



Meeting 11 Report

March 3, 2010

Observations, Considerations, Recommendations

The following is a complete list of the draft observations, considerations and recommendations from each of the four Work Groups, as they were revised at the Engage Gwinnett meeting on March 3. Most of these were written at earlier meetings, but there were some changes at this most recent meeting.

Development and Infrastructure Work Group

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)

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Recommendations

- Board of Commissioners to maintain current permitting, processing and plan review service levels – keep us competitive when growth returns
 - *The County understands this recommendation to mean that existing service levels should be maintained, based upon the 2010 budget.*
 - *Current funding level of total department is \$6.8m and will remain as projected for 2010 thru 2015. Funding includes a projected 4% escalation factor.*
- Department evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that they align with Partnership Gwinnett goals
 - *Staff will review the current policies and procedures to ensure that they align with Partnership Gwinnett.*
 - *No budgetary impact as staff can review and coordinate with Partnership Gwinnett.*
- Fast track renaming the Planning and Development department to Planning and Economic Development
 - *Department to be renamed Planning and Economic Development.*
 - *Estimated cost for new stationary and signage at One Justice Square at \$5,000 to \$7,000.*
- Do not outsource (outside contracting) any essential Planning and Development functions
 - *Department will maintain essential Planning and Development functions.*
 - *Current funding level of total department is \$6.8m and will remain as projected for 2010 thru 2015 which includes a projected 4% escalation factor.*
- Consider updating the recommendations made by the Matrix Consulting Group
 - *The original study provided for the review and re-engineering of Gwinnett County's Development and Building Permitting processes to capture the most efficient and effective processes available to Departmental management. Since the matrix study was completed and many of its recommendations put in place, the business environment for both the Department and its customer base have changed greatly. A renewed study would update the Department's business plan based on these new realities.*
 - *The estimated cost to update the original study is approximately \$225,000 (original Matrix Study was approximately \$250,000 the update is estimated at 90% of original cost).*
- Implement interventions of the 2030 Unified Plan
 - *Since there are some 33 proposed intervention policies listed within the 2030 Unified Plan that span across five different themes, it is difficult to place a cost on the overall implantation of the Plan. Two items that could be considered extensions of the Unified Plan and perhaps even apart of the implementation are the development of a revised Zoning Resolution/Unified Development Code and the Water & 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.*

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- *\$785k is budgeted for the development of the new Zoning Resolution/Unified Development Code, while the pending BOC revisions to the current Water & Sewer Master Plan will place this contract at \$624.3k.*
- License and Review: County should look into ways to identify non-licensed and non-compliant businesses operating in the county
 - *This is already in place with the new CH2MHill contract. The contract is a low risk mechanism for the county to recoup unreported revenues.*
 - *The County will receive 30 to 40 percent of revenues collected, while no payments will be made to the contractor until new revenues are found and collected.*
- Planning and Development should re-evaluate its fees on an annual basis
 - *As part of the county's on-going analysis of charge for service revenue, P&D can perform a yearly analysis of costs.*
 - *P&D staff would be able to perform this with no cost other than staff time.*
- Offer all forms of payment options with a fee for credit card for all county services
 - *Review the forms of payment currently offered for service.*
 - *Current forms of payment are cash, checks and credit cards.*
 - *Staff will review the current payment options to implement user convenience fees. Credit Card convenience fees can only be passed on to the customer if it is a convenience (i.e. online payment = convenience; payment at business location = not convenience). Should the customer choose not to utilize the online payment via credit card, this will result in increase payment processing cost for Gwinnett County (i.e. walk in customers, check process banking fees, staff time to process deposits).*