

GWINNETT  
COUNTY

DECEMBER  
2020

# Connection

**A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF  
GWINNETT COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

## 2021 proposed County budget focuses on strategic priorities

Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash's proposed 2021 budget totals \$1.91 billion, up 3.7 percent from 2020, and consists of \$1.47 billion in operating funds and \$441 million for capital improvements.

Nash tightened parts of the budget to create flexibility to respond to COVID-19 and included additional funding for the Gwinnett Public Health Department.

The budget funds transportation projects, two new parks in underserved areas, new positions in Elections, Transportation, and IT, and measures to address homelessness. Funding is included for the new Gwinnett Entrepreneur Center and Water Tower innovation center.

Because of leadership changes across County government, Nash also provided a reserve fund to allow the Board to decide the initiatives they deem most important.

The proposed 2021 budget resolution is available at [GwinnettCounty.com](https://www.gwinnettcountry.com). Residents can comment at a public hearing December 9 and on the County's website through December 31. Commissioners will consider the budget proposal January 5.



## AROUND GWINNETT

### Senate runoff set for January 5

The runoff for Georgia's U.S. Senate seats and the Public Service Commissioner will be on January 5. Advance Voting runs December 14 through 31 at multiple locations, with the exception of December 24 and 25. Absentee ballots can be requested from Gwinnett County Voter Registrations and Elections or the Georgia Secretary of State. Call the Voter Registrations and Elections Office at 678.226.7210 for more information. To stay up-to-date with elections in Gwinnett, follow @GwinnettGov on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram or visit [GwinnettElections.com](https://www.GwinnettElections.com).

### Segunda vuelta del Senado es el 5 de Enero

La segunda vuelta para dos escaños del Senado de los EE. UU. de Georgia y el Comisionado de Servicio Público será el 5 de Enero. La votación adelantada empieza del 14 al 31 de Diciembre en varios sitios con la excepción del 24 y 25 de Diciembre. Las boletas de voto ausente se pueden solicitar a la Inscripción de Votantes y Elecciones del Condado de Gwinnett o a la Secretaría de Estado de Georgia. Llame a la Oficina de Inscripción de Votantes y Elecciones al 678.226.7210 si tiene alguna pregunta. Para mantenerse al día con las elecciones en Gwinnett, siga a @GwinnettGov en Facebook, Twitter, e Instagram o visite [GwinnettElections.com](https://www.GwinnettElections.com).

### Drop off your Christmas tree for recycling

Wondering what to do with your Christmas tree when it's time to take it down? Give it a second life by participating in the annual Bring One for the Chipper event sponsored by Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful in partnership with Gwinnett County. Between December 26 and January 25, you can drop off natural Christmas trees at designated fire stations and other locations. The trees will be chipped into mulch for use at parks. Find the list of all drop-off sites or register to volunteer for the January 30 chipping event at Bethesda Park by visiting [GwinnettCB.org](https://www.GwinnettCB.org).

### Entrepreneur Center set to open next year

Georgia Gwinnett College will operate and staff the Gwinnett Entrepreneur Center under an agreement recently approved by the Board of Commissioners. The County's Economic Development division has already been working with the college to develop an operational and management plan. The center, located in Lawrenceville, will provide guidance and support for new businesses in Gwinnett and is set to open next year.



## PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES

### Conserve water at home

Gwinnett County gets all its water from Lake Lanier. With one water source for more than 900,000 people, water conservation is extremely important for our county, even in times of frequent rain. The best place to start making important changes is at home.

Here are some easy changes you can make to save water in your home:

- Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth or washing your hands
- Don't leave the water running when washing dishes
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or in a bowl of water, rather than under running water
- Only wash full loads of clothes and dishes
- Check for leaks often and repair them quickly

These small changes can add up to some big results. For more information on water conservation, please visit [Gwinnetth2o.com](https://www.Gwinnetth2o.com). Click on the tab labeled "Get Educated" and then "Water Conservation."

### COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS

All Gwinnett County government offices, with the exception of those operations required for the comfort and safety of residents, will be closed Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25 for Christmas and reopen on Monday, December 28. Offices will also be closed Friday, January 1 for the New Year's Day holiday and reopen Monday, January 4. A Magistrate Court judge will be available at the Gwinnett County Detention Center on both holidays. Christmas and New Year's Day are trash and recycling holidays in unincorporated Gwinnett County this year, so collections will be delayed one day for the rest of the week. To view the holiday schedule, visit [GCSolidwaste.com](https://www.GCSolidwaste.com).

