to Gwinnett? Are our requirements too stringent?
- Can we look at fees for Planning and Development? Should they be specific to users?
- Public transportation: examine efficiencies for current routes (we are seeing empty buses): more stops, examine how we can help seniors and senior services at the same time, smaller buses on less traveled routes.

Law Enforcement and Judiciary

- Encourage municipalities to have their own police departments and judiciaries.
- Volunteers for clerical work.
- Fees: increase court fees, filing fees (at least cover costs).

Fire and Emergency Services

- Changes for expensive alarm calls or 911 calls.
- Can we consolidate on calls (for example, we send police, EMT and fire to many calls that only need one).
- Check hydrants – can we outsource this?
- Inspections – How much time is being spent on this? Can we charge for it? Can it be moved to another department (Planning & Development), or would it be better privatized? Can we train more employees to do it?

Community Services – Parks and Recreation

- User fees: is this possible? Especially on passive parks?
- Natural vegetation vs. artificial vegetation?
- Less maintenance, more efficient facilities.
- Prisoner labor.
- Naming rights? (for trails, etc.)

Community Services – Library

- Preparing for paperless.
- Shortened hours (especially in Summer).
- Volunteers.
- Rotating schedules (so if Collins Hill is closed, you can go to Lawrenceville).
- Municipalities and communities “adopting a library” – they can help with personnel and other volunteering/funding issues.

Community Services – Health and Human Services

- Umbrella organization (coalition)

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- Volunteer
- Chamber help with coordinating a “Volunteer Gwinnett” where people commit to volunteering for a whole year instead of a day.
- One issue: people want to volunteer, but don’t know where to begin.

## Small Group 2

### Willing to sacrifice?

- Transit system: Keep express transit for downtown Atlanta only. Study local ridership, possibly cut some or all local routes.
- Willing to sacrifice my time as a volunteer with county.
- Leave police at 1 per 1,000 instead of 1.3 (some in favor of increasing rate).
- Libraries – alternate/stagger open days/services – more distance between libraries.
- Cut out “extra” library services.

### Willing to pay for?

- User fees for parks, libraries
- Youth athletic associations can take on more responsibility for playing fields maintenance and lights.
- Charge for lights, keep up with lights off when not in use.
- Parks – charge higher user fees for out-of-county visitors.
- Parking permit for parks – one-time charge with sticker.

### New ideas to add

- Don’t purchase more land. Keep investigating land purchases made by county.
- More fiscal responsibility and concern – run the county more like a business.
- Emergency response time – may not necessarily need more facilities/more people – analyze it better.
- Focus on infrastructure first, then building and development – septic/sewer, water, fire, police, etc. Make sure the infrastructure can handle more growth before allowing more growth.
- Better maintenance/refurbishing on county/law enforcement vehicles – not replacements. School system does this. They have buses that are quite old but put time and money into upkeep and refurbishing because it’s cheaper than always buying new ones.
- Stop contracting with retirees for county “studies” – use volunteers from the business community.
- Put any new purchases to a referendum – new parks, libraries, etc.
- Make it easier to volunteer at libraries and with other county services. Libraries turn volunteers away instead of welcoming them.
- Renters should share county costs. Sales tax helps offset the burden to property owners.
- Support LOST II – a way to reduce property tax increases and add to the county’s revenue.
- Revise 2030 plan – bring businesses into areas currently not served. Vitalization instead of revitalization. There are areas in the county that are underserved with businesses – restaurants, service stations, etc. – bring them in before re-building areas that are declining, but still have lots of resources close by.
- Question about less water usage means reduced revenue. County residents were great at reducing water consumption during the drought, but then there wasn’t enough revenue to pay for water services.

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- Instead of putting AstroTurf in existing park, open new parks in unserved areas. Don't spend more money in existing parks until all clusters have a feeder park. If you want to try out AstroTurf, try it out in a new park.
- Use technology (for example, timers for park lights) to reduce costs.
- Make sure each cluster has a feeder park with playing fields before instituting a "no new parks" rule.
- Collaborate better with other public partnerships (for example, libraries, schools). Collaborative partnerships are the future.
- Consider naming rights for libraries and parks to increase revenue.
- Stop 24-hour law enforcement use of their vehicles. Officers should only have use of vehicles when they are on duty. County would need fewer law enforcement vehicles.
- When situation improves, don't make same "spend, spend, spend" mistakes. Start now to plan tough fiscal management for the future.
- Interconnect libraries with schools so kids could check out county library books from their school libraries.
- Libraries use volunteers more – if a user fee is charged, volunteers could get discount.
- Airport – Keep it public. If privatized, might allow large aircraft, more negative impact on local communities (some agree, some not).
- County government needs to listen to community members more.

