



Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

**2023**



# CONTENTS

Comprehensive Executive Summary Report of Countywide Operational and Performance Assessment

Executive Summary: Phases 1 and 2 Operational and Performance Assessment – Support Services, Planning and Development, Law, and Transportation Departments

Phases 1 and 2 Operational and Performance Assessment – Support Services, Planning and Development, Law, and Transportation Departments

Executive Summary: Phase 3 Operational and Performance Assessment – Communications and Water Resources Departments

Phase 3 Operational and Performance Assessment – Communications and Water Resources Departments

Executive Summary: Phase 4 Operational and Performance Assessment – Department of Community Services and Information Technology Services Department

Phase 4 Operational and Performance Assessment – Department of Community Services and Information Technology Services Department

Executive Summary: Phase 5 Operational and Performance Assessment – Department of Corrections, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and Police Department

Phase 5 Operational and Performance Assessment – Department of Corrections, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and Police Department

Phase 6 Operational and Performance Assessment – Finance Department, Human Resources Department, and Gwinnett County Public Library System



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Report of Countywide Operational and  
Performance Assessment***

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April 2023



# CONTENTS

1. Overview and Background .....	1
2. Scope and Approach .....	2
3. Survey Data and Results Summary .....	4
4. Summary Department Overviews .....	11
5. Conclusion.....	39

# 1. Overview and Background

In 2021, the Gwinnett County (“County”) Board of County Commissioners, sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Assessment for all County departments that were under the supervision of the County Administrator at the beginning of our Assessment period. This included the following departments:

- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources

In addition to the 13 departments listed above, Mauldin & Jenkins also conducted an Operational and Performance Assessment of the Gwinnett Public Library System, a component unit of Gwinnett County. Our assessment did not include Child Advocacy and Juvenile Services, as that department was not established until May of 2022.

The Assessment was conducted between November 2021 and December 2022 through six phases with two to three departments included in each phase. Each phase resulted in an executive summary report, and a detailed report that includes department-specific observations, recommendations, and a strategic roadmap as shown in the following table.

Phase	Departments	Report Date
1	Support Services, Planning and Development	February 2022
2	Law, Transportation	February 2022
3	Communications, Water Resources	May 2022
4	Community Services, Information Technology Services	July 2022
5	Corrections, Fire and Emergency Services, Police	October 2022
6	Financial Services, Human Resources, Gwinnett Public Library System	December 2022

This Comprehensive Executive Summary report represents a high-level summary of the Operational and Performance Assessment and the Phase 1-6 work products. The detailed reports should be read in entirety to better understand specific observations and recommendations, and related context.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed, as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability. We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout the in-scope departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

The comprehensive project scope included the following departments:

- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources

In addition to the 13 departments listed above, the scope also included the Gwinnett Public Library System, a component unit of Gwinnett County.

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives included:

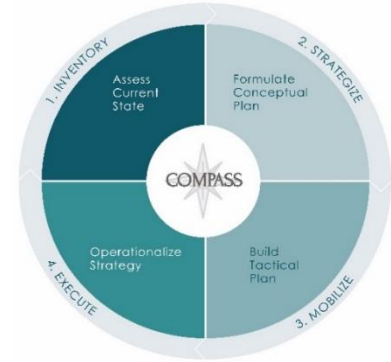
- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - "What is working well," "what needs improvement," and "areas for potential risk or concern"
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals included:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

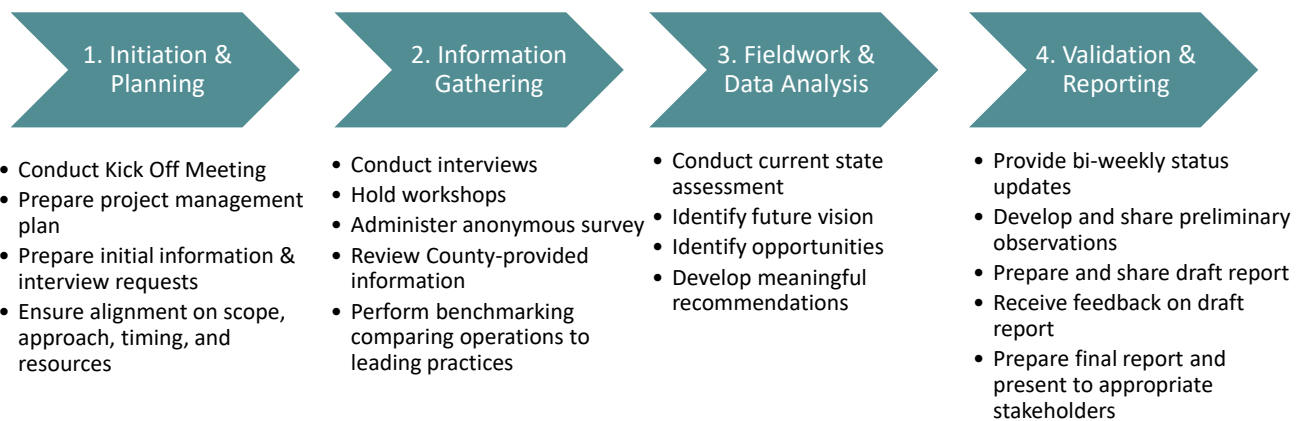
## Approach

The approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on leading practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



Mauldin & Jenkins developed a workplan for the Assessment which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, Mauldin & Jenkins performed the following key tasks to aid in formulating observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 590 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks

### 3. Survey Data and Results Summary

Gwinnett County has been considered a “leader in government” by peers and industry stakeholders for years. For decades, the County has been awarded numerous industry awards in such areas as financial management, public safety, community impact, environmental impact, diversity and inclusion, planning and development, transportation, water, communications, customer service, and others.

Gwinnett County has a strong track record of operational excellence. This Assessment demonstrates the County’s emphasis on continuous improvement and its commitment to sustain its operational excellence well into the future. As the world changes, technology advances, and customer service expectations continue to grow, the County must continue to assess and refine its operating model to sustain its high level of quality operations.

Over the years, County leadership has created an effective and efficient organization that is well positioned for future success. The 490 departmental observations and recommendations contained in the detailed Assessment Reports for Phases 1-6 deal in part with future strategy, but also with very detailed levels of operations through all levels of employee positions. The detailed recommendations and Implementation Roadmaps contained in the separate Assessment Reports are designed to help ensure the County sustains and exceeds its current levels of efficiency and effectiveness well into the future, and should be leveraged to help the County reach goals of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability.

Implementing change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”  
– Socrates

#### Survey Data Summary

As a part of the assessment of each department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted departmental surveys that extended to all employees. Each survey respondent was asked a series of open-ended questions and a series of questions with answers following the Likert-Scale. The Likert-Scale response options were as follows:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neither agree nor disagree

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

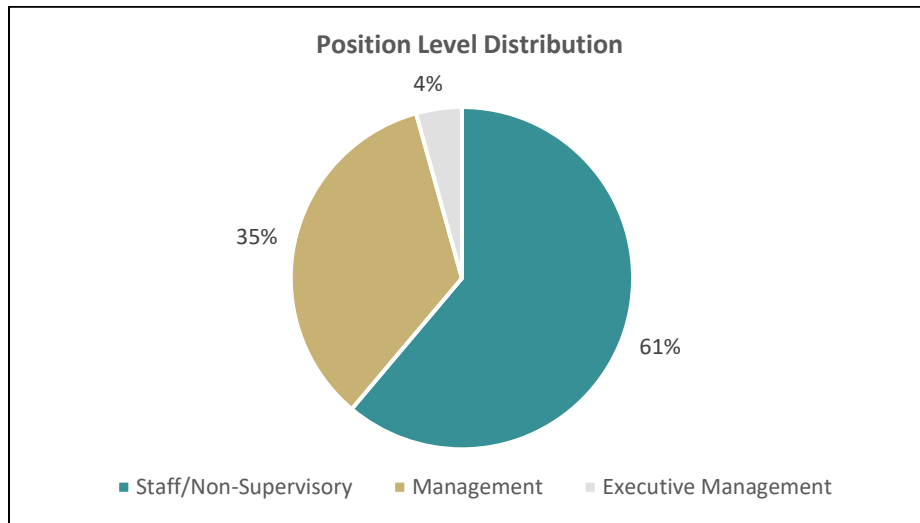
Throughout the entire project, more than 1,000 County employees responded to the surveys. The intent of the surveys was to provide a mechanism to receive open and honest feedback from County employees related to County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture.



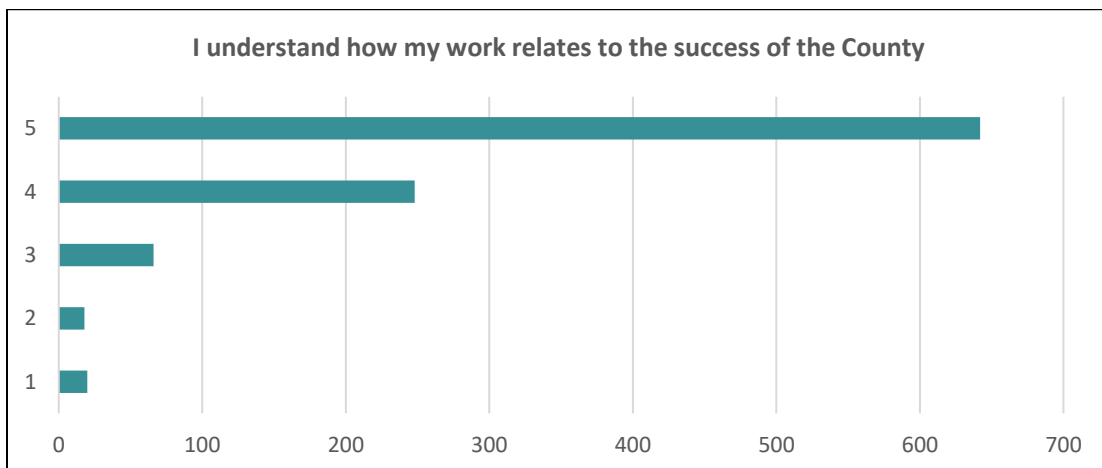
The following section shows the overall themes of the survey responses for all departments in the aggregate. Specific departmental survey results are shown in the separate detailed Assessment Reports. Department specific questions and survey responses from the Gwinnett County Public Library System have been excluded since questions were tailored to reflect the Library System’s role as a component unit of Gwinnett County government.

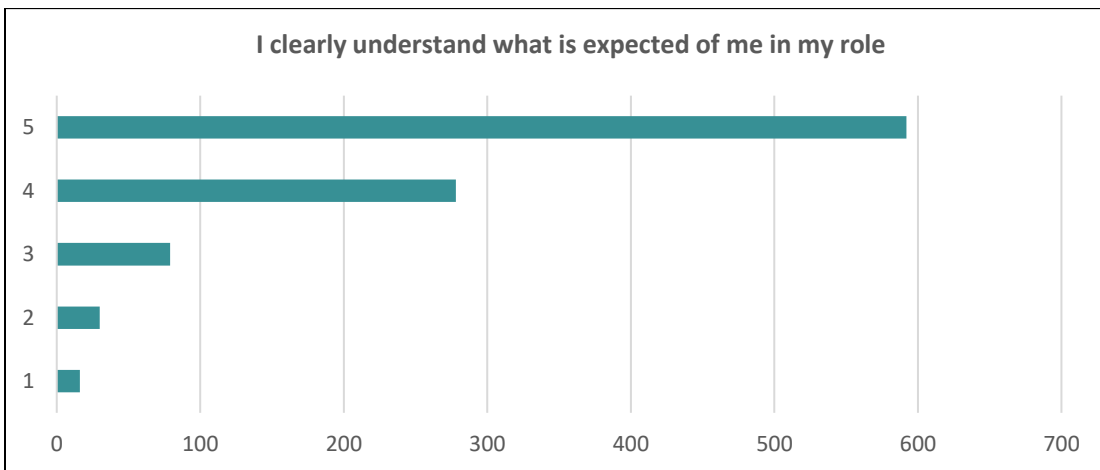
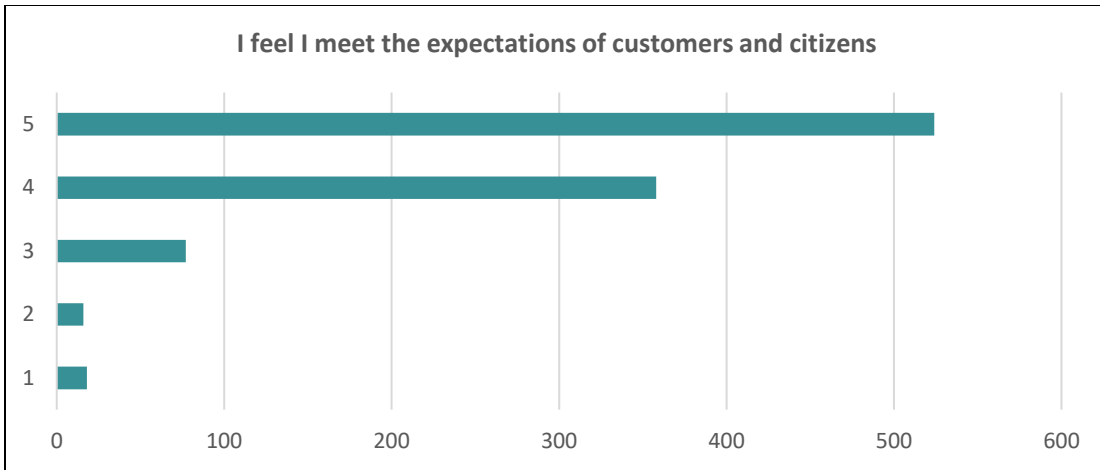
Detailed information about each department’s responses to both the Likert-scale and open-ended questions may be found in the detailed Assessment Reports.

The following chart shows the distribution of County employee position level who responded to the survey:

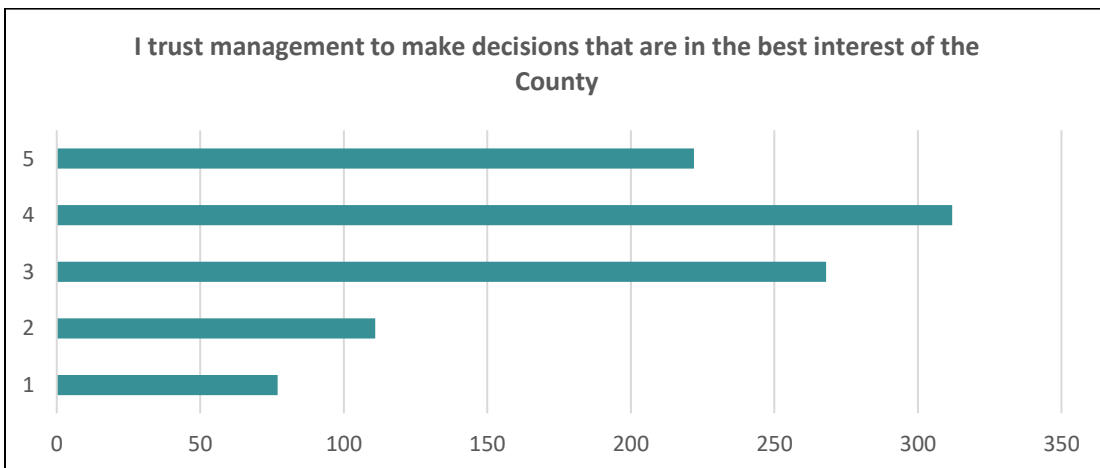


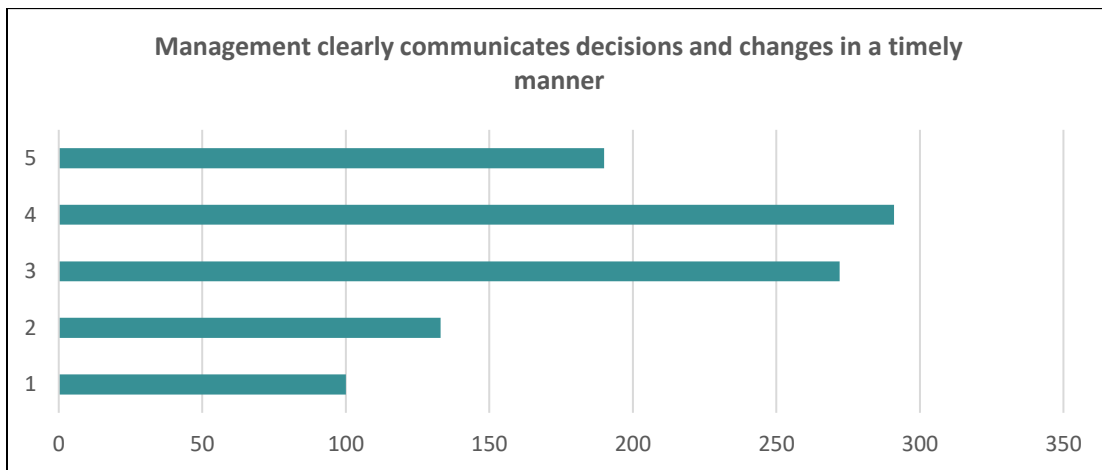
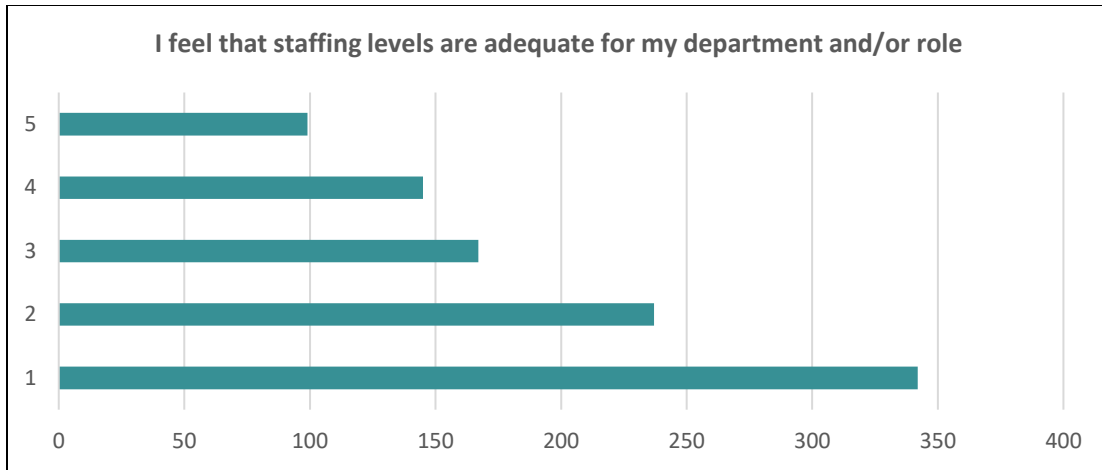
The highest three scores from Gwinnett County employees for all departments in the aggregate were in response to the following questions:





The lowest three scores from Gwinnett County employees for all departments in the aggregate were in response to the following questions:





Based upon these responses, County employees who responded to the survey believe that they understand the overall mission of the County and how their position relates to that success. County employees feel that overall expectations of them are clear and that the work they are doing meets the expectations of the citizens and customers of Gwinnett County.

County employees indicated that the staffing levels within their departments are not adequate for the tasks they are being asked to complete. Communication from leadership is a concern among County employees as well. A number of County employees indicated that communications around decisions and the decision-making process is not communicated either effectively or timely.