## TAX COMMISSIONER

### Emissions required for 1997 – 2018 model years

For 2021, all gasoline-powered and light-duty trucks 8,500 pounds or less with the model years 1997 through 2018 require an emissions test to register and renew. For testing locations, senior exemptions, and other information, please visit [CleanAirForce.com](http://CleanAirForce.com). Once your vehicle has been tested, renew online at [GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com/Renew](http://GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com/Renew).

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Prevent fire hazards during the holidays

Winter holidays are a time for festive décor and celebration. But the holidays can also mean a greater risk for fire. More than one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles. More than 40 percent of decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season:

- Blow out candles and turn off holiday lights before leaving the room or going to bed
- Choose flame resistant or flame retardant decorations
- Replace worn or broken strings of lights
- Use clips – not nails – to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged
- Test your smoke alarms, and tell guests about your home fire escape plan
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles
- Keep matches and lighters away from children
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop
- Ask smokers to smoke outside and provide large, deep ashtrays



## SPLOST

### Courthouse expansion close to completion

A \$75 million expansion of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center is set for completion by the end of the year. The courthouse expansion project includes a four-story, 180,000-square-foot courthouse addition and a 1,450-space parking deck, which opened in 2019 and provides almost double the number of spaces as the old deck. The new courthouse facilities will provide space for a jury assembly room, holding cells, workspace for the District Attorney, mediation rooms, and up to 14 additional courtrooms, although not all the courtrooms will be needed immediately.

When GJAC was built in 1988, the Gwinnett court system had five superior court judges, three state court judges, a part-time magistrate judge, and a probate court judge. Now, the County has 10 superior court judges, six state court judges, a full-time magistrate plus six associate magistrates, a chief probate judge, and an associate probate judge. Gwinnett's population was about 300,000 when GJAC opened. It is expected to reach more than 1.5 million in 2040.

## CHECK IT OUT

### Gwinnett library system offers enhanced learning for kindergarteners

Gwinnett County Public Library has a new early education initiative called Kindergarten, Here We Come! to help parents and caregivers prepare their young children to not only be ready for school, but to excel from the very start.

Each week the library features virtual events like letter camps and live story times as well as a revamped reading and activity programs. Parents can earn badges by logging reading minutes, doing activities designed to build early learning skills for their child, and leaving reviews – all while building a record of their child's accomplishments. Visit [GwinnettPL.Beanstack.org](http://GwinnettPL.Beanstack.org) to register for an account.



## SERVING GWINNETT

### #ListenToGwinnettMoms this holiday season

Spread holiday joy, not germs. No matter how you and your family celebrate the holidays this year, remember to follow these simple mom-approved COVID-19 safety tips when sharing time with others:

- Join the clean plate and hands club. Wash up before you head to the table, when you leave the table, and really whenever you can.
- Don't forget to keep your distance! Staying six feet apart is recommended, so trade in the handshakes and cheek pinches for air hugs.
- If you're feeling sick, stay home. Mom will fix you a plate, or maybe some chicken soup.

Want more holiday safety tips? Follow along on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn with the hashtag [#ListenToGwinnettMoms](https://www.instagram.com/ListenToGwinnettMoms).

For a round-up of COVID-19 information and resources, you can also visit [ListenToGwinnettMoms.com](http://ListenToGwinnettMoms.com).

### Board adopts new water and sewer rate structure, issues bonds for system improvements

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners recently approved a water and sewer rate resolution that sets rates for the next decade with planned gradual increases. The rate resolution will ensure funding to make needed investments in improvements, as well as for maintenance and operations. The new rate structure will repay bonds to finance these investment projects.

The new rates will increase water and sewer rates for usage every other year from 2021 to 2031. By 2031, the rate increases add up to an additional \$1.38 per 1,000 gallons water and \$2.27 per 1,000 gallons sewer. The monthly sewer base charge will increase from \$5 to \$7.50 in 2023 to keep up with rising costs.

## GWINNETT COUNTY CONNECTION

ESCANEE PARA LEER EN ESPAÑOL  
한국어 버전은 QR 코드를 스캔해 주세요



Gwinnett County Connection questions/comments:  
[Info@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:Info@GwinnettCounty.com) | 770.822.7180

Water bill questions: 678.376.6700