### Small Group 3

#### Willing to pay for:

- No additional cuts to school
- Fees for computer usage at the library
- Fees for use of parks and recreation facilities and field through private groups
- Cost sharing for schools to use parks and recreation facilities and fields
- Pet license fees (waived or discounted if adopted from a county shelter)
- Increase telecommunication fee for all

#### Willing to sacrifice

- Public transportation (especially local service, as opposed to express service)
- Library (staff sharing and reduction/increase hour based on usage)
- Parks and recreation (look at alternative ways to fund)
- How much would it cost to privatize parking lots, vs. moving to inmate service?

#### New ideas to add

- Sharing maintenance resource across all departments
- Changing rules for SPLOST
- Have private entities use existing building vs. building new
- Fee for unoccupied commercial buildings over a year
- Evaluate Gwinnett County's legal expenses



#### Small Group 4

##### Willing to pay for:

- Emergency Medical Services and Fire
- Acceptable response times to save lives
- Recreation centers (within reason) – seniors, youth – use user fees instead of tax fees
- Law enforcement – have police staff to address significant gang activity, drug activity, theft activity and violent crimes instead of using staff to focus on county ordinances
- Code enforcement – need to issue tickets to persons not maintaining their property (upkeep of home) – address major violations first

##### New ideas to add

- Prompt enforcement of code resolution (ticket fees/penalties cover cost instead of tax fees) in residential areas – concern about businesses activity in violation of code
- Code enforcement is a department under the police department
- Animal control is not part of code enforcement, but a separate department under police
- Better training for employees in code enforcement and animal control so that they can uniformly enforce ordinances
- Large private animal shelters (can also be referred to as large foster homes) exist in large numbers in Gwinnett. They act as commercial kennels in residential areas.
- Concern: no animal limit in residential areas. Kennels allowed to exist in residential. Recommendation: cost/registration fee per animal residing in a residential area.
- Question: parks and recreation, and coordinating use of fields with schools.
- Have more referendums for major expenditures.
- Bring volunteers into public libraries, animal shelters, public services.
- Go with less paper, or paperless.
- Break animal control budget out of overall police department budget. What are the specific performance standards for Gwinnett Animal Control?
- Is it better to outsource non-animal ordinance staff to a company whose purpose of getting animals into rescue and adoption is proven?
- What are the specific job tasks that each of the 35 Gwinnett Animal Control employees perform?
- Limit sick days you can carry over and limit the amount of vacation time that can be carried over.
- Better utilization of existing building in Gwinnett.
- Do not use Gwinnett Traffic Court (judges, solicitors, staff) to collect fees for probation. What does it cost the county to do this?

##### Willing to sacrifice:

- Pension plan for Gwinnett employees. Recommendation for retirees to pay for more of their medical benefits. Take more action by converting to 401k plan – believe occurred in 2007.
- 35 police department personnel at Gwinnett Animal Control. Recommend: moving non-animal ordinance enforcement staff resources (money or personnel) to patrol officers to address violent crimes.
- Cut public transportation if it only serves a small number of residents.
- Have libraries open when most citizens visit library – stagger hours and do not provide overtime to cover use staggered shifts.

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- Other services/departments need to stagger shifts to provide services when most citizens can come. Example: Gwinnett Animal Control needs to have staggered shifts to let citizens reclaim or adopt animals, not by using overtime to cover extended hours.

## **Snellville Meeting**

**Feb. 22 • Grace Fellowship Church**

### **Small Group 1**

Willing to sacrifice?

- Consolidation of public transit
- Buses are not full as it is
- Privatize public transportation
- Vans in place of buses
- Cut number of police and expand Sheriff department – why two systems of law enforcement – operations department and Sheriff department
- Cut money from capital fund for water department – only charge what it costs to deliver services
- Why doesn't the water department service the fire hydrants
- Post non-emergency phone numbers on public vehicles
- Don't let officers take their official cars home outside the county
- Ankle bracelets rather than housing criminals

Willing to pay for?