### Observations and Recommendations Summary

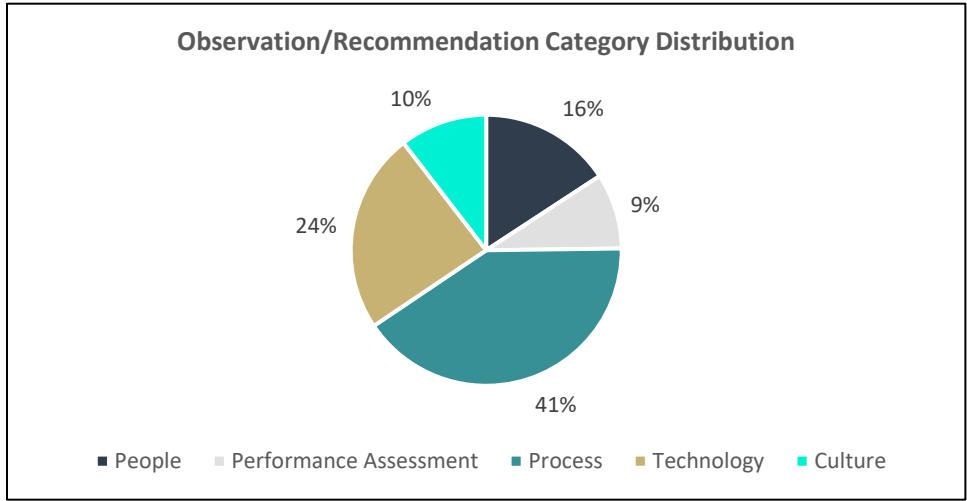
As a part of the Assessment, Mauldin & Jenkins developed observations and recommendations for each in-scope department and subsequent enterprise-wide recommendations for the County as a whole. In total, excluding all enterprise-wide and Library System observation and recommendations, Mauldin & Jenkins identified 490 departmental observations and recommendations.

Each observation and recommendation were assigned one of five categories based upon the content of the observation and recommendation, and the area of potential improvement within the department or County. The five categories include:

- **People** – observations and recommendations relating to organizational structures, position roles and responsibilities, resource levels, and training
- **Process** – observations and recommendations relating to operational workflow and policies and procedures
- **Culture** – observations and recommendations relating to the work environment and employee perception
- **Performance Assessment** – observations and recommendations relating to measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of outputs
- **Technology** – observations and recommendations relating to the current and potential future use of systems and automation

The following tables show the category distribution of observations and recommendations by department:

Department	People	Process	Culture	Performance Assessment	Technology	Total
Communications	2	13	8	4	12	39
Community Services	11	37	7	9	11	75
Corrections	2	5	2	2	3	14
Financial Services	12	21	10	0	12	55
Fire & Emergency Services	3	5	2	10	8	28
Human Resources	4	9	2	3	6	24
Information Technology	7	26	1	2	9	45
Law	5	6	0	0	2	13
Planning and Development	5	14	5	2	13	39
Police	1	7	2	0	3	13
Support Services	7	26	8	3	12	56
Transportation	4	4	3	15	15	41
Water Resources	2	14	6	15	11	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>490</b>



### Enterprise-Wide Recommendations Summary

In addition to identifying observations and recommendations at the department-level, Mauldin & Jenkins also identified observations and recommendations that should be addressed at the enterprise, or County level, as the observations were present in, or related to multiple departments. Mauldin & Jenkins identified 12 enterprise-wide recommendations. The following table shows the category distribution for each enterprise-wide recommendation:

Department	People	Process	Culture	Performance Assessment	Technology	Total
<b>Enterprise-Wide</b>	4	3	3	2	0	<b>12</b>

These enterprise-wide observations and recommendations were tracked comprehensively throughout our assessment and are shown in the separate detailed reports.

Many of the enterprise-wide observations and recommendations require County leadership to establish specific priorities through initiatives and policies to be implemented across all County departments to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation. Many of the enterprise-wide observations and recommendations stemmed from individual departments making their own decisions that may not align with the strategic needs of the County as a whole, or may result in inconsistent policy adherence or interpretation, creating tension among departments who have differing interpretations of enterprise practices such as telework policies, use of sick leave, and data collection and evaluation procedures.

This theme also extended to the use of job titles, hiring practices, and generational shifts related to work environment, job tenure, and work-life balance. Many of the enterprise recommendations can be implemented through the Human Resources Department, but County leadership should seek to collaborate with users across all departments to better define consistency in policy interpretation and application, and work to think strategically and long-term about potential opportunities for change in workplace culture, workforce recruitment, and retention strategies.

The enterprise-wide observations and recommendations also represent a theme in departments having challenges in gaining the necessary buy-in and support from other Gwinnett County departments or organizations in implementing internal service policies, or County-wide initiatives. County leadership will need to continue to support departments leading these efforts and initiatives and ensure that relevant departments are engaged, supportive, and contributing to policy and/or initiative success.

### Additional Enterprise-wide Support

In addition to the enterprise-wide recommendations, there were several observations and recommendations that were present in multiple departments and may require support and coordination from the County Administrator's Office to help ensure consistent and non-conflicting process development and implementation in impacted departments.

One area where recommendations were made in multiple departments related to communications and staff engagement across all levels of the department's employees. County leadership should work to develop training, structure, and support for Departmental leadership to create informal feedback opportunities, and increase visibility of departmental leadership throughout the department. County leadership should also provide encouragement and guidance for departments to create committees or other groups that include representation from all staff levels present in the department to provide insight and feedback about proposed processes or changes.

Additionally, as departments develop, update, or modify policies and/or procedures that may have impacts on other departments, support from County leadership will be critical in ensuring that the new or updated policies and procedures are followed and implemented consistently throughout the County.

The County has, over the last year, launched a succession planning initiative, which may assist in alleviating several of the concerns raised during the assessment process. As part of the succession planning initiative, the Human Resources Department should also work with end-user departments to ensure there is adequate cross-training and capture of institutional knowledge at all levels of the County, and not just within leadership positions.

Also of note and not represented in an observation and recommendation, is the day-to-day involvement of the County Administrator. Currently, all County department heads report directly to the County Administrator, which represents a span of control of approximately 1:14. For a senior executive position for a large organization, such as the County Administrator, the current span of control is an ineffective management structure, and additional positions should be evaluated to allow the County Administrator to function at a higher-level, and in a more strategic role.

## 4. Summary Department Overviews

The Operational Assessment included an assessment of all County departments that reported to the County Administrator at the beginning of the Assessment period, in November of 2021. This Assessment does not include Child Advocacy and Juvenile Services, as that department was not established until May of 2022.

The following is an overview of each department within the County that was assessed during the engagement, as well as a summary of the recommendations created for each department.

### Support Services Department

#### Introduction

The Support Services Department is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned assets, including facilities, property, and fleet. Additionally, the Support Services Department is responsible for managing the County's capital construction projects, records storage, and mail services. The Support Services Department's primary external-facing responsibility is management of the solid waste collection services in unincorporated Gwinnett County – any part of Gwinnett outside the 16 municipalities.

#### Commendations

##### Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Plan (VERP)



The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, has established a leading plan for replacing the County's fleet. The VERP requires regular education and establishes a multi-year capital replacement plan that is updated on a yearly basis.

##### Customer Service Surveys



As each of the Operations and Maintenance teams complete work orders, they deploy customer service surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with each internal customer interaction.

##### Proactive Fleet Maintenance



The Fleet Management Division has implemented proactive review of preventative maintenance scheduled by technicians, including 109-point inspections and review of upcoming preventative maintenance while a vehicle is already in the shop for repairs or unrelated service. This practice reduces downtime for end-user departments.

#### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues that were observed at the time of assessment have already been addressed, or are in-process of being addressed by leadership.

The assessment of the Support Services Department resulted in 56 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Staff noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. While Department-wide communications are delivered via emails, staff expressed concern that they do not see Department leadership regularly engaged with front-line staff. Department leadership should enhance engagement with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions.

The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of division directors. The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader Departmental priorities.

There is minimal cross-division discussion of strategic initiatives or broader efforts, which may result in either conflicting or duplicative efforts throughout the Department and potentially the County. Departmental leadership should engage with all divisions in strategic planning and goal setting.

The Department does not have a formal schedule for facility assessment and lifecycle management, including long-term planning for facility construction and renovation needs. The Department's current process for space planning and needs assessments is not always strategic or holistic, and does not consistently ensure that decisions are taking all impacted divisions and departments into consideration, and factor in projected growth and future space needs.

As the Department is an internal service department, its primary customers are other departments within Gwinnett County. Department-developed processes and practices are not consistently implemented by the end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts, which limit the effectiveness of the efforts made within the Department to improve asset management and preventative maintenance schedules.

## **Planning and Development Department**

### **Introduction**

The Planning and Development Department strives to develop a sustainable community through maintaining standards for new and existing structures in unincorporated Gwinnett County – those parts of the County outside of the 16 municipalities. The Planning and Development Department is responsible for zoning, long-range planning, plan review, permitting and the provision of occupancy certificates, and enforcement of property requirement ordinances.



## Commendations

### Data-driven Strategic Position



The Department established two positions – the Fiscal and Special Projects Manager and the Process and Technology Manager – in order to respond strategically to projects, processes, and systems, allowing the Department to make data-driven decisions.

### Construction Investigation Unit



The Department created a Construction Investigation unit, which provides citizens an opportunity to voice concerns about construction projects. The Department provides information and education to those who may be in violation of code and assist them to become compliant.

### Video Inspections for Minor Infractions



The Department has begun allowing for video re-inspections of minor building inspection infractions, more efficiently utilizing building inspectors' time, and reducing windshield time. The practice is an example of good customer service as it reduces the time between request and inspection, and assists the customer in moving forward with their project.

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Planning and Development Department resulted in 39 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Department employees acknowledge that leadership has been making changes that leadership believes are the right changes to move the Department forward, improve efficiency and workflow, and to improve customer service delivery. Many employees feel, however, that leadership is not engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions and making decisions in a silo, either hearing the needs of the “most vocal” division, or failing to consider how decisions made to assist one division may impact another division.

There is also a perception that management, both senior and middle, defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that cases and circumstances receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not County leadership (at either the Section, Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism. Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions.

The Department serves numerous customers, many of which do not speak English. The Department currently relies on internal employees with foreign language proficiency, as well as a list of County employees who speak non-English languages to provide translation services when needed. The Department should consider subscribing to a language line or other service that provides access to on-demand translation in a variety of languages.

The Department has recently prioritized a focus on customer service and service delivery strategy. Most of this strategy is internally driven and based on employee-developed perceptions of customers and their needs. There have not been consistent formal efforts to engage different groups of customers and stakeholders to better understand their interests and needs. This has resulted in the inconsistent definition of “customer” and has often failed to gain customer insight or perspective on what they desire.

## Department of Transportation

### Introduction

The Department of Transportation is responsible for providing efficient and accessible transportation to the residents of Gwinnett County. The Transportation Department maintains roads, intersections, and rights-of-way, as well as the striping, signage, and traffic signals throughout the County’s infrastructure system. Additionally, the Department is responsible for Gwinnett County Transit and Gwinnett County Airport – Briscoe Field.

### Commendations

#### Locally Controlled Transportation Infrastructure



The Department controls eight percent of all traffic signals in the state, the largest number of locally controlled traffic signals in Georgia. This means the Department is maintaining and managing traffic signals at nearly 750 intersections across the County.

#### Service Request Center



The Department created one unit assigned to respond to all citizen-initiated concerns, complaints, and issues. The unit is connected to the Department’s work order system so the Center can enter the details of the concern directly into the work order and route appropriately, creating more efficient response times and better customer service.

#### Collaborative Relationships with Transportation Partners



The Department has cultivated strong, strategic partnerships with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL). One such program is Safe Trips in a Connected Transportation Network (ST-CTN) with ARC, providing County residents with safe and efficient trip routing, increasing the accessibility of the County’s transportation infrastructure.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Transportation Department resulted in 39 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

The Department leverages an open procurement that prequalifies engineering firms to support capital design projects. Having a list of “on call” prequalified vendors is a leading practice. However, the engineering firms provide varying quality of work and there is not a formal mechanism for staff to provide formal feedback and evaluation that results in impacting the project assignment process. Preconstruction and Construction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify construction firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly considers and impacts future awards. The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be further assessed as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project”.

The Department manages projects through detailed excel spreadsheets which contain project-specific detailed information and notes, which results in inconsistent formats and templates throughout the Department.

The Department previously collaborated with the Georgia Department of Transportation and local Community Improvement Districts to create Smart Corridor projects and Traffic Responsive Technology projects in order to provide research and experiential data and information for possible expansion of each project statewide. Each of the projects are considered cutting-edge transportation technology, and other Counties in the state are waiting for the results the Department may share. The Department should expand their utilization of both projects, and include additional federal, state, and local grant opportunities in order to expand the research and experiential capabilities.

## Department of Law

### Introduction

The Department of Law is responsible for providing legal services and legal advice to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, government, and governmental organizations including their employees, authorities, elected officials, and constitutional officers.

The Department of Law also houses the County Open Records Officer, responsible for ensuring all County departments are responding to open records requests in a consistent and compliant manner.

## Commendations

### Open Records Officer



The Department houses the County's Open Records Officer position to ensure consistent and compliant responses to all Open Records Requests.

### Expertise



In comparison to other jurisdictions, the Department has created a team of experienced, dedicated attorneys and staff who have experience in a variety of local government legal fields, creating a diverse, experienced team who have the skills and expertise to represent the County in a variety of legal matters.

### Transparent Process



The Department uses GovQA, an online public records workflow and response management system, to track and manage Open Records Requests. GovQA allows customers a one-stop opportunity to submit requests, see the progress of their request, receive the requested information, and pay for any associated fees in a single system.

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Department of Law resulted in 13 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

While the County Attorney supports all of the Department's attorneys, providing them with opportunity for growth and exposure to new areas of law, there is not always an overlap in workload between the County Attorney and other attorneys, so there are not always interactions outside of staff meetings. The County Attorney's interactions with each of the three Deputy County Attorneys varies based on the assigned matters and projects. The differences in interactions and relationships creates the perception amongst other staff that there is inconsistent treatment or even "favoritism" in how certain Deputy County Attorneys are treated.

The current Departmental organizational structure is imbalanced, which creates workload challenges. The lack of formalized back-up assignments or cross-training exacerbates these issues. All but one of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys reporting to a single Deputy County Attorney, who must oversee their own workload, and support the workload of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys during absences or heavy demand from the assigned end-user departments. Additionally, each Legal Associate II is assigned to staff two attorneys. As each attorney's workload, needs, and use of their assigned Legal Associate II varies, this may not represent equitable workloads, leading to some Legal Associate IIs being significantly busier than others.

The Open Records Officer is currently a unit of one, with only general cross-training by the Legal Managers.

Many of the processes and policies in the Department are high-level rather than instructional, relying on the institutional knowledge or subject matter knowledge of staff to utilize in practice. This includes the onboarding processes, which were developed when the County's primary workforce was hired with prior local government experience.

## Communications Department

### Introduction

The Communications Department is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned public communications channels, including the website, printed and electronic newsletters, video and audio productions, TV Gwinnett, printed materials, and social media. Additionally, the Communications Department is responsible for internal communications channels, media relations, and management of the County government's brand.

The Communications Department originated as a division within the County Administrator's Office. To better respond to the priorities of the Board of Commissioners, Communications was established as its own department in October 2021.

### Commendations

#### First Impressions Ambassadors



The Department's willingness to provide the necessary support and resources to the First Impressions Ambassadors, including hiring additional staff to the role, demonstrates the Department's understanding of the Ambassadors as an important communications and customer experience resource. The Ambassadors provide to GJAC visitors resources and handouts developed through 20+ years of experience.

#### 20+ Years of Video Production



Gwinnett County boasts a longstanding commitment to telling the County's story through video, produced in-house for more than 20 years. Through resources like the dedicated studio space and governmental cable access channel funding, the Department produces videos at little cost to the County that visibly demonstrate the Gwinnett Standard.

#### Web Administration Leading Practices



The Department provides a massive number of resources for Gwinnett County employees through a well managed intranet. And on the public website, the Department has emphasized the importance of applying user experience best practices and providing training for end-user departments' approved web content publishers.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Communications Department resulted in 39 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

The Communications Department was established as a standalone department in response to the strategic priorities of the Board of Commissioners. As part of the shift to its own department, the number of positions allocated to Communications doubled. The expectations and responsibilities of the Department have increased significantly, as have the number of projects routed through the Department. The Department's ability to think proactively and strategically has been limited by the increase in service delivery expectations with half of the allocated positions not yet filled. Last-minute requests hamper the Department's ability to strategically plan campaigns with end-user departments or recommend leading practices for promoting end-users' initiatives.

Department leadership has earned the trust of the Department staff over the course of their decades of service to the County in Communications roles. Divisional leadership, too, has earned the trust of their staff through their experience and their willingness to listen to feedback and ideas. Because the Department grew from a team of four, leadership embraces a small-team environment in which management supports the growth and development of their staff. The drawback, however, to the small-team mentality is that managers are often required to be working managers – performing day-to-day tasks in addition to supervising and supporting staff. As the Department's staff size grows, managers, supervisors, and Division Directors will need to relinquish their day-to-day responsibilities and focus primarily on strategic positioning and staff supervision.

The Department has a limited number of PR Specialists currently, most of whom are each assigned five to six end-user departments as internal clients. As a result, workloads are often too overwhelming for the Division to help end-user departments proactively and strategically plan campaigns and marketing initiatives. As the Department continues to increase the number of PR Specialists and redistribute workloads, the Department should ensure the PR Specialists begin to proactively approach and engage their internal clients with strategic planning of campaigns.

The Department lacks formal policies and procedures governing project intake and lead times. Additionally, the lack of service level agreements (“SLAs”) can result in project priorities being shifted, deadlines being adjusted, and sometimes confusion by the end-user departments about what is needed from them, and on what timeline, in order for the Department to meet its end-users' needs.

The Department currently performs a significant number of manual processes, including project intake, collateral upload to the project management system (Hive), sharing feedback, and securing approvals. Coupled with lack of defined procedures and policies (especially around project lead times), these manual processes risk the Department continuing to increase its workload and perform inefficiently.

End-user departments have expressed some conflict between the necessity to maintain adherence to the brand and ensuring content remains correct after the Communications Department has made changes to or has completely designed a collateral piece. The Department will need to learn to balance brand adherence with messaging fidelity – this balance might come from a combination of strategic initiatives from both the PR and Marketing Division and the Branding and Design Division, encouraging PR Specialists to spend more time onsite with internal clients to better understand their messaging and development of formalized intake forms and procedures to provide end-user departments more structure when submitting design requests. Departmental and County leadership will also need to reiterate to end-user departments the necessity for the County to have one look and one voice, stressing that design is not about personal preference.

Successful organizations commonly utilize a comprehensive communications plan to clearly detail the strategies and tactics employed for all internal, external, and emergency communications. A communications plan establishes communications-related goals, defines key audiences, provides key messaging, determines chains of command, lays out standard operating procedures, recommends tactics and strategies, and sets policies for use of the organization’s communications channels. In short, a communications plan establishes the policies, procedures, and practices for all internal, external, and emergency communications performed by an organization. Currently, the Department does not have a comprehensive communications plan, though elements of such a plan exist, including emergency communications strategies.

## Department of Water Resources

### Introduction

Gwinnett County’s Department of Water Resources is responsible for providing drinking water and treating wastewater in Gwinnett County. As of March 2022, Department of Water Resources reported more than 284,000 water accounts, representing single family homes, office parks, schools, industry, and multi-unit residential units. Customer accounts have risen approximately 9% over the past four years.

### Commendations

#### Highly Decorated Department



The Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources has received more than 45 statewide and national awards in the last five years.

#### Employee Skills Development Program



The Department introduced a program to automatically promote staff while encouraging continual job and personal growth. As members of the Department achieve new skills important for the functioning of the Department, those staff receive automatic promotions to the next job level. The program began in the Field Operations and Technical Services Division, and expanded to include the members of the Facility Operations and Engineering & Construction Divisions.

#### Technical Staff with Industry Experience



Many Department professionals are former consultants who have significant industry experience serving other utility organizations, bringing industry leading practices and lessons to Gwinnett County.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Water Resources Department resulted in 48 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

While the Department has made significant strides in recent years to positively impact operations, perception, and culture throughout the Department, there are still opportunities to enhance and improve operations. Staff also cited an interest in more organic interactions with leadership, especially in positions that are not assigned to the Central Facility.