- More law enforcement personnel
- Parks and recreation
- Infrastructure improvement – water, roads, and bridges on county roads
- Be wise about setting up specific courts in effort to be more efficient
- Zero-based budget system – all departments must justify budgets yearly
- Tax breaks for revitalizing unused sites – CID

Community Services, and Fire and Emergency: Cuts

- All non-departmental budgets represent a very small part of overall budget
- Cuts here translate into lower property values
- Non-emergency transportation – use professional care or private ambulance companies to respond
- Digitize the libraries more in order to avoid building any new libraries and possibly use some of the existing libraries for other uses
- Coordinate more free clinics to help alleviate the pressure on hospital emergency rooms

Community Services, and Fire and Emergency: Pay More

- Parks and recreation fees for organized sports and allow those fees to return to county
- Volunteer in-kind services – cut grass, painting, trash – have volunteers sign waivers to avoid potential lawsuits
- Sales or property tax increase to maintain and enhance quality of emergency services
- Have a secure contribution box at every park and library

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- Community “homeowners” association required to maintain certain services at the park – tax incentive

Other ideas

- 1.5% sales tax in lieu of property tax – consumption tax
- Marketing outreach for each community – Lilburn, Snellville, Lawrenceville, Dacula, etc.

**Small Group 2**

Ideas

- Code enforcement – no cuts
- Coordinate between departments – identify and eliminate duplication of services – utilize personnel across departments more efficiently
- Reduce funding for non-specific land purposes (downside, land cost could rise)
- Redevelopment instead of development
- More public transportation – higher fee for out of county
- Waive fee for auto tag registration for county residents
- Reduce funding if not used
- Add transit routes – educate public
- Capital can be used for other departments’ capital expenses, not operational expenses

Willing to pay for

- Public safety officers, fire, quality of life
- Transportation – light rail, SPLOST
- Better traffic flow
- Traffic lights, curbs, intersection, interparcel

Fire and Community Services

- No more new libraries and parks
- Charge non-residents park access fees
- Local sports association should pay night use costs
- Raise timers on park lighting
- Honor fees: disadvantage is that not everyone would pay – too many downsides to be viable
- No cuts to fire and safety
- Need to address shortage of medical units – would be willing to pay more
- Correction to CPR – choking is taught
- Eliminate annexing of land by municipalities
- We should have no libraries without books
- Leave open on Monday or stagger throughout county
- Increase volunteerism by offering credits to students
- Adding small fee for computer use in libraries (downside: some people may not afford)
- Small annual fee for “Media Use” (library card)
- More inmates do DOT maintenance
- More recycling banks and education

### Small Group 3

#### Willing to sacrifice

- Enough underdeveloped subdivisions that we could cut planning and development – permit process for new construction
- Willing to cut park expenditures – outsource maintenance, privatize use or operations
- Parks and libraries can take a hit – less of a priority than safety or fire
- Too many fire stations – drawback: insurance can increase
- Redistribute the books and people – libraries
- Maintain level of police protection but increase fees – fines, our revenue sources
- Law enforcement – how you hire new officers – change hiring profile to hire more experienced officers and temporarily close academy to save money.
- Sheriff’s office is spending too much on individuals who commit non-violent crimes – housing these individuals is costly when the county is not recouping the costs to house them
- Too much money being spent on public defense – cap the amount
- Libraries – use more volunteers instead of paid staff – tap into local schools for work-study programs and internships
- Have schools and libraries work in conjunction to purchase books – lobby to purchase together to reduce costs

#### Fire and Community Services: Willing to pay more

- More money for code enforcement
- Pay more to stop over-development – willing to pay more taxes to preserve neighborhood
- Increase to developers who insist on building – “Impact fees” like Florida
- User fees on library or parks – pay for internet access at libraries
- Pay for an annual pass to use public parks, especially parks that have pools
- Parents with children who participate in sports – have them pay a fee (like an athletic fee)
- Willing to pay more for police protection – make sure you get an increase in service for the higher fee
- Need an alternative for 911 – for example, 311 – willing to pay for this, for non-emergency services
- Charge for abuse of 911 services
- Encourage ad space to generate revenue
- Repo man for the county to force banks and property owners to maintain vacant property – create a disincentive for banks to abandon property
- Willing to pay a 1% sales tax or more in exchange for a 50% reduction in property tax
- Willing to pay more for alcohol tax

#### Considerations

- How to retain the aging population – encourage retention of aging population
- How do you retain the younger population with discretionary income
- Start looking at building more 55+ communities
- Look at creating more “city centers” that will attract older and younger citizens
- Look at the attributes that you need to look at to retain citizens
- Look at more privatization of services

## **Norcross Meeting**

**Feb. 25 • Victory World Outreach Church**

### **Small Group 1**

#### Ideas

- Consider staffing ratios by precinct rather than countywide
- Group does not support cuts to fire and EMS
- Court fees should be paid by user
- Utilize and train community volunteers for translation
- Utilize resources of library to match needs of each location
- What percent of athletic league fees are going to parks and recreation, and do they cover the cost?
- Parks and recreation and not essential – we should balance quality of life vs. cost of parks
- What percent of park's fields maintenance is paid for by users?
- Explore sponsorships for recreational fields and parks – athletic leagues have sponsor banners
- Are stimulus funds available for parks and recreation?
- Veto “honorary” parking fees
- Collaborate with GCPS on recreational facilities
- We will need to raise taxes
- Advocate legislation to increase court fees to cover costs of services
- Explore investing in infrastructure to save money in the future
- Utilize innovation to automate transportation process
- Reduce size of individual parks
- Have parks explore alternate maintenance options, e.g., parents

### **Small Group 2**

#### Cuts

- Unwilling to cut parks based on use
- More equitable distribution of fees assessed to sports teams (seasonal vs. year-round)
- SPLOST funds used to redevelop parks as opposed to continuing to build new parks
- More electronic resources in library
- Possible dedicated computer system for library
- Support stated recommendations, but need more info for Health and Human Services

#### Consider Revenue Options:

- Raise property taxes – cutting services cannot attract new business
- Collect taxes that should be collected – fees, forfeitures, property taxes
- Increased fees for athletic fees – trying not to hurt lower income populations
- No entrance fees for parks
- Parks close earlier, open later
- Pocket parks, smaller neighborhood parks
- Support stated library recommendations – More volunteers at library, pink ladies at hospital, have students receive credit hours, more college interns
- Support stated recommendations for Health and Human Services

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Fire and Emergency Services

- No cuts
- Revenue option: raise rates on false alarms (recurring)
- Service increase – improve response times – would be willing to pay more (two maybes)

Infrastructure and Development

- Transportation – walk more
- Privatize the airport if substantially cost-effective – would provide tax revenue as well (opposition is noise)
- One-cent sales tax to fund transportation in the county
- Bus service: promote bus service to increase ridership – privatize if cost-effective
- Use the library as a distribution site for info on routes and schedules and as a way to increase ridership

Law Enforcement and Judiciary

- Pay tickets (driver) on the spot and offer a discount when paid this way
- Driving without a license – first, warning; second, ticket

**Small Group 3**

Cuts

- Solve conflict between municipal association and county government – city residents are paying double
- Do better assessment of resources sent out – example: don't necessarily need firetruck and ambulance when 911 calls are made – confusion of which jurisdiction the call falls with in city our county
- Assess efficiency of current services and operations in library
- Utilize energy reduction and maintenance reductions – make best use of taxes so can minimize cuts, stagger days and hours libraries are open
- Identify businesses not paying taxes and start collecting taxes
- Plan for operation and maintenance costs when building anything new with SPLOST
- Consider implementation of user fees for parks and recreation, parking – examples: GJAC, sports fields, pavilions, pools, walking trails
- Charge fee for things that are a choice – example: conference rooms in libraries
- Outsource where it makes economic sense
- Privatize with oversight
- Defer expenditures if appropriate

Revenues

- Identify businesses that aren't licensed and make them pay fees
- Implement user fees
- Increase code enforcement of illegal room rentals in homes
- County and state to work together to increase fines and court costs
- Kill senior citizen exemption from school taxes
- Add sales tax, reduce property tax