The Department has several units or sections whose titles represent contract management and oversight as their primary function. In many of these instances, contract management and compliance oversight is shared amongst multiple divisions, sections, units, and workgroups. This may lead to misunderstandings about what each group's role is, and how these roles interact and relate. This may also lead to missed oversight and review checkpoints, as one workgroup may assume another workgroup is responsible for a portion of contractor compliance or management. There are also multiple repositories for contract-related documents, including internal workbooks, logbooks, CMMS information, Access databases, physical files, and the use of Jira for contract management. This may result in not all files being captured as part of the official record, and may result in duplicative work performance. The Department needs to assess and inventory all contractor compliance functions to understand which roles and tasks reside in each workgroup. The Department should create consistent levels and clearly document who is responsible for which tasks.

Project Managers throughout the Department do not use a formal and consistent system/tool for project management, which creates opportunities for inconsistent data collection, reporting, and project management practices.

Construction firms provide varying quality of work and County policy dictates that the selected construction vendor is based on responding to the County's requested items/requirements in the RFP, and lowest bid (price). The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the "Gwinnett Standard" and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a "successful project."

DWR has created several newer middle management positions to help with workload imbalances across the Department. Once these positions are created and staffed, there is minimal guidance or expectations set for what responsibilities these new positions will assume, and how that may impact the responsibilities of other positions. Many staff in these new roles have determined their own responsibilities, which may result in inconsistency in how the role is performed across different units or sections. There have also been issues with managers not relinquishing duties to the newly created positions, leaving the new positions without adequate workload, which has resulted in some perceptions of micromanagement by lower-level staff.

The Department currently has two systems for asset management – one for linear assets and one for vertical assets. These systems are independent of each other, and do not consistently communicate with other systems and software maintained by the County. This can create redundancy of data entry, management, and analysis. These concerns are compounded by the lack of comprehensive data collection evaluation, to ensure that all data that is collected is relevant, consistently collected, and utilized for appropriate reporting.



Due to the complex nature of wastewater processing, training is critical to become fully proficient across all of the buildings and assets involved in the process. With current staffing levels, training can be a challenge, especially opportunities to transfer institutional knowledge and provide on-the-job training to new hires.

## Department of Community Services

### Introduction

The Department of Community Services is responsible for providing events, services, and activity spaces throughout Gwinnett County. This includes aquatic, recreation, athletic, electoral, wellness, and other resident services throughout the County.

### Commendations

#### Developing Strategic Partnerships



The Department has sought to develop intentional partnerships and bring together a variety of resources. This includes partnerships with other County departments, community organizations, and others within the County to provide a variety of services and programming throughout Gwinnett County.

#### UGA Extension Gwinnett Recognition



UGA Extension Gwinnett has won multiple recent national and state recognitions for Agriculture and Natural Resources. These recognitions have highlighted performance and program delivery.

#### OneStop 4 Health



Health and Human Services formally created and began the OneStop 4 Health program – an initiative designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various health and human services.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Community Services Department resulted in 75 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Department employees acknowledge that leadership has been making positive efforts to move the Department forward and improve efficiency. Many employees feel, however, that decision-making is not based on leadership engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions.

This culture of unilateral decision-making and criticism of program issues or concerns has also created a sense among staff that they should not suggest ideas, or be innovative, because if it isn't immediately successful, or doesn't align with leadership's vision, that they may be penalized, disciplined, or publicly humiliated. This is coupled with a Department leadership that is very hands-on and involved in day-to-day operations, and nearly all decision-making. Department leadership is actively involved in and supports many of the Department's initiatives, but many staff feel that this is less indicative of interest and engagement, and more representative of a culture of mistrust.

Throughout fieldwork, staff throughout the Department noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. Employees in divisions that tend to be more visible with the communities and receiving accolades and acknowledgements noted frequent, proactive engagement with Department leadership. Staff in other divisions note only seeing Departmental leadership in their area in limited frequency. There is also a perception that senior leadership defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that incidents and requests receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not leadership (at either the Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of lower-level directors or managers. This emphasis has led to delays in approvals, inconsistent treatment of issues, and less autonomy and authority granted to other directors and managers, eroding their authority and benefit. The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the lower-level departments and managers and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.

The Department is predominantly focused on community service and public-facing programming and activities. As such, there are many opportunities to support other community activities, or expand their footprint to include additional programming, initiatives or activities. Leadership frequently introduces new initiatives, or expanded activities throughout the Department. This has resulted in mission creep and conflicting priorities throughout the Department, with staff often asked to step away from their primary functions to support other initiatives and efforts. This mission creep has also led to an increased reliance on volunteer labor, and has led to stretched resources and overextended staff.

The Department's organizational chart is disjointed, with similar functions present in several divisions. This has created some confusion about which division is responsible for certain functions and how the functions are delineated between divisions. Additionally, some functions are not assigned within divisions, which can create discrepancies in how units are housed under management. Under one Deputy Department Director, there is a division, a team, a section, a single person, and an unclassified unit. The Department also utilizes contractors to supplement the work of staff in multiple divisions. Department policy discourages and, at times, prevents employees from working overtime hours, as overtime is not budgeted for. This has resulted in the use of on-demand contractors for work that could be potentially performed by staff. Staff have also noted concerns with other contractors being able to meet the demand of the workload assigned by the County.

There is currently a waiting list for Department senior services that can extend to multiple years. With the average human lifespan increasing, the mental and financial impacts of COVID on individuals, and the current wait list for services, it is reasonable to conclude that additional Care Manager and/or direct service provider positions within the Department would assist the Department in keeping up with demand. The Department should assess the need for additional Care Manager and direct senior service positions to create an environment where there is no wait list for senior services, or at least reduce the length of time before eligible seniors can begin to receive all eligible services.

The Department offers multiple “One Stop” centers for multiple services at a single location. Generally speaking, “One Stop” centers offer multiple services around a specific citizen need such as health or employment. The County’s One Stop centers include multiple citizen services that include County services and services provided by organizations outside the County, and services that are not necessarily connected to each other (i.e. – health services and motor vehicle services). The County’s One Stop Centers offer multiple services at a single location, but may or may not be beneficial to County citizens for single visits. There is also not integration among all services offered at the One Stop Centers as the services are provided by both the County and non-County organizations with distinct systems and processes.

The Elections Division receives thousands of calls per day during the lead up to elections with no phone tree or Interactive Voice Response (“IVR”) phone system to assist with management of incoming calls. As a result, callers leave thousands of voicemails daily and the Division does not have an efficient way to track which callers have received callbacks or have left multiple messages. The Division should talk to other County departments about solutions for handling calls as a call center, such as the IVR and switchboard systems utilized by the Support Services Department’s Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division, the Communications Department’s Fiscal and Administration Division, and the Department of Water Resources’ Fiscal and Administration Division.

## Information Technology Services

### Introduction

Information Technology Services provides service to all County departments, including the Board of Commissioners, Community Services, Corrections, Courts, Elections, Financial Services, Fire and Emergency Services, Human Resources, Planning and Development, Police Services, Sheriff, Support Services, Tax Commissioner, Transportation, and Water Resources.

Information Technology Services’ primary functions include data center and network operations, end user computer support, information security and compliance, business application support, technology planning, and innovation, and project management and governance

### Commendations

#### Server Virtualization and Reduction of Data Center Space



The Department has significantly reduced the number of servers and consolidated data center floor space by implementing server virtualization.

#### Building a Strategic Roadmap



The Department has developed a vision for the future with a strategic roadmap to modernize the County’s Information Technology Services Department, business applications, and supporting infrastructure.

#### Continuous Improvement



The Department is progressing toward achieving its strategic initiatives through incremental project success, including department reorganization, infrastructure upgrades, and the migration of business applications to the cloud.

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Information Technology Services Department resulted in 45 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Most of ITS's leadership and management team have been with the County for at least five to six years. There are several vacant leadership positions within the Department, including the Assistant Director for the Department, the Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Director, the New Technologies Solution Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Manager. Due to the leadership vacancy, the staff in the Divisions and Units report directly to the CIO, placing additional management responsibilities on the Department Director. In addition, the Department Director is involved in many detailed decisions and approvals, often resulting in process bottlenecks. While the Department Director's involvement in tactical decisions may be attributed to leadership vacancies within the Department, the lack of delegating authority for tactical decisions uses time that could be more effectively used on ITS's strategic initiatives.

As with other public sector information technology departments, Gwinnett County's ITS has several outdated systems, applications, and infrastructure components. ITS recognizes these challenges and has developed a strategic plan to transform the Department's organizational structure and update the County's business applications and technology infrastructure for the future. ITS's Leadership Team communicated its vision to the Department and is conducting a Road Show with the other County Departments to communicate the vision and report on progress against the strategic plan. However, full implementation of the strategic plan will require the support of County leadership and additional funding. The Department will require continuous funding to achieve the desired outcomes. According to a prior ITS assessment report conducted by an outside consulting firm, the Department's 2021 budget is \$12 million under industry benchmarks for state and local governments with similar total operation budgets. It is perceived by some staff that IT funding is often secondary to funding citizen services. However, today, technology is the foundation for customer service and operational efficiencies, and continual investment is required. In addition, the County's outdated technology increases the risk of the County's ability to provide network, infrastructure, and application service continuity, defend against cyber-attacks, and recover critical technical infrastructure in the event of disaster recovery.

Many of the Department's divisions are understaffed due to staffing challenges. The number of unfilled vacancies, the difficulty in attracting appropriate technical talent, the long hiring timeline, the County's ability to provide a competitive total compensation package, etc., all contribute to the divisions being understaffed. Some policies may have to be revisited to attract talent. Remote work has become ubiquitous since the pandemic, and the current technology workforce expects the ability to work remote for at least a few days of the week.

The metrics being tracked in the Department are primarily tactical. It was noted during interviews that there are plans to enhance metrics for the Service Desk and other units. There does not appear to be any monthly trend analysis or programs to improve performance. The Department should develop a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance.

The Department has documented processes and procedures but needs to enhance them in key areas like Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity, and IT operations.

Although many of the components are in place, there does not appear to be an overall Enterprise Architecture that oversees enterprise-wide system strategies and solutions through infrastructure and applications.

There appears to be a lack of effective communication amongst all the Divisions regarding system implementations, upgrades, and maintenance, which can result in unexpected impacts on the call volume and demands for the Service Desk team.

## Department of Corrections

### Introduction

A primary purpose of the Gwinnett Department of Corrections is to house residents and inmates and provide County services through Work Details. The facility, which consists of one main building and one exterior building, houses several different programs for inmates and residents. State and County inmates can be housed by the Department of Corrections for a portion, or the duration of their sentence.

The Department of Corrections is responsible for safely housing inmates and providing a variety of cleanup and landscaping services around Gwinnett County. The safety of the citizens, inmates, and Correctional Officers is a priority of the Department.

### Commendations

#### Compliance and Accreditation



The Department of Corrections takes pride in the Department's consistent American Correctional Association ("ACA") accreditation and Department-wide policies and procedures based on ACA standards.

#### Inmate On-the-Job Training



The Department of Corrections offers on-the-job training for inmates to learn new skills for application after release. This program is run through partnerships with Gwinnett Technical College, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and the Center of Industry and Technology.

#### Correctional Officer Training



The Gwinnett Department of Corrections works hard to ensure staff are trained in accordance with ACA and Georgia Department of Corrections standards. On top of the the 20 annual training hours Officers in the State of Georgia are required to have, the Department requires an additional 20 hours of training each year for Correctional Officers.

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Department of Corrections resulted in 14 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

A common staff perception is that the Warden tends to micromanage operational aspects of the facility, which may result in staff not being fully authorized to accomplish their assigned responsibilities and exercise their assigned authority. The Warden needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the appropriate staff and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader Departmental priorities.

The Department does not currently have a formal process for evaluation of inmate eligibility for participation in Work Detail. It is the current perception of the staff within the Support Services Division that the Warden is responsible for qualifying inmates for Work Detail. Without a formal process outlining the specific reasons for allowing or disallowing inmates to work, there may be inconsistent understanding or application of determining inmate eligibility.

The educational programs within the facility are a chance for inmates to learn new skills and gain resume credit that helps to receive jobs once they have left the facility. Currently, only inmates without disciplinary reports who have six to eight months left on their sentence are allowed to participate in the educational programs. This excludes a number of inmates at the facility from participating in the programs. This coupled with the lower number of inmates allowed to go on Work Detail leaves a number of inmates who are eligible for the programs left with idle time.

Currently, the Department does not do much active recruiting and does not participate in career fairs around the County. Applicants are able to access job descriptions and apply for positions on the Gwinnett County website, but there are no other methods being used by the Department to increase hiring and open position awareness, which is reflected in the Department's current hiring and staffing challenges.

Before applicants are invited to the facility to participate in orientation, they are required to fill out and return a paper preliminary orientation booklet. This booklet must be filled out by hand and returned. Many potential applicants have not been turning in the manual booklet which ends the overall hiring process for that individual.

Current staffing shortages have increased the need for overtime within the Department. Current staff note exhaustion and decreased morale due to the expectation of overtime, as well as the perceived lack of proactive communications around overtime shifts.

Many Department staff believe there is not enough empathy training done for Officers within the facility. This training allows for Officers to be able to handle inmate and coworker interactions with more empathy and understanding, and can help promote a healthier environment for both inmates and Officers.

## Department of Fire and Emergency Services

### Introduction

The Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services provides fire protection and emergency medical services (“EMS”) to Gwinnett County residents, visitors, and passers-through. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services responds to fire, EMS, and other incidents in the Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Medical Services District, which encompasses unincorporated Gwinnett, as well as 15 of the County’s 16 municipalities: Auburn, Berkeley Lake, Braselton, Buford, Dacula, Duluth, Grayson, Lawrenceville, Lilburn, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, Rest Haven, Snellville, Sugar Hill, and Suwanee. Additionally, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services responds to emergency medical incidents in the Loganville EMS District – the portion of the city in Gwinnett County; the Loganville Fire Department provides fire rescue services in the city.

### Commendations

#### Triple Accreditation



The Department maintains accreditation from three organizations: the Paramedic College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”), the Fire Investigations Section is accredited by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”), and the Department overall is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”).

#### Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”) Team



More than 40 personnel spread throughout the Department comprise the CISM Team, which helps first responders mitigate the emotional and physical impact of responding to emergencies. The Team helps peers identify mental health and other resources available to employees.

#### Citizens Fire Academy



A seven-week course provides members of the public first-hand knowledge of the Department’s organization and services. Participants take classes at the Training Academy, run through firefighter drills, and witness life at the stations. The Department has established a Hispanic Citizens Academy specifically for Spanish-speaking residents and has offered classes in Korean when possible.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Fire and Emergency Services Department resulted in 28 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Leadership focuses on data-driven decisions, strategic planning, and continuous improvement in an effort to manage the Department in a proactive manner. This push for proactivity trickles down through the command structure, encouraging forward-thinking and planning throughout the Department. Leadership is focused on succession planning to ensure quality of service continues as staff take leave, separate from the Department, or retire. During fieldwork, staff indicated leadership takes a very active role in operations and decision-making throughout the Department. Executive leadership participates in meetings at the Division and Section level and encourages all employees to approach executive leadership with ideas and suggestions. This involvement, however, results in perceptions of micromanagement and excessive levels of approval, with nearly all decisions ultimately made by the Fire Chief. Excessive levels of approval slow down processes and projects, with some projects taking months longer than necessary, according to staff, due to executive leadership requiring their involvement.

The Department prioritizes certifying all fire apparatus at the ALS level, requiring at least one medic per apparatus above the EMT level. The Training Academy currently only trains personnel to EMT certification at the BLS level or Paramedic licensure at the ALS level, with no intermediary steps. With the Department facing retention issues for Paramedics, AEMT certification could potentially reduce costs, provide additional growth steps, meet ALS requirements, and reduce turnover of staff at the Paramedic level leaving for other opportunities.

For the last seven to eight years, the Department has utilized overtime schedules (“OTS”) to ensure adequate coverage of all stations and apparatus throughout the County. OTS requires staff to work 48-hour shifts, potentially risking on-the-job injuries, auto accidents, lowered morale and heightened turnover, and equipment loss.

Staff perceive the Department’s pay cycle as discouraging taking leave, as one day of leave negates pay for a day of overtime. Overtime pay is based on number of hours worked that cycle rather than whether a shift worked required a 48-hour (or more) shift rather than a scheduled 24-hour shift.

All ambulances have a basic cell phone for communication during radio failure. However, field personnel do not have smartphones. Without smartphones or similar mobile technologies, field personnel lack access to job-related mobile applications. Job-related mobile applications include applications that calculate medical dosage by weight according to County protocols and send heart attack data to a hospital while the patient is en route. The County already owns many of the mobile applications for field personnel. However, field personnel cannot access the applications without smartphones or tablets. In addition, smartphones would provide an additional mobile hotspot to the extracorporeal cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“ECPR”) computer on each medical unit. The ECPR computer takes time to transmit data and is not always brought on the scene; the use of smartphones could improve the transmission times for these computers.

The Department relies heavily on physical paperwork for processing and documenting everything from new hires, promotions, and disciplinary actions to third-party contracts, on-scene information for public release, and purchase requests. During interviews, staff suggested some documents are printed out solely for the purpose of collecting wet signatures from leadership and then those documents are scanned into the system and shredded. Other documents are commonly stored onsite either in accordance with Departmental policy or because the Records Management Warehouse doesn’t have space available.



While Section Manager positions are often filled by sworn personnel and both report to and manage sworn positions, the Department does not have a sworn equivalency to the County's Section Manager paygrade as it does for Division Directors, Deputy Directors, and Department Directors. During our fieldwork we identified several areas in which sworn staff were performing duties that non-sworn personnel could potentially take over, freeing up sworn staff to focus on more strategic and managerial responsibilities. During our fieldwork, we noted a select group of personnel have rotated between many of the upper middle management roles in the Department, often wearing multiple hats and accepting responsibilities not appropriate for their current position.

## Police Department

### Introduction

The Gwinnett County Police Department serves the citizens of Gwinnett County by providing professional law enforcement services that prioritize compassion and improving the quality of life for citizens within the community. The Gwinnett County Police Department includes six police precincts around the County which serve to monitor and protect the respective areas in which they are stationed. The Gwinnett County Police Department utilizes innovative policing and investigative practices to protect and serve the citizens of Gwinnett County.

### Commendations

#### CALEA Accreditation



The Gwinnett County Police Department has achieved the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies ("CALEA") accreditation as a law enforcement agency since 1993. Recently, the Department has additionally received accreditation for the Communications Division as well as the Training Division. This makes the Gwinnett County Police Department the first department in the State of Georgia to obtain CALEA Tri-Arc status.

#### Emphasis on Community Outreach



There is a strong emphasis from leadership throughout the Department on the importance of community outreach. In addition to regular Officer-community interactions, the Department organizes and participates in numerous events in the community in order to foster relationships and perceptions.

#### Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center ("SACRC")



The Department is in the final stages of implementing a real time crime center that has the ability to leverage cameras throughout the County to provide real-time viewing and recording. The SACRC will provide the ability to observe crimes as they are committed and provide a greater sense of oversight and security to Officers responding to situations.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Police Department resulted in 13 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Staff perception of the new Chief of Police is generally very positive. Staff feel that the Chief genuinely cares about the success of the Department and is making positive steps to improve various aspects about Department operations and processes. Communication was a focal point of commendation from staff.

Leadership has recognized that staffing and retention are both issues within the Department (as is the case with other County departments and organizations throughout the Country at this point in time). The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for all aspects of recruiting for the Department. Currently, the Department does not have the permission to utilize various social media platforms to advertise job postings based on current County policy. This is a County policy that is prohibiting open use by the Department. The perception among current civilian staff is that there is not a specific promotional path for civilian positions within the Department. Staff feel that the only way currently to be promoted is to work for a different Department or join the private sector

Currently, the Planning and Research Section is housed under the Training Division, but interacts more frequently with the Office of the Chief in preparing monthly goals and actions to accomplish these goals for each part of the Department.

The Chief of Staff is responsible for coordinating with a third-party to conduct the citizen survey. The survey is open to all residents within the Department's jurisdiction, which excludes residents living within Cities that employ a city police department. The purpose of the citizen survey is to gauge feelings and thoughts of the community towards the Department. Currently, data is reported in the survey about the community thoughts on Officers, Officer interactions, and various individual specific points regarding the Department. The citizen survey has the potential to serve as an indicator of how effective/non-effective efforts by the Department to improve community relations have been. In 2022, the citizen survey only saw 591 respondents to the survey. In order to move closer to having a more accurate representation of the thoughts/feelings of the County as a whole, the number of respondents needs to rise. Survey response numbers could benefit from more Department-wide promotion and advertising of survey availability.