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- Form citizen group to address green communities and find efficiencies – reference Wal-Mart and their green plan
- Charge compensatory rates for services
- Strictly enforce traffic laws
- Ensure new businesses which receive county incentives are expense-neutral, generate revenue and jobs
- Implement opportunity zones to attract businesses so county benefits as well as the state
- Extended stay hotels pay proper county taxes – have them on same tax status as apartment buildings

Ideas

- Pursue CALEA police certification for long-term efficiency
- Continue citizen study and involvement
- Code enforcement of animal control issues as well as other code enforcement issues
- Adhere to standards for contracts for land and other purchases

**Small Group 4**

Cuts – Library:

- Cut library hours
- Increase library fees – late fees
- Start membership
- Importance of job searching available at libraries – keep those hours open
- Study usage, adjust hours – Monday, Wednesday, Saturday
- Fee for internet usage
- Encourage more volunteers
- Community members, students as personnel
- Grandfathering fees, increase for new residents

Cuts – Parks:

- Work with development community in building parks
- Charge for parking
- Stone Mountain Park model
- Usage fee for parking
- Inmate, community service, labor

Cuts – Health and Human Services:

- Efficiency and transparency in delivery of services
- Faith-based organizations can assist
- All volunteers should be found/tapped
- Create outreach to diverse organizations to assist

Cuts – Fire and Emergency Services:

- This is a crucial service that should not be cut – cuts can impact insurance rates
- Have more citizen education – CPR training
- Community group liaison with fire department

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- Need to maintain stability in community
- Encourage more eyes on the street
- Pass on cost to consumer of responding to a non-emergency call

Cuts – Law Enforcement and Judiciary

- County/City working together to maintain/increase police services while increasing efficiency
- Ensure staffing at precincts is appropriate to the area
- Get rid of helicopter
- More sharing of police forces among jurisdictions
- Need GA State Patrol building in Gwinnett

Cuts – Water and Sewer

- Increase water fees to repair infrastructure – pipes
- Ensure water meter accuracy and billing

Cuts – Transportation

- Pay-as-you-go transit provided
- Regional sales tax – use it
- Light rail – build it for economic development
- Smaller buses, less cost
- Changing transit hours – fewer

Cuts – Planning and Development

- Zone to stop empty mini shopping centers
- Support privatizing airport
- County look at incentivizing undeveloped lots – federal dollars
- Fee to pet owners to pay for animal control – dog/cat license
- Encourage hunting to get rid of unwanted deer

**Small Group 5**

Cuts – Community Services

- Libraries – cut hours or change the use of volunteers from higher education schools – community service hours
- Cut building new library branches at this time
- Cut the idea of user fees for parks
- Do not cut user fees – raise them for parks

Cuts – Fire and Emergency Services

- Some neighborhoods have duplication of services, especially close to county lines
- Do freezes or salary caps on upper level staff
- Will not mind driving further to a library
- Willing to sacrifice staffing time if we could get better instructions from the libraries on using internet – talking about internet education for seniors or people who are not computer-savvy

Cuts – Infrastructure



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- Want paperless system (willing to pay fees to do online)
- Cut areas except: health care for needy, education, emergency services and police, water

Ideas

- Educate library patrons to be more self-sufficient to reduce branch staffing
- Consider additional demographic in addition to aging population
- Increase participation in parks and recreation activities to increase revenues and reduce costs
- Reduce luxuries within parks and recreation – fee, new uniforms, to allow user fees to cover costs
- Adopt a park – a for-profit – branding, implement participation opportunities
- Re-think children’s athletic programs – cut expenses
- Better evaluation of capital improvement projects
- Can we recycle storm water?
- Develop incentives to increase ridership of GC transit
- Coordinate transportation plans with other counties
- Evaluate current transportation system
- More IT – technology in county government
- Rail – keep trying to get this – Doraville to Mechanicsville, Indian Trails, Brain Train
- Keep same level of development across the county
- More CIDs
- Animal control funded by people who own animals not funded by county
- Limit number of animals in a household
- SPLOST overused – be efficient with the money – use for beautification instead of services
- Are we talking about new revenue sources?
- Are we utilizing current revenue streams?
- Expanding existing businesses to make jobs instead of starting new businesses?
- Parks and recreation needs to allow more community involvement