Within the training facility there is currently a 25-yard and a 100-yard firearms range for Officers to use for training/routine practice. Prior to COVID, the Department was in the process of constructing a 50-yard firearms range, which has not been completed, as the area has been used for County supply and equipment storage. The lack of a 50-yard facility has resulted in reduced availability for training classes. Also, each firearms range must be professionally cleaned every year which takes approximately one month to complete, leaving the Department with only one operable range for two months each year.

## Department of Human Resources

### Introduction

The primary purpose of the Gwinnett Department of Human Resources is to manage employee-related processes for Gwinnett County employees from pre-hiring activities such as recruitment and interviews, through separation from the County. The Department of Human Resources manages the benefit packages provided to employees, training courses, FMLA claims, salary adjustments, performance appraisals, recruitment and hiring, in addition to promotions and demotions. The Department of Human Resources also supports all Gwinnett County departments through dedicated Operations Service Teams.

## Commendations

### Wellness as a Priority



The County and the Department have long provided leading benefits packages to employees, and in recent years added additional benefits focused on employee wellness. This year, Gwinnett County was ranked No. 4 on Atlanta Business Chronicle's Healthiest Employers list in the Extra-Large Company category (5,000-plus employees) and also ranked No. 91 out of the Healthiest 100 Workplaces in America by Healthiest Employers.

### Ease of Access



The Department maintains a Call Center that is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist the public and all active/retired Gwinnett County employees. The Call Center enables direct assistance from Department professionals for all types of human resource inquiries, and is heavily utilized during open enrollment periods.

### Emphasis on Employee Engagement



In April 2022, the Department created two Employee Engagement positions for the purpose of helping to ensure the County is creating and maintaining a positive and healthy work environment for all County employees. The new positions are designed to continuously assess employee perceptions, take demonstrable actions, and position the County as an "Employer of Choice".

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Human Resources Department resulted in 24 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

There has been significant turnover in leadership in the Department at the Director level within the last five years. The new Department Director aims to build more partnerships with County departments and enhance customer service to the Department's internal and external customers. Due to work demands and lack of staffing, the Department Director is currently involved in many day-to-day operational tasks and is not able to consistently function at the strategic level.

The newly created Employee Engagement Section is responsible for helping to ensure that the County and the Department are promoting a positive and healthy workplace for all Gwinnett County employees. The current focus and priorities of Section employees has not been fully focused on employee engagement efforts due to Section personnel supporting Operations Service Teams due to position vacancies. When the Section was created up until the present, personnel have been given flexibility and freedom to define scope, direction, and goals as they have not yet been formally defined in detail by leadership, which results in potential misalignment between leadership's intent for the Section and its day-to-day operations.

The Department administers surveys with the assistance of vendors to assess employee's satisfaction and experience with benefit plans. The Department should utilize the data collected from vendor surveys such as the Voya survey to target specific populations of County employees who do not leverage available benefits to their fullest ability or advantage. Data from the survey will help the Department identify where to target their efforts and help to increase employee's satisfaction with benefit plans. In addition, employees are not able to make changes to their 401(a) or 457(b) plans following hiring.

The Department supports County employees through "Service Teams". While some Service Teams assign team members specific departments, others assign tasks as they come in or each team member will self-assign tasks to be completed, which can lead to inconsistent and imbalanced workloads.

The County's Request to Fill ("RTF") process is based on previous budget trends and is antiquated for current operations and hiring volumes. The RTF process is creating inefficiency in hiring processes as Teams cannot extend a final job offer until waivers are approved. This extended timeline for hiring may impact the County's ability to hire top-quality candidates, who may accept other offers during the extended Gwinnett County hiring process.

Additionally, the County has not performed a classification and compensation study since 2005, which may result in inequity in salaries and job descriptions and classifications across the County, as well as a loss of competitiveness within the overall market.

Training courses that are specific to County leadership or management such as the Internal Management Academy are very competitive, and many interested candidates are not able to timely complete the course. Because the course is so competitive, County leaders and managers may feel that they are not able to get the training they need to be a successful leader.

Each department maintains an "HR Liaison(s)" to help coordinate HR policies and procedures within each department. The Department experiences issues with HR Liaisons not having consistent training on HRIS systems and therefore are not consistently entering data correctly. Monthly HR Liaison Workshops are currently offered, but attendance is not mandatory.

The County lacks an integrated Talent Management System for recruiting and onboarding, performance management, learning, and succession planning. Although NeoGov, the County's current human resources management system, provides automated recruiting and onboarding solutions, the County does not have performance management, learning management, or succession planning systems. The County's need to attract and retain skilled labor is more important than ever. Automated processes and tools for recruiting, onboarding, performance reviews, succession planning, career development, and learning management tools are critical in today's Human Resource departments. Having fully integrated tools can help County employees do more with less by automating many of the commoditized tasks associated with these business functions and enhancing the candidate and employee experience.

## Department of Financial Services

### Introduction

The Department of Financial Services manages the County government's financial functions, including budgeting, accounting, purchasing, grants management, debt management, capital funding, accounts payable, payroll, and tax assessment. Additionally, the Department of Financial Services oversees risk management, continuous improvement, and strategic planning for the County government.

## Commendations

### AAA Bond Rating for 25 Years



Since 1997, Gwinnett County's management and financial policies have resulted in AAA bond ratings from all three bond-rating agencies – the highest possible bond rating. A high bond rating indicates financial stability and credit worthiness, allowing the County to save ratepayers through lower interest rates.

### 34 Years of GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award



Gwinnett County has received the Government Finance Officers Association ("GFOA") Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 34 years. The award is presented to governments whose budget documents meet certain criteria, including presenting the budget as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device.

### Working Toward Modernization of Functions



The Department of Financial Services is implementing new systems and workflows to modernize the Department's functions. For example, the Department is in the process of implementing GovGrants for grants management support, DocuSign for electronic contract workflows, and is in the planning phase of a cloud-based ERP system.

## Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the Financial Services Department resulted in 55 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all Department observations and recommendations.

Staff were generally positive about leadership in the Department on a personal level. Leadership regularly engages with staff and encourages feedback from all levels. While lines of communication have been established via the Department's reporting structure, supervisors are generally understanding when senior leadership reaches out directly to staff-level employees and those employees respond in kind. Leadership is known for being accepting of mistakes and encouraging staff to participate in team building exercises.

Expectations for Department staff are high in order to successfully implement Department and County initiatives that occasionally exceed the duties and responsibilities listed in initial job descriptions. Coupled with staffing issues and the relative inexperience of many staff, high expectations create high-pressure situations within the Department. While staff generally agreed micromanagement is not an issue within the Department, leadership is perceived to heavily scrutinize some regular tasks and analyses, resulting in duplicative analyses and perceptions of lack of trust in employees' capabilities and expertise.

The Accounting Division's staffing structure has extremely limited growth opportunities, with only one position between the Financial Analyst II level and Manager level. The Department prefers a CPA licensure for any supervisory position but provides no incentive for staff pursuing or becoming licensed as CPAs. Staff feel a lack of growth opportunities have led to high levels of turnover in the Division as staff leave for opportunities in private industry and in other County departments.

Journal entries are completed by end-user departments in a decentralized manner, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. The decentralized model also results in a lack of authority for the Accounting Section when trying to compel end-user departments to complete transactions in a timely manner. This impacts the Department's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently.

The County does not have a comprehensive fixed asset management policy governing how departments should record and track their fixed asset inventory. This leads to each end-user department recording asset-related transactions and reporting asset status in different systems and manners, resulting in challenges for the Department staff responsible for oversight of the inventory process. Lack of guidance from County leadership also results in a lack of authority for the Department when trying to compel end-user departments to provide asset information in a timely manner and prioritize the upkeep of their inventory. County leadership should determine to what degree fixed asset inventory management is a priority and provide guidance to the Department and end-user departments regarding expectations around fixed asset inventory.

There are numerous manual processes throughout the Department, including tasks related to: budget preparation and management; budget-related data collection, management and visualization; grants-related fiscal year closeout and re-establishment of grants, purchase orders, and receivables; procurement functions and bid tabulations; and other functions. These manual processes can result in redundancy, increase the likelihood for human error, and increased staff time expended for limited outputs.

As the County contemplates a new ERP, the Department should consider how the new system can be utilized to make processes more efficient and less prone to human error.

The Budget Division does not consistently leverage modern dashboards, data visualization, or business intelligence tools for data analysis and reporting.

The County does not have a holistic formal grants strategy, allowing each end-user department to determine which grants its own strategy. This results in fragmented grants strategies and may result in inefficient use of time or funding in pursuing grants that don't align with the County's overall strategic mission and direction. The current Grants Manual contemplates high-level evaluation of grant match with County or department strategy, but there is no formal assessment. Departments are applying for grants with a value of less than \$5,000, and spending more than \$5,000 in County time and resources to administer and support the grant.

The Procurement Division overall is reactive to the needs of end-user departments, serving as a functional rather than strategic procurement body. The Procurement Division should consider implementing process changes that allow staff to function more as a strategic procurement body, helping end-user departments better identify their needs and conduct long-range planning. While Department Buyers may not be experts in their assigned department's specialties, Buyers should be familiar enough to help their internal clients address potential deficiencies in procurement documents and provide recommendations to strengthen solicitation requirements and specifications.

Procurement is conducted as a partially decentralized function, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc., especially when it comes to solicitation preparation. The decentralized model also results in lack of authority for the Purchasing Division when trying to compel end-user departments to provide timely information. This impacts the Division's ability to consistently manage workloads and work efficiently. The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions, such as solicitation preparation, to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management. The decentralized model has also resulted in a high-level vendor evaluation process, which many end-user departments feel limits their ability to consistently evaluate vendor performance, or escalate non-performance issues.

The Office of Strategic Excellence ("OSE") provides the opportunity to serve as additional support and staff for departments who want to introduce process improvement and efficiency initiatives, but there is not widespread awareness of the availability to support the efforts, which leads to inconsistent use, or missed opportunities by end-user departments to leverage OSE's expertise and available resources. Additionally, OSE's position within the Finance Department undermines their authority and ability to effectively compel end-user departments to buy into County initiatives.

The County's performance management program provides the Departments with useful information and is ahead of many other public sector entities regarding its performance management applications. In terms of systems, Corporater has served its purpose as the application used to build the Management Framework. However, the application's user interface is not intuitive and lacks some of the features of other data visualization tools. In addition, Corporater is a niche product with limited skill sets available in the open market. To address the usability and skill set challenges with Corporater, the County should define the requirements for new performance management tools and develop a strategy for procuring new performance management applications. The strategy should include using the functionality of the new ERP system for financial and human resources dashboards plus tools and applications for the performance management of non-ERP data.

Many divisions within the Department oversee decentralized functions, such as budget preparation and management, cash management, certificate of insurance collection, safety and risk mitigation, and others. This decentralized model creates challenges for Finance, as end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. The decentralized model also results in lack of authority for divisions within the Department when trying to compel end-user departments to provide timely information. This impacts the Department's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently.

The current organizational structure within the Department has resulted in merging of some transactional and strategic responsibilities, resulting in a loss of strategic functionality. Additionally, certain functions have grown and become more enterprise-wide and strategically focused as they have evolved over time. Housing these functions in the Department has resulted in a loss of autonomy and ability to effectively manage strategic priorities and initiatives for the County.

## Gwinnett County Public Library System

### Introduction

Governed by a Board of Trustees, the current Gwinnett County Public Library System was established in 1996 in compliance with the Official Code of Georgia (“OCGA”) § 20-5-40. While the Library is a component unit of the County, the Library and Board of Trustees possesses a certain level of autonomy to govern themselves in the use of funds and overall operations.

The primary responsibility of the Public Library System is to provide library services to the citizens of Gwinnett County. These services include material borrowing, research assistance, and program creation and coordination.

### Commendations

#### Learning Labs



The GCPL Learning Labs are a unique offering not commonly found in library systems. The Learning Labs provide a space for citizens within the County to use technology and software such as 3-D printers, audio and video equipment, and audio and video editing software. These labs and all necessary materials are free to use and allow County residents the opportunity to learn how to use the equipment and then proficiently use it on their own.

#### Timely and Relevant Community Programs



GCPL designs and offers programs that are timely and relevant for the community in which each branch serves as well as broader social issues and concerns. Branches are able to design their own programs based on the preferences and needs of the community that they serve. This includes programs such as the conversational English class and book clubs for individuals with disabilities.

#### New Start Entrepreneurship Program



Several of the GCPL programs are recognized nationally for their innovation and service to the community. One program is the New Start Entrepreneurship Program, a six-month program designed to assist formerly incarcerated individuals successfully prepare to start a small business.

### Observations/Recommendations Summary

The following summary includes observations and recommendations that were noted at the time of our assessment. As the assessment was conducted in phases over the course of a year, some of the issues were observed at the time of the assessment, but may have been addressed since the observations and recommendations were initially drafted.

The assessment of the GCPL resulted in 24 observations and recommendations. Provided below is a summary of key findings. See separate detailed report for all GCPL observations and recommendations.

Governed by a Board of Trustees, the current Gwinnett County Public Library (“GCPL”) system was established in 1996 in compliance with the Official Code of Georgia (“OCGA”) § 20-5-40. While the Library is a component unit of the County, and receives funding from Gwinnett County, the Library its Board of Trustees possesses a certain level of autonomy to govern themselves in the use of funds and overall operations.



GCPL has a hierarchical structure, which relies on middle management and leadership to manage front-line staff and communicate issues or successes up to more senior leadership. Several front-line and middle management staff noted that senior leadership is not consistently visible within their work areas, although most staff described senior leadership as generally supportive and transparent when there were opportunities for direct interaction and organic discussion.

There is a staff perception that the branches are the most important function and unit of the organization, and that many decisions are driven by prioritizing the needs of the branches and the impact that potential strategies, initiatives, or changes may have on the branches before considering headquarters staff. Some staff noted that leadership may not be fully evaluating how decisions impact headquarters staff, nor proactively communicating those changes with them to appropriately adjust processes or provide their input. This perception also impacts the communication between many of the non-branch services and the branches.

While GCPL conducted a large-scale needs assessment as part of its strategic planning initiative, it does not regularly conduct quantitative updates, nor does it formally or consistently use data collected by partner organizations and governments to ensure GCPL is leveraging updated information about community needs and currently available resources. Some of GCPL's strategic goals are broad, and may be contributing to mission creep and overextension of staff and resources into services that may be available in the County. Additionally, with staff in both the individual branches and Headquarters working towards a similar strategic goal, it is difficult to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that the shared objectives are relevant to each branch and division equally.

GCPL capital projects are funded by Gwinnett County, with GCPL paying for furniture, fixtures, and equipment ("FF&E") purchases then requesting reimbursement from Gwinnett County. There is not a specific County process, nor operating guidance, on what has been approved for purchase, the budget for purchase, nor the format and process for GCPL to request reimbursement and provide supporting documentation. The lack of guidance and support puts GCPL at risk of purchasing FF&E that may not be reimbursed by Gwinnett County.

GCPL staff perceive the relationship with Gwinnett County as competitive or adversarial. GCPL staff also note inconsistent messaging from different County staff and different County departments, and feel that there is no comprehensive strategy or approach unifying the County's interactions with GCPL. Staff acknowledge that there are services that are provided by both GCPL and Gwinnett County, but note that some of these services were provided by GCPL first, or that GCPL's service provision expands the geographic footprint and access to services that may only be provided at a single location, or only intermittently through County departments. As these programs are developed independently, there are also inconsistencies in program needs evaluation, baseline data measurement, and ongoing data collections.

Branch Managers currently have some autonomy as to how they run their branch. Processes and procedures between branches differ which causes confusion for employees and supervisory level staff who transfer between branches often. This can cause confusion or misunderstanding for staff regarding processes and expectations such as communications protocols and program planning reviews.

GCPL does not have a formal, comprehensive customer relationship management tracking system or spreadsheet. This may result in multiple divisions approaching a partner simultaneously, or create the potential for inconsistent messaging to partners.

GCPL volunteers are required to go through a background check before being able to volunteer with the GCPL system, but there is no current interim background check or annual affidavit that volunteers have had no criminal charges in the past year. The lack of recertification or certification of maintenance of status may increase risk and liability for the branches, as volunteers interact with visitors.

GCPL currently produces and disseminates a monthly E-Newsletter to subscribers, and makes it available on their website. The current monthly E-Newsletter only allows for one program or activity from each branch a month to be considered for the newsletter. This may create conflicts in branches having to prioritize and select a single program to promote, which may result in missed opportunities to promote multiple timely programs.

The GCPL is currently not tracking website engagement data or analyzing collected data to understand the impact of blogs, frequently asked questions pages, or other site content. This type of data could be leveraged to better understand current website engagement, and to prepare a more comprehensive website update and strategic marketing plan.

## 5. Conclusion

Gwinnett County has a strong track record of operational excellence. We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as the process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and opportunities for improvement. This Assessment demonstrates the County's emphasis on continuous improvement and its commitment to sustain its operational excellence well into the future.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding of its current state, and Implementation Roadmaps to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the detailed Assessment Reports' recommendations and systematically enhancing the departmental operations and performance.

As of the date of this Comprehensive Executive Summary Report, the County has already begun to implement recommendations contained in the previously issued detailed Assessment Reports. The County should evaluate each recommendation individually, and in the aggregate when designing an implementation strategy. The County may make strategic decisions that may warrant recommendations not being implemented exactly as stated in the reports such as discontinuing certain services or determining different solutions that remedy the situation in a different manner while still achieving a positive outcome. We strongly encourage the County to continue maintaining a dedicated focus of internal and external resources to assist in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the detailed Assessment Reports with specific attention to change management and implementation management throughout the County.



## **Executive Summary:**

Phases 1 and 2 Operational and Performance Assessment – *Support Services, Planning and Development, Law, and Transportation Departments*

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

March 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 2
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 3
- 3. Departments ..... 5
  - 3.A Department of Support Services ..... 6
  - 3.B Planning and Development Department ..... 12
  - 3.C Law Department ..... 18
  - 3.D Department of Transportation ..... 24
- 4. Enterprise-wide Recommendations ..... 29
- 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations ..... 31
- 6. Conclusion ..... 35

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This executive summary report represents the summary work product of Phases 1 and 2 which includes the following departments:

- Phase 1 – Support Services, and Planning and Development
- Phase 2 – Law, and Transportation

Phase 1 fieldwork began in November 2021, and Phase 2 fieldwork began in January 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions. This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement.

This executive summary identifies numerous recommendations and our detailed report provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County’s Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phases 1 and 2 scopes included the following departments:

- Phase 1 – Support Services, and Planning and Development
- Phase 2 – Law, and Transportation

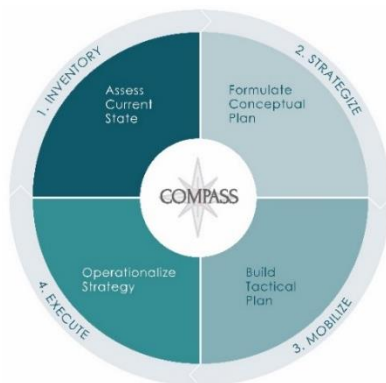
### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments’:
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well”, “what needs improvement”, and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

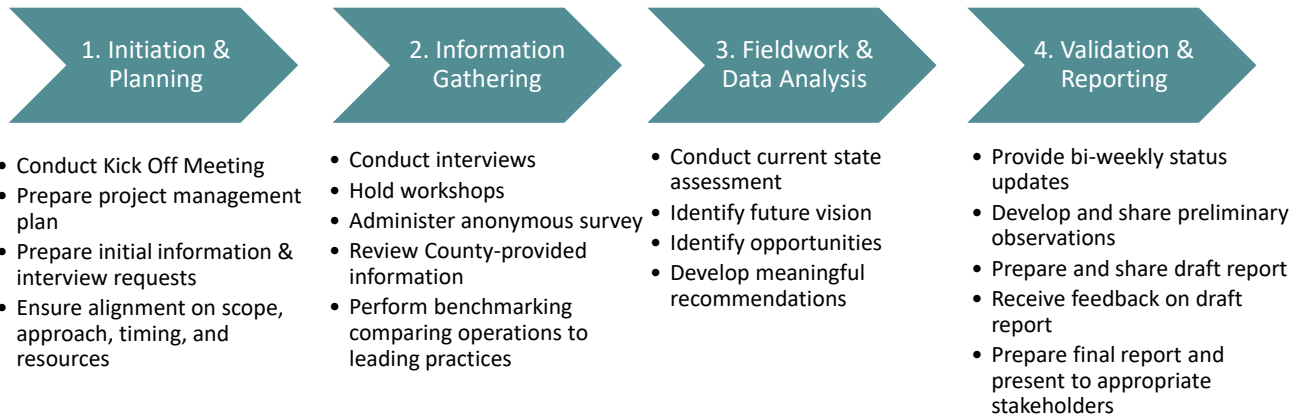
- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service



### Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins’ proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.

We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 200 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This executive summary represents the culmination of our Phase 1 and Phase 2 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This executive summary report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between November 2021 and February 2022. Our detailed report should be read in its entirety to gain additional insight and context.



### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state evaluation and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Support Services
- B. Planning and Development
- C. Law
- D. Transportation

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Leadership and Management
- Survey
- Department Recommendations

# 3.A Department of Support Services

## Support Services At A Glance

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- 1 | Manage the design, construction, and maintenance of County-owned facilities
  - 2 | Manage the acquisition and disposal of real property and right-of-way for County departments
  - 3 | Manage the purchase and maintenance of the County's fleet
  - 4 | Manage solid waste contracts
  - 5 | Provide records management services for County departments and citizens

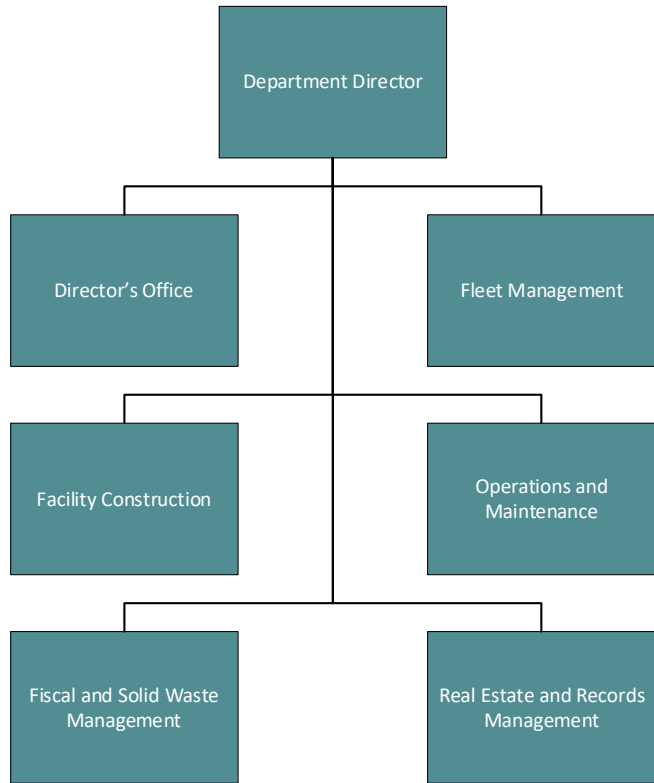
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):**

<b>\$65,017,503</b>	<b>\$52,759,653</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

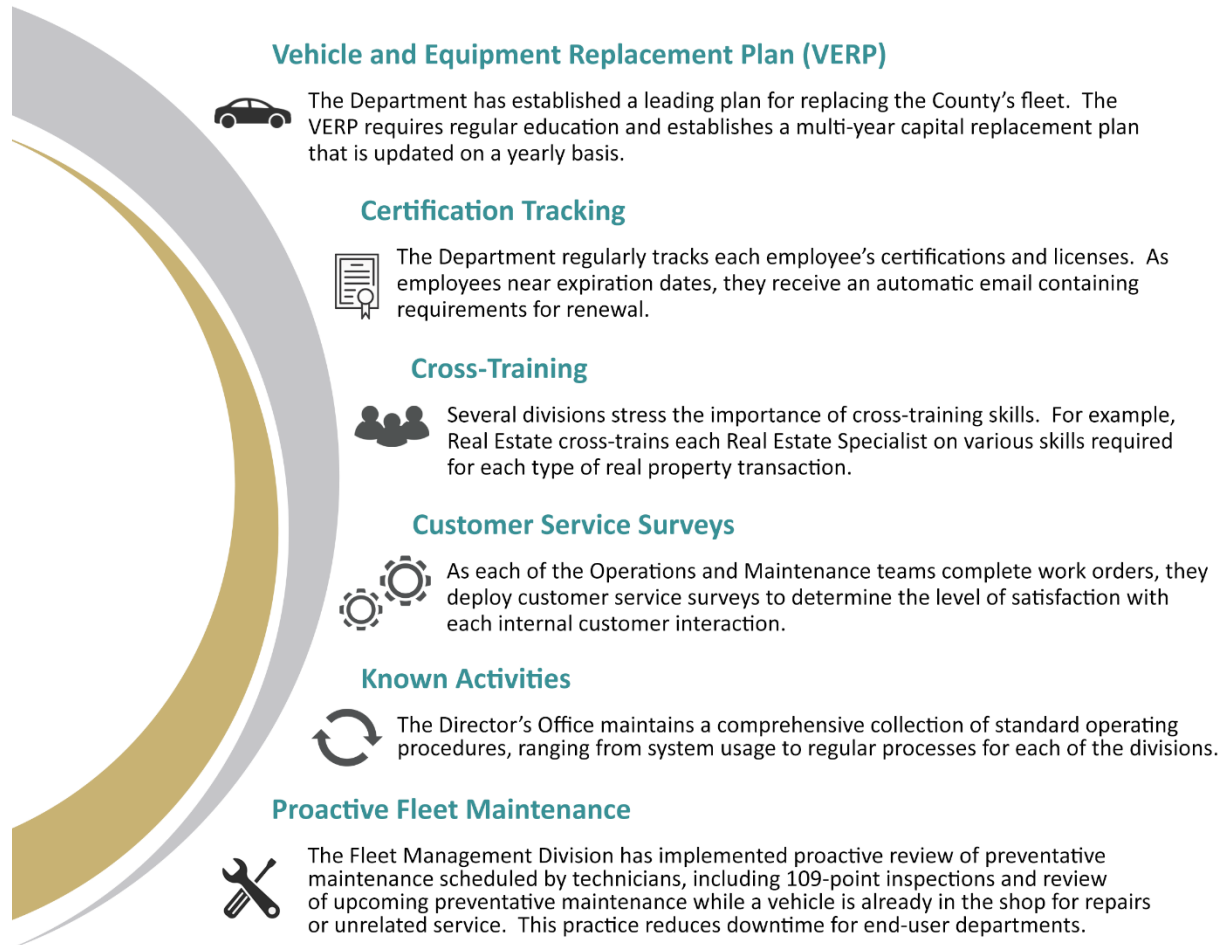
**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through December 2021	Support Services
Filled		144
Allocated		154

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



## Introduction

The Support Services Department (“Support Services” or “Department”) is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned assets, including facilities, property, and fleet. Additionally, the Department is responsible for managing the County government’s capital construction projects, records storage, and mail services. The Department’s primary external-facing responsibility is management of the solid waste collection services in unincorporated Gwinnett County – any part of Gwinnett outside the 16 municipalities.

## Organization

The Support Services Department is led by a Department Director. Department staff are organized into six divisions:

- Director’s Office
- Facility Construction
- Fleet Management
- Fiscal and Solid Waste Management
- Operations and Maintenance
- Real Estate and Records Management

## Leadership and Management

Department leadership is very hands-on in a number of divisions, including having the Department Director review individual documents for content and grammar changes. In our time with staff throughout the Department, staff noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. Employees in divisions that tend to have higher visibility noted frequent, proactive engagement with Department leadership. Staff in other divisions cannot recall seeing Departmental leadership in their area for anything other than Departmental meetings, and that many communications about updates or changes were introduced the day that the change was implemented or effective, or after employees had heard information from other divisions or other departments' employees. Multiple Department staff across divisions noted that suggestions for operating enhancements, proposals for process improvement, or technology updates, have either received no response from Department leadership, or have had the requests rejected with no discussion around the rationale for rejection.

Leadership also seems unwilling to push to obtain support and buy-in for new processes and technology. If end-user departments or staff push back on challenges with the new processes or use of technology, those departments or end-users are generally allowed to revert to their prior workflow or process, without any analysis of why the new process or technology was a challenge, or other ways to improve the issues being noted.

Several employees also noted that they feel that Department leadership does not care about the staff. While Department-wide communications are sent via emails, staff expressed concern that they do not see Department leadership engaged with front-line staff in their Department, unless they come to deliver bad news or complaints. Staff expressed a desire to have leadership visit front-line staff to provide accolades in addition to concerns/complaints.

Staff within one section of one Division expressed a desire for better communication and interactions with their supervisor. The staff conveyed experiences which show a lack of trust by the supervisor towards staff, and a lack of trust that the supervisor will take appropriate action and/or escalate issues when appropriate to the Section Manager. Some conversations, as they were described, may rise to the level of unprofessional and/or hostile behavior, but none of the staff indicated they have filed official complaints, other than speaking to the Section Manager.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted an anonymous survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Thirty-six Support Services responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 25%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Support Services' employees were for the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I am proud to work for the County
3. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens

The lowest three scores from Support Services' employees were for the following questions:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I have opportunities to advance within the County
3. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common Department response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Support Services' people are the Department's greatest strength, with strong emphases on teamwork and customer service.
- The Department is reactive, with limited long-range planning.
- The Department's management appears not to trust staff, micromanaging all aspects of the work done within Support Services.
- Support Services needs to better embrace changes in technology, work on going paperless, and consider better technologies and systems to create efficiencies.
- The Department needs a more streamlined process for approval, with bottlenecks in the process resulting in inefficiencies.
- The responses are split on communication – some consider it a strength for the Department, others a weakness – indicating non-uniform communication practices across various divisions and sections.
- Employees who provide internal services to other departments feel their services are often under-valued by the departments served and their needs are often secondary to those of the departments served.
- The Department has limited authority to guarantee accountability, both with its own staff and with other departments.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions and should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology recommendations and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader Departmental priorities.

**Recommendation 2:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should provide strategic direction to all Divisions requesting modification to Department policies, processes, or protocols, to seek active participation, consideration, and input from all Divisions within the Department which are or may be impacted by the revision or modification.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points reported through Management Framework to determine which data best aligns with the Department's key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Recommendation 6:** Departmental leadership should engage with all divisions in strategic planning and goal setting. Where relevant, Departmental leadership should take the lead in creating cross-division lines of communication and collaboration, ensuring consistency in efforts, messaging, and performance tracking. As appropriate, Departmental and division leadership should engage with County leadership to adopt a County-wide plan and strategy for these efforts, and create a collaborative team to ensure appropriate coordination and buy-in across all County departments. Based on the identified initiatives and efforts, a strategic plan for staffing and systems and other costs should be identified and communicated to County leadership to ensure that appropriate resources are provided to assist in helping ensure success.

Once strategies, policies, and procedures have been developed by responsible divisions, Department leadership should support the new or revised practices and consistently enforce the expectations surrounding these efforts with County leadership and other end-user departments.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal complaints about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should create a separate Solid Waste Management Division and consider adding additional staff to support contract oversight and enforcement. The creation of a position to support these efforts would allow the Solid Waste Management Division Director to focus on more strategic efforts, such as recycling and green initiatives and County-level coordination and buy-in.

The Fiscal Management Section should be merged with the Director's Office to create an Administrative Management Division. This Division should include financial and human resources functions as well as serve in a more strategic and analytical role that also works towards strategic efficiency and process improvement across the Department.

Facility Construction should be renamed Facility Planning and Construction and take a more active leadership role in facility planning and lifecycle management across the County. The Division should consider hiring an architect responsible for facility planning and lifecycle management, including regular condition assessments and operational assessments for County departments. This Division should assume responsibility for County-wide space planning needs and submit comprehensive capital and asset maintenance budget requests for the County, in collaboration with the Operations and Maintenance Division.

Operations and Maintenance should create a Strategic Asset Management Section, with a Section Manager. The Program Analyst I and II currently housed in Operations and Maintenance should report to this newly created position. This team would continue to focus on asset management and energy management, as well as more strategic trend analysis and data review to support asset management, preventative maintenance scheduling, and cost projections. The team should provide quality control to assist in ensuring complete, consistent, and accurate entry of work order cost and labor information into Lucity. Strategic Asset Management can also collaborate with Facility Construction to ensure appropriate data is captured. Work order data is often used to prepare operating costs estimates included in the initial budget request process for new facility construction and capital renovation projects. This team should develop and monitor metrics for sustainability and asset management, and ensure adequate time, staff, and budget are made available to support asset preventative maintenance.

Currently, the County budget process is "competitive," with capital maintenance and renovation projects, and even smaller renovation projects such as flooring or paint, competing against the County's other budget priorities and new facility construction needs. The County should consider 10-year maintenance costs in all new facility construction budget requests, including the cost of flooring or fixture replacement and repair, and commit to funding the 10-year maintenance budget without the end-user department or Support Services having to submit these requests through each year's annual competitive budget process.

# 3.B Planning and Development Department

## Planning and Development At A Glance

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 | Encourage high-quality development and promotes the maintenance and revitalization of existing neighborhoods and commercial properties
- 2 | Process building, development, fire, and planning permits and certificates of occupation
- 3 | Process all Occupational Tax Certificates and Alcohol Licenses for businesses in unincorporated Gwinnett County
- 4 | Conduct building, development, and fire inspections
- 5 | Investigate any property maintenance code violation for residential and commercial properties

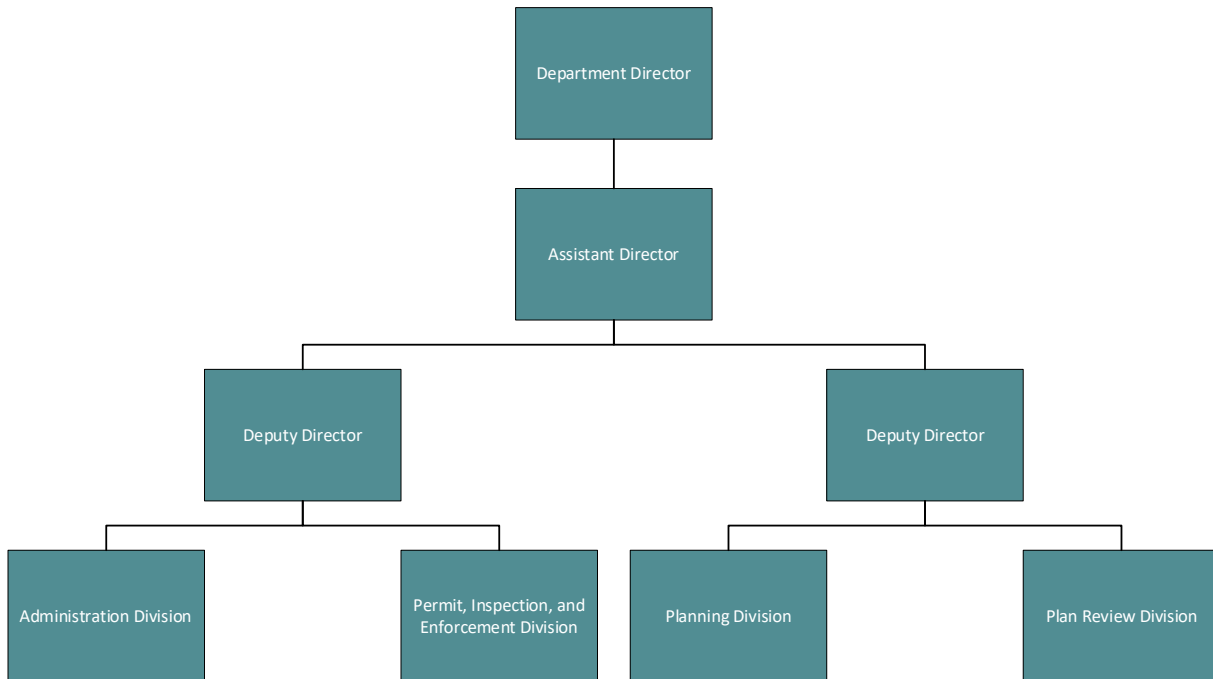
### RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):

<b>\$26,543,102</b>	<b>\$422,952</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

FTE	*through December 2021	Planning & Development
	Filled	
Allocated		130

## Organization





## Commendations

### Data-driven Strategic Position



The Department established two positions – the Fiscal and Special Projects Manager and the Process and Technology Manager – in order to respond strategically to projects, processes, and systems, allowing the Department to make data-driven decisions.

### Wikis



The Administration Division maintains a series of wikis for standard operations, training guides, and system usage.

### Code Education



The Code Enforcement Section emphasizes the importance of public education on relevant ordinances and requirements. The Section provides explanatory documents to potential violators, and maintains a vanity URL to a webpage providing succinct explanations and beneficial resources.

### Alcohol License Education



As businesses apply for alcohol licenses, the Department reviews a one-pager with each applicant covering common issues and concerns.

### Construction Investigation Unit



The Department created a Construction Investigation unit, which provides citizens an opportunity to voice concerns about construction projects. The Department provides information and education to those who may be in violation of code and assist them to become compliant.

### Video Inspections for Minor Infractions



The Department has begun allowing for video re-inspections of minor building inspection infractions, more efficiently utilizing building inspectors' time, and reducing windshield time. The practice is an example of good customer service as it reduces the time between request and inspection, and assists the customer in moving forward with their project.

## Introduction

The Planning and Development Department (“Planning and Development” or “Department”) strives to develop a sustainable community through maintaining standards for new and existing structures in unincorporated Gwinnett County – those parts of the County outside of the 16 municipalities. The Department is responsible for zoning, long-range planning, plan review, permitting and the provision of occupancy certificates, and enforcement of property requirement ordinances.

## Organization

The Planning and Development Department is led by a Department Director, who is supported by an Assistant Director and two Deputy Directors. The Planning and Development Department is divided into four divisions:

- Administration
- Permit, Inspection and Enforcement
- Planning
- Plan Review

## Leadership and Management

Employees in the Department acknowledge that leadership has been making changes that leadership believes are the right changes to move the Department forward, improve efficiency and workflow, and to improve customer service delivery. Many employees feel, however, that leadership is not engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions and making decisions in a silo, either hearing the needs of the “most vocal” division, or failing to consider how decisions made to assist one division may impact another division.

Many changes are communicated via email, leaving staff feeling that the Department doesn’t care about their input, or fails to understand how the change will impact their division or group. Providing direction via email leaves staff to worry that they may have missed directions provided by leadership that is separate or even in conflict with Department policies. Staff expressed frustration with the inconsistencies created by leadership who manage by email, rather than taking time to update Department policies.

Many employees feel that leadership is distant and not engaged within the Department, and only talking to division leadership about upcoming information in the County. Many front-line staff and non-middle management feel that leadership does not understand or appreciate the work that they do, or how changes will impact their work. Leadership has not consistently cultivated relationships with staff, outside of staff meetings, so many employees do not feel that there are opportunities for interaction or to provide feedback or interact informally with Department leadership.

Several Departmental employees also noted that they feel that the County doesn’t care about the staff. Many County-wide communications come out in emails, and staff communicated that they do not see County leadership or elected officials engaged with front-line staff in their Department, unless a subject or specific matter is of interest to that official.

There is also a perception that management, both senior and middle, defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that cases and circumstances receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not County leadership (at either the Section, Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted an anonymous survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Sixty-seven responses were received from Planning and Development employees, representing an approximate response rate of 56%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Planning and Development employees were for the following questions:

1. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens
2. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
3. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role

The lowest three scores from Planning and Development employees were for the following questions:

1. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner
2. I have opportunities to advance within the County
3. I trust Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County

The survey also asked open-ended questions, which included these common response themes:

- Planning and Development's people are the Department's greatest strength, with strong emphases on teamwork, customer service, and work ethic.
- Opinions are split on whether the Department is staffed with employees with high experience levels and those with limited to no experience and institutional knowledge, indicating a disparity between divisions and sections.
- Communication is commonly identified as a Departmental weakness, both in terms of top-down communication and communication between divisions and sections.
- Some divisions and sections suggest executive management does an excellent job listening to front-line staff concerns, while others suggest management is disconnected with the work, again suggesting disparity between divisions and sections.
- Staffing is identified as a common obstacle to improvement – respondents indicate staffing levels are low, growth opportunities are limited, and they are not able to participate in necessary training. Respondents state workloads are heavy enough that when one team member is out, the workload is overwhelming for the remainder of the team. Additionally, workloads due to staffing levels limit the time available for employees to take advantage of training opportunities.
- While customer service is identified as a priority, respondents identify a need for greater public education and communication as an opportunity, including increasing online service offerings.
- Several respondents suggest improved technologies and systems are required, and that new technologies are being rolled out before they are ready and staff has been properly trained.
- The Department's emphasis on customer service results in employees feeling as though their needs and work ethic are not valued. When management doesn't understand the work being done by front-line staff, they emphasize the wrong issues, concerns, and cases.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions and should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology recommendations and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points reported through Management Framework to determine which data best aligns with the Department's key mission and priorities. The Department should continue to leverage the Process and Technology Manager and Fiscal and Special Projects Manager positions to ensure consistent collection and entry of data, and include quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Recommendation 3:** As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff's understanding of specific cases and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all customers - the complainant, property owners, internal customers, etc. - and should recognize that the needs of one should not automatically outweigh the needs of the others, and that oftentimes external customers' needs are best addressed through education. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with front-line staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific case can do so.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider subscribing to a language line or other service that provides access to on-demand translation in a variety of languages.

**Recommendation 5:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should identify and consistently leverage available customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions. The Department should consider creating more standard templates and forms across divisions for publication of customer-facing materials, to ensure a more consistent customer experience regardless of the division they initially engage.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should collaborate with Human Resources to seek guidance and consultation of opportunities to address the compensation, work-assignment, and job-related concerns within the merit system structure and County policies. The Department should allow staff interested in broadening their technical and work experiences to request a broader spectrum of work assignments within their assigned division and/or across divisions.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should explore technological opportunities that allow management and leadership to review and provide feedback to Staff Reports electronically. Further, Department leadership should create a work environment where staff are comfortable and encouraged to ask questions about the feedback, raise issues of inconsistencies of feedback, or raise issues of compliance with current policies, procedures, and guidance.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluations and identified issues about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

# 3.C Law Department

## At A Glance

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 | Represent the government of Gwinnett County, Board of Commissioners, other elected county officials, employees, authorities, constitutional officers, courts, and other related governmental organizations
- 2 | Draft easements for public facilities, condemn property needed for public works projects, and respond to petitions to quiet title
- 3 | Review contracts for land purchases, oversee zoning and land use policies, and litigate tax appeals
- 4 | Evaluate and defend claims against Gwinnett County involving issues of risk toward Gwinnett County employees and citizens

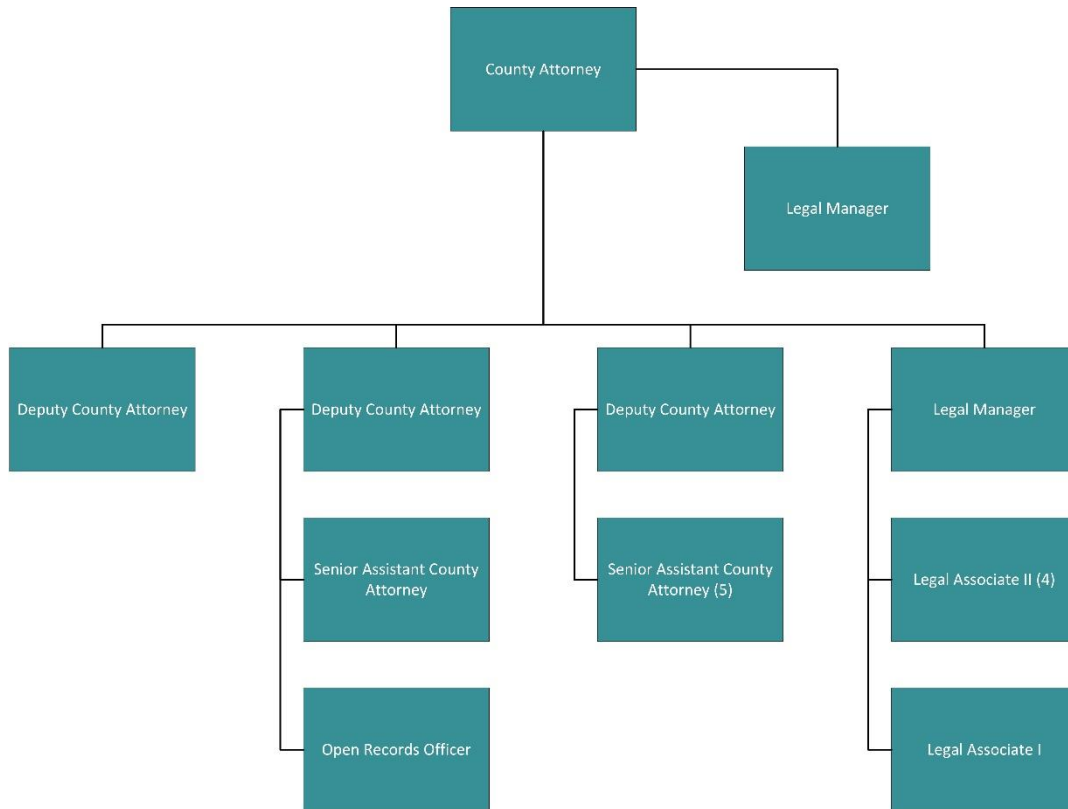
### RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):

<b>\$2,788,416</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

FTE	*through December 2021	Law Department
	Filled	18
Allocated	18	

## Organization



## Commendations



### Open Records Officer



The Department houses the County's Open Records Officer position to ensure consistent and compliant responses to all Open Records Requests.

### Expertise



The Department has created a team of experienced, dedicated attorneys and staff who have experience in a variety of local government legal fields, creating a diverse, experienced team who have the skills and expertise to represent the County in a variety of legal matters.

### Transparent Process



The Department uses GovQA, an online public records workflow and response management system, to track and manage Open Records Requests. GovQA allows customers a one-stop opportunity to submit requests, see the progress of their request, receive the requested information, and pay for any associated fees in a single system.

## Introduction

The Department of Law is responsible for providing legal services and legal advice to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, government, and governmental organizations including their employees, authorities, elected officials, and constitutional officers.

The Department of Law also houses the County Open Records Officer, responsible for ensuring all County departments are responding to open records requests in a consistent and compliant manner.

## Organization

The Department is led by the County Attorney, who is supported by a Legal Manager who supports the County Attorney and helps to manage confidential matters.

There are three Deputy County Attorneys, with Senior Assistant County Attorneys who report to two of the three Deputy County Attorneys. The Senior Assistant County Attorney who supports the HR and IT Departments reports to the Deputy County Attorney who directly supports the Board of Commissioners. The remaining Senior Assistant County Attorneys report to another Deputy County Attorney. This imbalanced organizational structure also results in an imbalanced workload, with the Deputy County Attorney responsible for overseeing the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys spending a significant portion of their time managing the attorneys, assigning workload, and serving as a resource and mentor to the assigned attorneys. Additionally, the Deputy County Attorney who oversees the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys is also responsible for serving as backup for their workloads.

The Department's attorneys are supported by a team of Legal Associate IIs, who report to a Legal Manager. The Legal Associates are overseen by a Legal Manager, who also serves as the Office Manager, responsible for the Department's financial functions and budget management, Aderant management, and new hire onboarding. There is also a Legal Associate I who serves as the front desk reception and provides general office support.

### Leadership and Management

The County Attorney supports attorneys, provides opportunity for growth, and exposure to new areas to some extent. There is not always an overlap in workload between the County Attorney and other attorneys, so there are not always interactions outside of staff meetings. The County Attorney's interactions with each of the three Deputy County Attorneys varies based on the assigned matters and projects. The differences in interactions and relationships creates the perception amongst other staff that there is inconsistent treatment or even "favoritism" in how certain Deputy County Attorneys are treated.

The current number of attorneys doesn't allow for backups or adequate cross-training. This may create issues where managers have to support their own workload plus the workload of the attorneys they supervise in periods of absence. This most directly impacts the Deputy County Attorney who supports five Senior Assistant County Attorneys.

The Legal Associates perceive the Legal Manager's management style as "hands-off". There are minimal proactive communications or touchpoints about workload. Currently, the Legal Associates are expected to come to the Legal Manager with workload issues or the need for additional resources. Additionally, none of the Legal Associates have been cross-trained in the Legal Manager's role; only the Legal Manager serving as the County Attorney's assistant has that training. Most of the Legal Associate IIs are hired with experience, so there is minimal training other than to provide general expectations for Gwinnett County, and an overview of County-specific applications or software that may be utilized. Some of the Legal Associate IIs' predecessors had notes or binders with their processes, but none have been formalized across the division.

Staff noted feeling generally supported by Management in terms of workload, but felt that there was a culture of mistrust around everyone having the trust and independence to manage their own workload and complete their assignments. An area cited as a frequent example is the Department's telework policy. Currently, staff and Senior Assistant County Attorneys may only telework one day every two weeks, with supervisors being prohibited to telework. Each morning, employees who telework must develop a daily list of planned work for the day, and then must write up a summary of what was accomplished at the end of each day. Staff feel that this policy implies a mistrust of the staff's ability to manage workload and perform while teleworking.

Some staff noted that a lack of proactive communications also impacted trust of management. This coupled with a failure of discussed initiatives or efforts to come to fruition has led to a hesitancy to trust in the ability of management to follow through.



## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted an anonymous survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Eleven responses were received from Law Department employees, representing an approximate response rate of 61%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Law Department employees were for the following questions:

1. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role
2. Management consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority
3. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County

The lowest three scores from Law Department employees were for the following questions:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I have opportunities to advance within the County
3. My workload is appropriate for my role

The survey also asked open-ended questions, which included these common response themes:

- The experience and specialized expertise of the Law Department staff is consistently identified as the Department's greatest strength, followed by the Department's commitment to responsive client relations. The staff is identified as professional and as having a strong work ethic.
- Respondents identify a need for more consistent and comprehensive onboarding, as well as ongoing professional development and cross-training opportunities. Similarly, promotional opportunities within the Department are limited.
- Respondents state limited staffing, as well as uneven responsibilities across staff at the same or similar levels, results in heavy workloads across the Department.
- Technology is a major concern within the Department. Some feel the longer-serving members of the Department are resistant to change and the utilization of newer, better systems. Some believe the current system is inefficient and is adding processes with limited benefit, recommending a better technology strategy be considered. Some suggest the need for a case tracking system, in addition to a better document management system.
- The organizational structure leads to staff working in silos, with limited opportunities for team building and collaboration.
- The Department's teleworking policy is a common concern of the respondents. Staff feel the lack of regular teleworking opportunities, and constant check-ins while teleworking, suggests a lack of trust between management and staff.
- Several respondents identify the supervisory structure as an impediment to the operations of the Department. Staff feel the current structure leads to a lack of inclusivity and has resulted in unequal treatment of different members of the Department staff.
- Concerns with management include limited top-down communication and an absence of long-term goals and long-term planning within the Department.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions and should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology recommendations and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider realigning the organizational chart using client departments with similar matters. The Department should also ensure a more equitable allocation of Senior Assistant County Attorneys amongst the three Deputy County Attorneys to allow for succession planning and attorney support for more complex or time-consuming matters assigned to all of the Deputy County Attorneys.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should continue to add Assistant Attorney positions and assign at least one Assistant Attorney to support each client department. This will also support succession planning and provide additional opportunities exposure to new or different client departments or matters, such as real estate or litigation.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should create a more detailed, robust onboarding and training process for newly hired attorneys and staff. The onboarding and training process should include more training on Gwinnett County requirements, such as the process for records retention, as well as include more training on using Aderant. This may also require the creation of more user guides or job aids for standard processes.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should review the staffing of attorneys relative to workload. Additionally, the Legal Manager should hold regular Legal Associate II meetings to review workload and consider temporary reassignment or support of specific attorneys based on workload.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department needs to create unique naming standards for use in Aderant, including identification of order of title as well as which acronyms or abbreviations are to be used.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should consider hiring an Open Records Specialist, to provide additional support and training to end-user departments as well as to serve as a back-up to the tasks performed by the Open Records Officer. In the interim, the Department should ensure another Departmental staff member is fully cross-trained in the responsibilities of the Open Records Officer, especially those around ensuring compliance with the timelines for responding to record requests.

**Recommendation 7:** The Legal Manager should institute regular meetings with the Legal Associates to review workload, help address issues or concerns, and ensure consistent communication about office operations or other changes.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should review and revise the current Policy Manual and Employee Handbook to reflect current practices. The Policy Manual and Employee Handbook should be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with current practice.

The Department should also identify opportunities for the creation of job aids or user guides that provide clear foundational parameters for matters such as contract review. Where relevant, the Department may also need to consider crafting County policies to ensure consistent end-user department processes for matters such as anti litem hold notification or open record request processing.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should consider revising the contract review process to allow for staff to review contracts and other agreements for basic terms and conditions and data point verification, reserving attorney time for more complex analysis and review.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents. The County should also establish a standard timeline and process for contract review, to ensure that all contracts are reviewed at the same or similar points in the overall contract review and acceptance process and to reduce risk for the County.

**Recommendation 11:** The Open Records Officer should maintain current lists of all trained end users and power users for GovQA. The Open Records Officer should routinely review these lists with end-user departmental leadership and ensure that separated or reassigned employees' access is revoked or revised in a timely manner.

# 3.D Department of Transportation

## Transportation At A Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 Maintain the roadways and road infrastructure, sidewalks, bridges, signs, traffic signals, cameras, fiber optic cable, transit buses, and the airport which comprise the County's transport infrastructure
- 2 Provide traffic engineering services to provide County residents with efficient transportation
- 3 Address critical capital-related public transit needs through construction, asset management, and technology upgrades

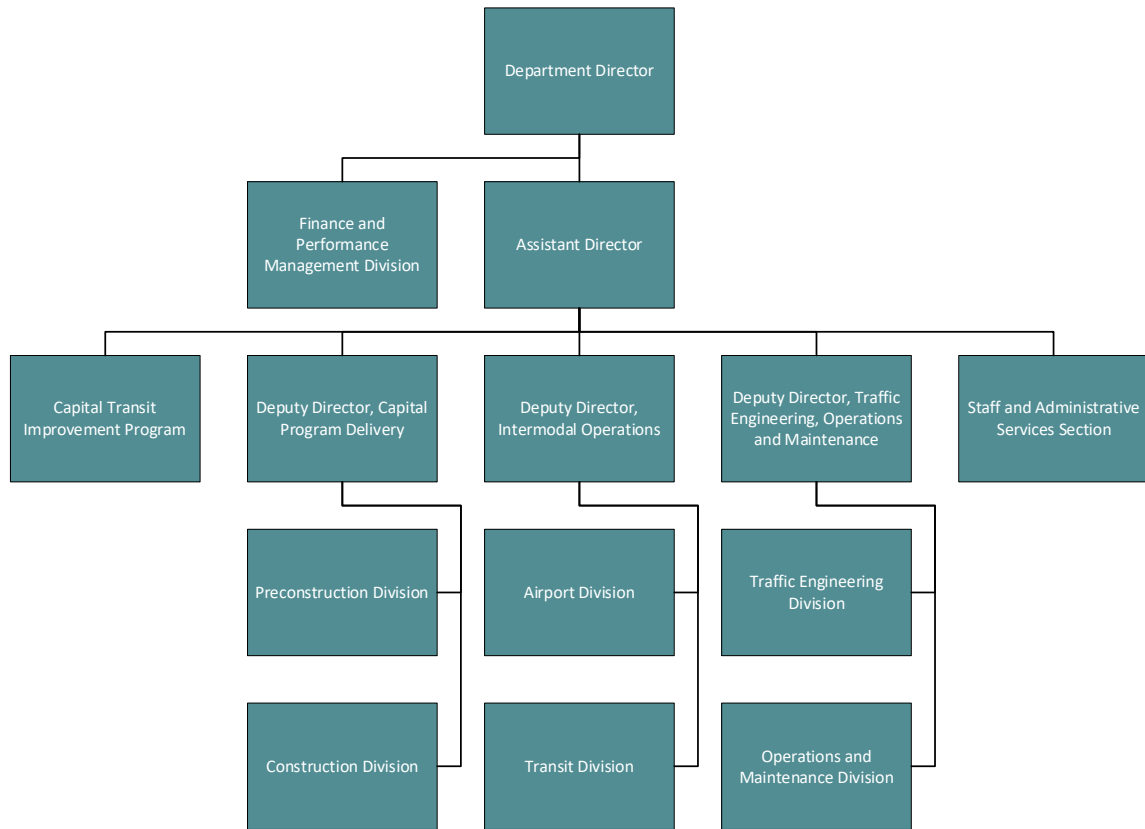
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):**

<b>\$42,267,638</b>	<b>\$130,033,707</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through December 2021	Department of Transportation
FTE	Filled	152
	Allocated	175

## Organization



## Commendations

### Traffic Control Center Collaborations



The Department's Traffic Control Center (TCC) collaborates with the Gwinnett County Police Department in sharing access to the County's live traffic camera feed, as well as additional equipment, for law enforcement purposes at no additional cost to the County. The Department is currently exploring additional opportunities for similar collaborations.

### Locally Controlled Transportation Infrastructure



The Department controls eight percent of all traffic signals in the state, the largest number of locally controlled traffic signals in Georgia. This means the Department is maintaining and managing traffic signals at nearly 750 intersections across the County.

### Service Request Center



The Department created one unit assigned to respond to all citizen-initiated concerns, complaints, and issues. The unit is connected to the Department's work order system so the Center can enter the details of the concern directly into the work order and route appropriately, creating more efficient response times and better customer service.

### Collaborative Relationships with Transportation Partners



The Department has cultivated strong, strategic partnerships with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL). On such program is Safe Trips in a Connected Transportation Network (ST-CTN) with ARC, providing County residents with safe and efficient trip routing, increasing the accessibility of the County's transportation infrastructure.

### Citizen Project Selection Committee



The Department has established a Citizen Project Selection Committee to help select and recommend SPLOST projects for funding. This body provides public input representing 11 communities within the County: homeowners from each commission district, senior citizens, industry, schools, environmental groups, civic clubs, young professionals, and freight.

## Introduction

The Department of Transportation ("Transportation," "DOT," or "Department") is responsible for providing efficient and accessible transportation to the residents of Gwinnett County. The Department maintains roads, intersections, and rights-of-way, as well as the striping, signage, and traffic signals throughout the County's infrastructure system. Additionally, the Department is responsible for Gwinnett County Transit and Gwinnett County Airport – Biscoe Field.

## Organization

The Department of Transportation is led by a Department Director and Assistant Director. The Department is organized into the following divisions/sections:

- Finance and Performance Management
- Capital Transit Improvement Program
- Capital Program Delivery
- Intermodal Operations
- Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance
- Staff and Administrative Support Section

## Leadership and Management

At the County level, Department staff noted that communications feel more reactive than intentional. Information is being shared with different Departments on different timelines, so staff often hear from employees in other departments before hearing the information from an official Gwinnett County leadership source. Staff also perceive a lack of visibility into County leadership and Commissioners, unless working in a highly-visible/high-priority area of the County.

Within the Department, staff perceive that management is available, supportive and approachable. A common perception by staff is that some managers think they are communicating better with staff than they actually are. However, staff perceive that Departmental leadership has a limited understanding of what all divisions do, and that management does not understand the impacts of making unilateral changes and/or directives.

Communications and engagement feel inconsistent. While some of the Finance and Performance Division staff participated in the Plant Moran needs analysis for a new ERP, those employees never heard the results of the process, nor where the County currently is in the process of procuring a new ERP.

There is a perception that more Department leadership are “out of the loop” since relocating to One Justice as there are fewer organic opportunities for face to face communication. Department leadership requires Section Managers to work from One Justice Square for one- to two-days each week so supervisors will be available to Department leadership and other Section Managers for communication regarding project discussions. However, with no coordination across Section Managers, the result is often an unrelated assortment of One Justice Square each day.

DOT has intentionally tried to build a sense of community and relationships among the staff – there have been potlucks, informal meetings, and “community” building events. This does not fully translate to understanding duties, responsibilities, workload, etc., but has shown a positive effect on morale and sense of belonging within the Department.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted an anonymous survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Sixty-three responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 41%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Transportation employees were for the following questions:

1. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens
2. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role
3. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County

The lowest three scores from Transportation employees were for the following questions:

1. I feel the staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner
3. My workload is appropriate for my role

The survey also asked open-ended questions, which included these common response themes:

- The Department staff is hardworking and each individual team exhibits strong teamwork. The staff take pride in their work and in Gwinnett County, resulting in a drive to serve the community and be responsive to citizens.
- The diversity of the staff within the Department has grown. While respondents suggest additional diversity is necessary, the growth in diversity over the last few years has been noted.
- Communication is divisive between respondents: some include communication in their list of Departmental strengths, while others identify a need for greater top-down and inter-divisional communication. This suggests inconsistent communication between divisions, sections, and teams in the Department.
- Respondents acknowledge staff levels can be considered low, partially because the Department has difficulty retaining talented staff. Respondents identify non-competitive pay, limited training opportunities, and too many internal candidates for too few internal promotions as reasons the Department struggles with staff retention.
- According to Department staff, the supervisors and upper management who are strong in their jobs and their leadership skills are excellent to work for, however that is not universally the case for all managers. While the strong managers listen to their staff, other managers struggle with top-down communication, treat various teams or staff members differently, and do not hold their staff or their contractors properly accountable.
- Technology is identified as a common issue within the Department. Outdated technology and lack of computer access for all employees results in quality issues, while limited automation of processes and issues logging results in redundancies in project tracking. Better systems and more access could allow for better asset management, as well as general quality control.
- Some respondents feel the Department has set an expectation that staff will work overtime, especially for salaried workers who do not receive overtime pay. Respondents acknowledge some staff arrive nearly two hours prior to the start of their shift and stay two or more hours after, while also being prepared to come into the office at night or on the weekends, even when not on call. Additionally, staff are expected to work full 40 to 50-hour work weeks on top of County-sponsored training programs.
- While respondents suggest most staff are proud to work for Gwinnett and be responsive to the citizens, there exists a concern the Department is not successfully telling its story to the Board of Commissioners or to the public. Respondents identify limited branding to showcase the work the Department is doing or has done, and recommend the Department take advantage of more opportunities to communicate the benefits and necessities of projects to the Commissioners and the citizens they represent.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions and should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology recommendations and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluation of vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points reported through Management Framework to determine which data best aligns with the Department's key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Recommendation 4:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise. Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.



## 4. Enterprise-wide Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

## 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations

County leadership should consider the following “quick win” recommendations extracted from the full report for each of the Phase 1 and 2 In-Scope Departments. These recommendations may provide an opportunity for executive leadership to make an immediate approval/decision or prompt action to provide rapid successes:

### Support Services

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** The Support Services staff responsible for issuing badges should coordinate with the Operations and Maintenance Division to ensure that there are updated maps reflecting the placement and identifying information for all security readers in County buildings. The Division should also consider working with end-user departments to create standard access groupings for specific divisions or user titles within each department, to standardize security access and better document when requests for access exceed norms for a position or division.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Department Director should create and encourage inter-divisional communication and collaboration that focuses on integrated and efficient process design and process improvement.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** The Department needs to prioritize filling the two vacant division director positions. Once those positions are filled, the Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** The Fleet Management Division should create standardization guides in using the AssetWorks system for task code use and perform regular quality control checks to ensure task codes are used consistently and accurately.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The County should include the Fleet Management Division in the next round of facility condition assessments, to determine the current and future space needs of the Division.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** The County should require that all calls about Solid Waste service within Gwinnett County should go through the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Call Center, to ensure a complete and accurate depiction of the customer service requests and hauler performance.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** The County should update the Solid Waste landing page of the Gwinnett County website to allow for customer lookup of address eligibility for inclusion in County solid waste pickup. The County should also consider allowing citizens to submit complaints through the website, including missed pickup, damage or spills occurring during routes, or other requests.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** The County should research and implement signature policies and practices that allow for the use of secured digital signatures for invoice approvals and other tasks.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9A:** The Department should consider at an appropriate time replacing the current tables in the Support Services Conference Center with tables that are lighter, designed to be moved on castors, and provide more flexibility in how the equipment is utilized.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9B:** The Department should require customers who use the Support Services Conference Rooms to provide layout and design requests for the set-up of the room at least three business days prior to the reservation date. The Department should also consider prohibiting or limiting last-minute, on-demand requests to move furniture in the Conference Rooms.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** Support Services should collaborate with the Information Technology Department for assistance in assessing the functionality of the Versatile Retention system and determine additional system and budgetary requirements for full-operational efficiency of the system.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11A:** Support Services should collaborate with the County Purchasing Department to determine requirements for Mail Services vendor to provide state-of-the art/current computer equipment with minimum processing requirements. The Purchasing Department may recommend the re-bid of this service to achieve current pricing and equipment standards.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11B:** Support Services should request that Information Technology Services provide an assessment of the number and type of computers and ancillary equipment needed to support the number of full-time Mail Services Staff, then follow appropriate protocols to budget for and purchase the additional computer equipment.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** Support Services should replace laptops and flip phones with smartphones throughout the Department. This would eliminate the burden of connecting to Wi-Fi at various locations and carrying around cumbersome laptops. The smartphones must have cellular service so that they do not require Wi-Fi to access the internet. Although this service would incur a monthly cost, it would also reduce manual labor and time.

## Planning and Development

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** The Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division (PIED) should identify the primary types of information needed by Officers and compare this list with County systems or databases that may provide the information. The Division should coordinate with other divisions and departments to determine if access may be made available to Officers. Alternatively, the Division should purchase subscriptions to resources.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** PIED's Commercial Code Enforcement Team should continue reviewing and begin implementing means to encourage businesses to appear in court for code violations. For example, Code Enforcement Officers could issue citations to individual parties with responsibility over the business, such as an owner or manager, after continued non-compliance by the business entity.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 15:** The Department should consider expanding the concept of the "Pre-Application Meeting" to additional Divisions for expanded support to the customer, with the addition benefit of information for the Department.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 16:** The Plan Review Division should collaborate with the Department's Administration Division to create a Frequently Asked Questions resource that could be posted on the Department's website or have hard copies available for in-person customers.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 17:** The Department should escalate/communicate the need for enterprise-wide credit card processing standards to the Finance Department and include the new ERP system project requirements if applicable.

## Law Department

**Quick-Win Recommendation 18:** The Legal Manager should institute regular meetings with the Legal Associates to review workload, help address issues or concerns, and ensure consistent communication about office operations or other changes.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 19:** It was noted during Law Department focus groups that the Information Technology Department is working with the Legal Managers on evaluating Case Management systems to replace Aderant. However, some of the Attorneys were unaware of the evaluation and none of the Attorneys were involved in the process. We recommend that the County continue the process to evaluate alternatives to replace Aderant and expand the working group to include a group of Attorneys to further define and validate the system requirements. In addition, we recommend that the County expand the system requirements to include the requirements for eDiscovery, Litigation Holds and Privileged Log to determine if the Case Management system vendor have solutions for these processes.

## Transportation Department

**Quick-Win Recommendation 20:** The Division should assess whether the current SharePoint process can be modified to replace the manual entry of invoices on a spreadsheet and reduce the duplication of entry.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 21:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 22:** Preconstruction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify engineering firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly impacts the assignment of work provided to each engineering firm.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 23:** The Department should allow the Contracted Services Section and the County Purchasing Division to provide additional training to all areas of the Department on better methods to manage performance and service contracts, including how to informally and formally address accountability and performance concerns that are articulated in the contract.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 24A:** Reports and accusations of theft over a certain dollar threshold should be reported to law enforcement for investigation. Additionally, reports of theft, missing equipment, or inappropriate use of County equipment should be reported to appropriate levels of leadership within the Department and County, with mandatory escalation based on the amounts/value and frequency. Communications should also include Finance and Risk Management Departments.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 24B:** The Department should consider installing security cameras and other security equipment with recording functionality to deter future thefts, as well as provide details, footage, audio, etc. to law enforcement in cases where theft occurs, or missing equipment is reported.

The Department should also consult with the Department of Water Resources for advice on the security equipment they have installed on their property, which is next door to the DOT Central campus.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 25:** The Department should collaborate with Technology Services Department to determine options to providing staff with more frequent (computer/laptop/smartphone) access to County systems, information, and email.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 26:** The current stock of Toughbook laptops in Operations and Maintenance Division should be deployed to more field staff assigned to workstations/work barns away from central operations to ensure staff have access to computers and County systems.

## 6. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.



# Phases 1 and 2 Operational and Performance Assessment – *Support Services, Planning and Development, Law, and Transportation Departments*

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

February 2022





# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 2
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 4
- 3. Departments ..... 7
  - 3.A Department of Support Services ..... 8
    - 3.A.1 Department of Support Services – Director’s Office Division..... 20
    - 3.A.2 Department of Support Services – Facility Construction Division..... 25
    - 3.A.3 Department of Support Services – Fleet Management Division..... 31
    - 3.A.4 Department of Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division ..... 45
    - 3.A.5 Department of Support Services – Operations and Maintenance Division ..... 53
    - 3.A.6 Department of Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management Division ..... 66
    - 3.A.7 Department of Support Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations .. 83
    - 3.A.8 Department of Support Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations..... 89
  - 3.B Planning and Development Department..... 94
    - 3.B.1 Planning and Development Department– Administration Division..... 107
    - 3.B.2 Planning and Development Department– Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division ..... 114
    - 3.B.3 Planning and Development Department– Planning Division..... 129
    - 3.B.4 Planning and Development Department– Plan Review Division..... 138
  - 3.C Law Department ..... 151
    - 3.C.1 Law Department - Technology Observations and Recommendations..... 176
  - 3.D Department of Transportation ..... 178
    - 3.D.1 Department of Transportation – Finance and Performance Management Division .... 191
    - 3.D.2 Department of Transportation – Capital Transit Improvement Program ..... 195
    - 3.D.3 Department of Transportation – Capital Program Delivery ..... 196
    - 3.D.4 Department of Transportation – Intermodal Operations Division ..... 202
    - 3.D.5 Department of Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance Division ..... 211
    - 3.D.6 Department of Transportation –Staff and Administrative Services Section ..... 224
    - 3.D.7 Department of Transportation – Technology Observations and Recommendations ... 228
    - 3.D.8 Department of Transportation – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 232
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 234
- 5. Conclusion..... 237
- 6. Strategic Roadmap ..... 238

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This report represents the work product of Phases 1 and 2 which includes the following departments:

- Phase 1 – Support Services, and Planning and Development
- Phase 2 – Law, and Transportation

Phase 1 fieldwork began in November 2021, and Phase 2 fieldwork began in January 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phases 1 and 2 scopes included the following departments:

- Phase 1 – Support Services, and Planning and Development
- Phase 2 – Law, and Transportation

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well”, “what needs improvement”, and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

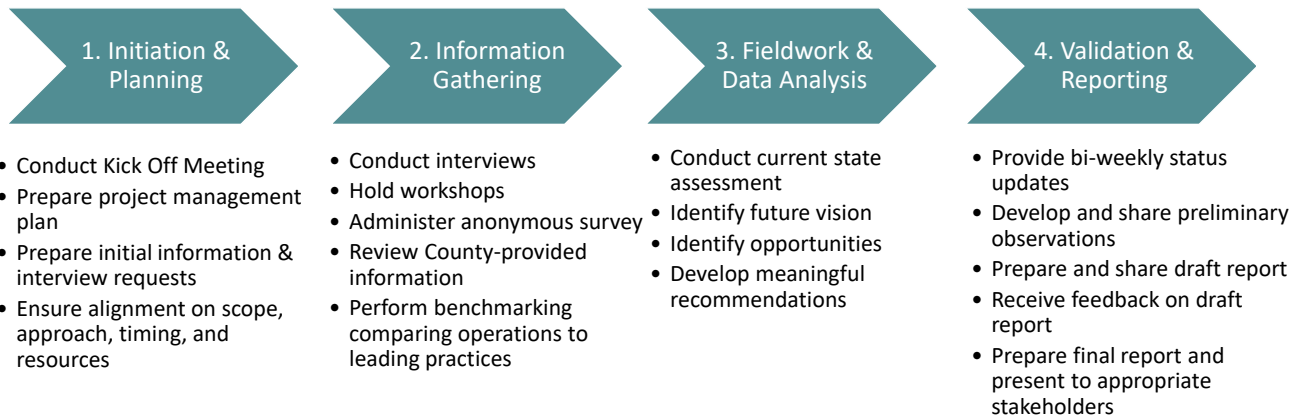
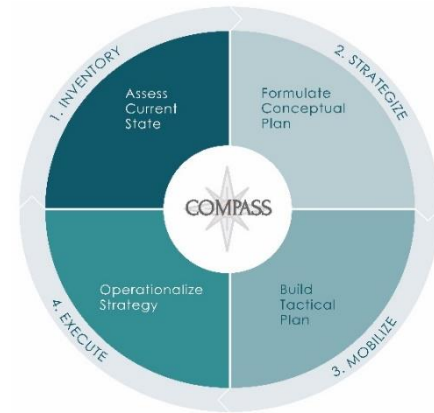
- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

## Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.

We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 200 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This report represents the culmination of our Phase 1 and Phase 2 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between November 2021 and February 2022.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Support Services
- B. Planning and Development
- C. Law
- D. Transportation

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Strategic Priorities
- Leadership and Management
- Technology
- Customer Service
- Survey
- Technology Observations and Recommendations
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

Also within each departmental section, divisions are described and contain the following divisional attributes:

- Introduction
- Key Functions
- Communications
- Strategic Initiatives
- Systems and Applications
- Data and Performance Analysis
- Division-specific Observations and Recommendations

# 3.A Department of Support Services

## Support Services At A Glance

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- 1 | Manage the design, construction, and maintenance of County-owned facilities
  - 2 | Manage the acquisition and disposal of real property and right-of-way for County departments
  - 3 | Manage the purchase and maintenance of the County's fleet
  - 4 | Manage solid waste contracts
  - 5 | Provide records management services for County departments and citizens

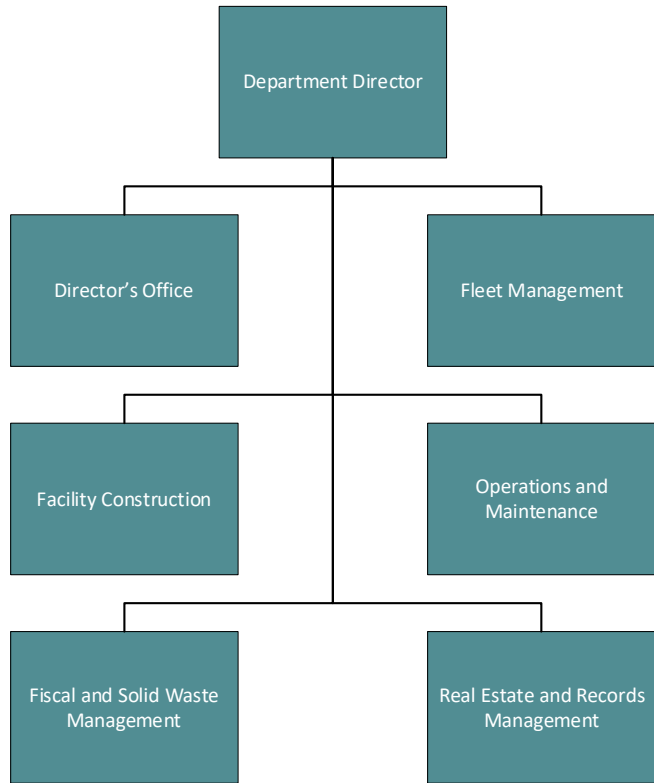
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):**

<b>\$65,017,503</b>	<b>\$52,759,653</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

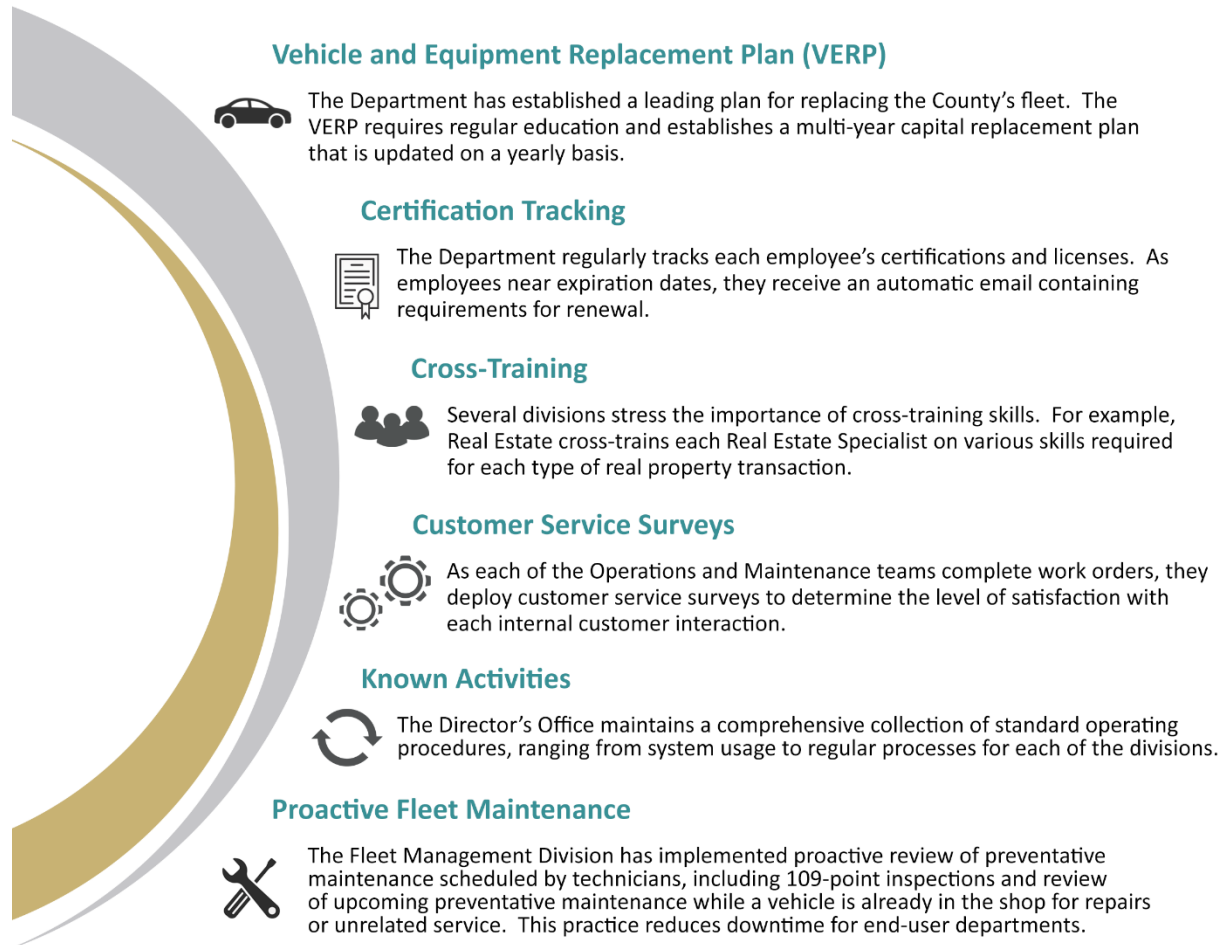
	*through December 2021	Support Services
FTE	Filled	144
	Allocated	154

## Organization Structure





## Commendations



## Introduction

The Support Services Department (“Support Services” or “Department”) is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned assets, including facilities, property, and fleet. Additionally, the Department is responsible for managing the County government’s capital construction projects, records storage, and mail services. The Department’s primary external-facing responsibility is management of the solid waste collection services in unincorporated Gwinnett County – any part of Gwinnett outside the 16 municipalities.

## Organization

The Support Services Department is led by a Department Director. Department staff are organized into six divisions:

- Director’s Office
- Facility Construction
- Fleet Management
- Fiscal and Solid Waste Management

- Operations and Maintenance
- Real Estate and Records Management

### Director's Office

The Director's Office houses the Department Director, two Deputy Directors, GJAC Conference Center staff, and administrative staff that support the rest of the Department in HR and IT functions, along with managing payroll. The Administrative Staff also serve as direct support to the Department Director, and assist in preparing board book preparation for agenda items the Department is submitting to the Board of Commissioners.

The Director's Office also houses the ADA Coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating responses to any ADA questions or grievances about County buildings.

### Facility Construction

Facility Construction is responsible for oversight and project management of new facility construction and significant renovation projects across County buildings. This includes new construction, capital renovations, as well as roof and HVAC replacements and parking lot paving projects.

In Facility Construction, the Department has made some changes to the title structure to try and encourage opportunities for internal growth as well as succession planning. The Division uses Program Manager and Construction Manager I and II titling to designate level of experience and project responsibility.

The Division also has a Project Coordinator, who is tasked with providing support and assistance to the Program Manager and Construction Managers. This position has recently also been assigned the role of System Administrator for the e-Builder system, which is used for project management of all division projects. The shift in the Project Coordinator performing more e-Builder-related roles has left a gap in administration support functions, which has resulted in the project managers performing more rote/administrative type tasks that may not be the best use of their time.

### Fleet Management

Fleet Management is divided into two sections: Fleet and Fuel Operations. The Fleet Section has three shops:

- Light – under 10,000 pounds (predominantly made up of police and Sheriff's office patrol vehicles)
- Heavy – over 10,000 pounds and all offroad vehicles (mowers, tractors, etc.)
- Fire – all first responder and fire apparatus, including boat and other specialty equipment

Each shop is staffed by Technicians at varying levels. Currently, the only Tech IVs are the Supervisors, whose workload does not allow them to actually perform any Tech IV level work, but whose use of that position may prevent the Department from promoting or hiring staff who can perform work at that level. The Fleet Section is responsible for preventative maintenance and repairs for all County-owned equipment and vehicles, with the exception of engine and transmission repairs, and certain body work.

The Fuel Operations Section is responsible for coordinating the purchase and disposal of County-owned vehicles and equipment, as well as purchasing and distributing fuel for use in County-owned vehicles and equipment. Intergovernmental agreements also allow fuel access for the Gwinnett County School District and 16 Gwinnett County municipalities.

The Fuel Operations Section houses the Dispatcher, who coordinates the receipt of vehicles needing preventative maintenance and repairs. This Section also houses the Accident Coordinator, who liaises with the Risk Division of the Finance Department in coordinating repairs needed after motor vehicle accidents.

### Fiscal and Solid Waste Management

Fiscal and Solid Waste Management represents two distinct responsibilities of the Department. The Fiscal Management Section of this Division is responsible for financial administration for the Division, including processing all payments, coordinating procurement and contract renewals as appropriate, managing P-card administration, and preparing agenda items for submission to the Board of Commissioners.

The Solid Waste Management Section is responsible for overseeing the contracted solid waste haulers operating throughout unincorporated Gwinnett. This includes a customer service call center for citizens to call and request new service, report missed pickup, or note other issues or concerns with the services. The Solid Waste Section is also responsible for outreach and awareness about recycling and green initiatives throughout the county. Outreach efforts include both citizens and residents as well as efforts throughout County government buildings.

### Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for providing preventive maintenance and ongoing repair and support services for County facilities and properties. The Division is organized into multiple sections based on the trades areas of responsibilities and expertise:

- Building Services
- Carpentry and Furniture
- Contracted Services Supervision
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Plumbing

Each technical section is staffed by Technicians at varying levels, including Trades Technician I to Trades Technician IV, and are supervised by Trades Supervisors. The HVAC section includes HVAC Controls Technician Sr. and is supervised by a HVAC Supervisor. The Building Services Section includes Building Services Coordinators, Building Services Associates, and Grounds Maintenance Associates of varying levels.

## Real Estate and Records Management

The Real Estate and Records Management Division comprises two very distinct areas of responsibility. The Real Estate section is staffed with Real Estate Specialists and is supervised by a Section Manager. The second section comprises Records Management, Mail Services, and contract management of the cafeteria at the Gwinnett Judicial and Administration Center (“GJAC”), and is also supervised by a Section Manager. Records Management is staffed by a Records Management Officer and Warehouse Technicians, and Mail Services is staffed by a Mailroom Supervisor and Mailroom Associates.

Across the Department, staffing was generally noted as adequate to complete the currently assigned workload, but that the current workload did not allow time for training or advancement of skills.

In several divisions, skilled staff are being used to supervise contractors and perform rote tasks, rather than perform value-added tasks that benefit the County.

The staffing model is not tied to data-driven metrics, which may result in delayed creation of new or updated positions to reflect where workload has increased with the County’s growth.

## Strategic Priorities

The Department has identified a variety of strategic priorities, but seems stalled in determining how best to approach those priorities. Different members of leadership had different ideas about how to proceed, and some even cited the need for County leadership and Board of Commissioners buy-in to move forward, but could not identify the best way to propose their ideas and obtain that buy-in.

While the Department speaks of several strategic priorities, the Departmental focus is more reactive.

Employees across many of the divisions noted that leadership strategy seemed to be moving from one emergency to another, with minimal reflection on lessons learned and needed changes to prevent future emergencies or issues from arising.

Employees in several divisions and within Departmental leadership cited the need to move towards more proactive models for asset management and preventative maintenance as a strategic priority. These efforts have been somewhat successful to date, but the Department failed to take into consideration the needed buy-in and collaboration from end-user departments, which causes conflicts between Department divisions trying to adhere to the new policies and processes, and end-user departments either not being aware of, or not adhering to policies and expectations. The impacts on the Division staff includes a range of reduced productivity and increased frustration by both Division staff and end-user departments.

The Department is still somewhat short-sighted in its capital asset and space planning and management. Some decisions and tracking are being completed on a department-by-department level, such as facility condition assessments. The delays in completing assessments between different departments makes longer-term capital planning challenging, as assessments completed later in the cycle may have significant impacts on the County-level timeline and planning efforts. Decisions about space and moving also are being made based on short-term needs and are not taking broader impacts into consideration. Decisions made about one department or division’s current space needs don’t take into consideration medium-long term anticipated needs, or how other departments or divisions located adjacent to the impacted group may be displaced or have their own current/future space challenges.

The Department has sought to better leverage technology to assist in automating workflows and processes, and improve efficiency and customer service. Generally, this has been successful, as is discussed further in the divisional sections of this report.

Customer Service is also a priority for the Department, although this is defined differently within each of the divisions.

The Department has also identified sustainability as a focus, but there are several different definitions of sustainability throughout Departmental leadership and senior management, based on the potential actions and initiatives that could be undertaken by individual divisions. Sustainability efforts such as green building efforts and LEED certification are considered in both Facility Construction and Operations and Maintenance. Solid Waste is interested in increased recycling efforts and trash diversion efforts both within County buildings and with the public. Fleet is interested in improving the County's use of hybrids and green technology in vehicles, provided that it is accompanied by the right training and staffing to support the impacts of workload. As many of these definitions and proposed initiatives will require engagement with and buy-in from other County departments, more coordinated County-level strategic planning will be needed before Support Services can effectively move forward. The Department will also need coordinated leadership overseeing these efforts to ensure consistency in messaging and implementation across the divisions.

The Department has focused on providing more than adequate levels and types of technical equipment for staff in several Divisions – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted availability of staff and social distancing requirements. While concerns were expressed regularly from varying Divisions of the need for additional workspace (e.g., more bays for servicing equipment and vehicles, expanded space to better accommodate the size of multiple larger pieces of Mail Services equipment, etc.), staff overwhelmingly complimented Department leadership, and Section Supervisors in particular, for their support in purchasing an array of equipment and supplies needed and used regularly by staff.

### **Leadership and Management**

Department leadership is very hands-on in a number of divisions, including having the Department Director review individual documents for content and grammar changes. Some of this is due to vacancies in division leadership positions, but that is not always the case. Employees in several divisions mentioned using previously approved documents as templates, only to have different grammar and content changes requested during the new request review process. This resulted in conflicting guidance by leadership on similar topics and inconsistent templates.

In our time with staff throughout the Department, staff noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. Employees in divisions that tend to be higher visibility noted frequent, proactive engagement with Department leadership. Staff in other divisions cannot recall seeing Departmental leadership in their area for anything other than Departmental meetings, and that many communications about updates or changes were introduced the day that the change was implemented or effective, or after employees had heard information from other divisions or other departments' employees. Division staff may also make requests for updates, proposals for process improvement or technology updates, and either receive no response, or have their requests rejected with no discussion around why the proposal was not being moved forward or considered.

Leadership also seems unwilling to push to obtain support and buy-in for new processes and technology. If end-user departments or staff push back on challenges with the new processes or use of technology, those departments or end-users are generally allowed to revert to their prior workflow or process, without any analysis of why the new process or technology was a challenge, or other ways to improve the issues being noted.

Several employees also noted that they feel that Department leadership does not care about the staff. While Department-wide communications are sent via emails, staff expressed concern that they do not see Department leadership engaged with front-line staff in their Department, unless they come to deliver bad news or complaints. Staff expressed a desire to have leadership visit front-line staff to provide accolades in addition to concerns/complaints.

Staff within one section of one Division expressed a desire for better communication and interactions with their supervisor. The staff conveyed experiences which show a lack of trust by the supervisor towards staff, and a lack of trust that the supervisor will take appropriate action and/or escalate issues when appropriate to the Section Manager. Some conversations, as they were described, may rise to the level of unprofessional and/or hostile behavior, but none of the staff indicated they have filed official complaints, other than speaking to the Section Manager.

## Technology

The following describe the Support Services Department's current technology:

### AssetWorks

AssetWorks is the primary core business system used for asset management across the division for fleet management, work orders, and asset tracking. AssetWorks' Asset Management Software is a commercial cloud-based system for state and local governments to collect, record, and manage assets from acquisition to disposal.

### Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The Solid Waste Management Section uses an internally-developed CRM system for residential/commercial new service requests, scheduling, and missed collections tracking. Complaints submitted to the Division are routed through the CRM system. Complaints submitted directly to the haulers are tracked through spreadsheets in excel.

### Enterprise Records Management (ERM)

The County is currently looking to procure and transition to an ERM system, as records management is a priority for multiple divisions within Support Services. The Records Management Section warehouse currently uses Versatile, a commercial ERM system, for records management and communicates with users who submit requests through email, as there are no internal communication capabilities.

### e-Builder

e-Builder is the primary core business system used by the Facility Construction Division to manage the construction of new County facilities. The Division uses e-Builder to receive and complete initial review of all vendor invoices associated with construction and capital renovation projects. These invoices must then be manually submitted to the Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division for final review and upload to FileNet for payment processing.

## Lucity

Lucity is a second core business system for managing assets, customer requests, work orders, preventative maintenance, resources and inventory, and regulatory compliance. The Operations and Maintenance Division uses Lucity for work orders and special requests intake, along with requests from helpdesk or supervisors who process requests from users without system access who call/email.

## Galaxy and Facility Commander

The Support Services Department uses two core business systems to manage access control to most County buildings. Both systems leverage badges to provide authorized access through security access readers. Currently, Operations and Maintenance is responsible for managing two systems: Galaxy and Facility Commander. The County is working to transition all buildings to Galaxy. Administrative Services Associates in the Conference Center process all badge requests for County employees and contractors.

## Customer Service

Support Services serves a variety of customers. With the exception of the Solid Waste Section, most of the Department considers other County departments as their primary customers. There is also an element of other divisions within the Department as customers. As an example, the Conference Center regularly relies on staff from Operations and Maintenance to assist in setting up conference rooms.

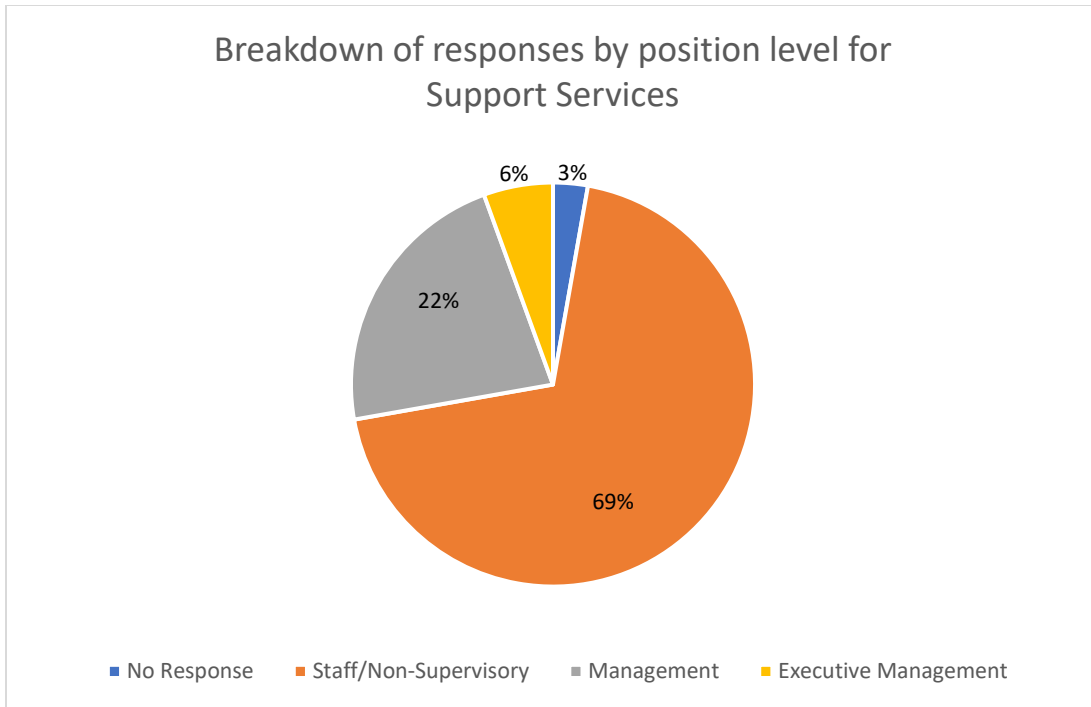
The Department prides itself on customer service and flexibility in working with internal customers. Many staff cited “pride” and “willingness to go above and beyond” as their division or team’s strength.

What may be lost in this focus on internal customers is consideration of other divisions within the Department as internal customers as well. There are not consistent considerations of how processes, requests, or even facility construction and maintenance schedules impact other divisions or teams within the Department. The emphasis on exemplary customer service results in reduced customer accountability. Reduced customer accountability and expectations that staff will always go above and beyond to deliver on customer expectations impacts staff workloads. The current practice also increases the expectation that staff will provide services which may not adhere to established operating processes or procedures.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Thirty-six responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 25%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

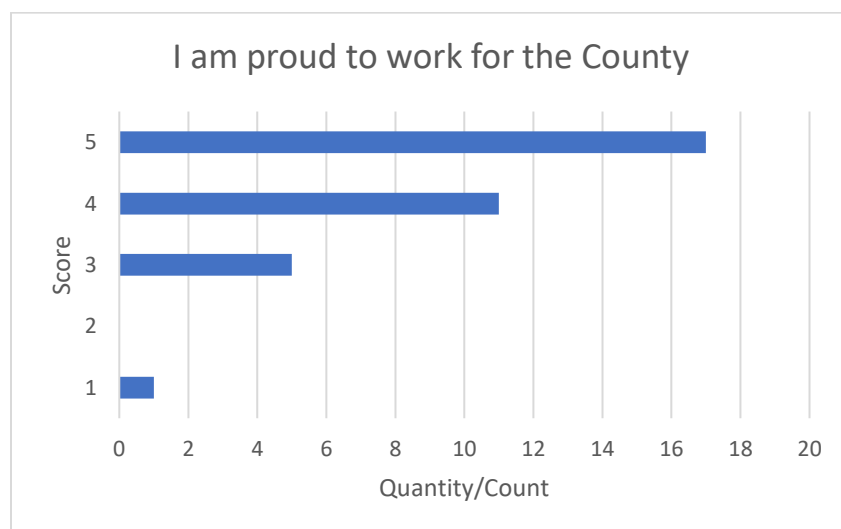
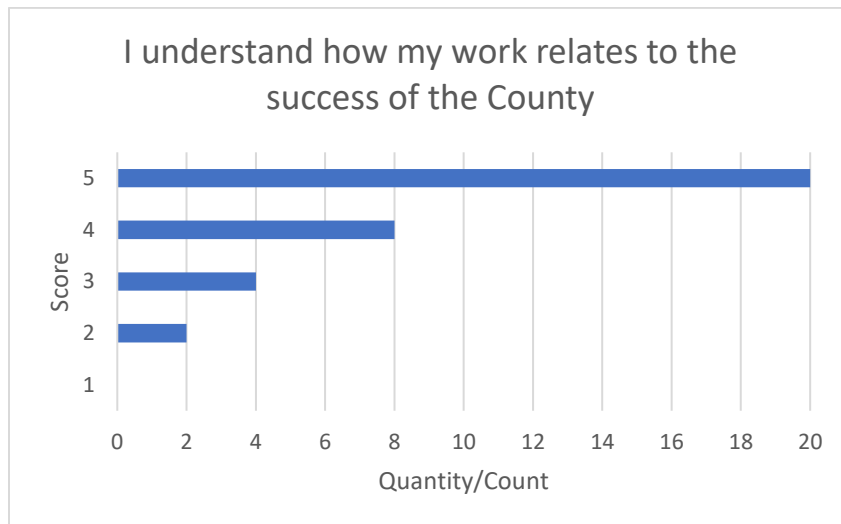
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

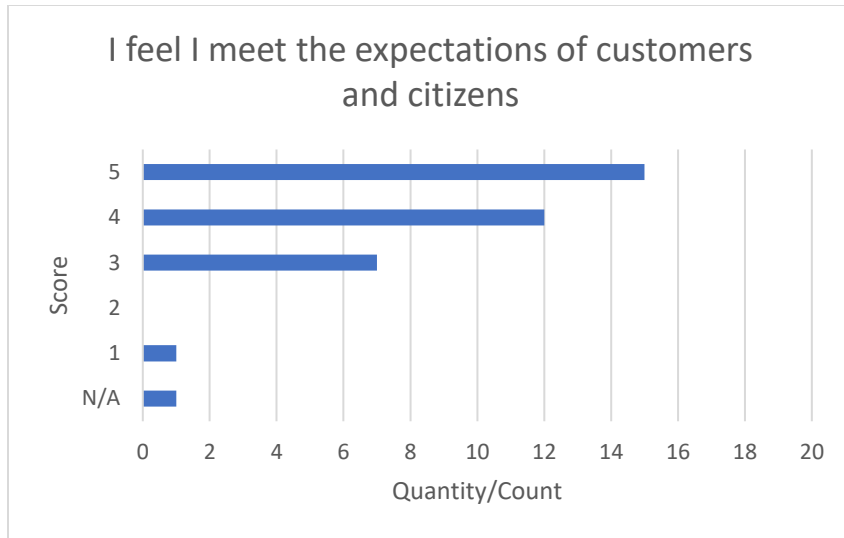
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.5
I understand my mission and vision of my department	4.0
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.3
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.0
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.6
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.6
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.1
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.6
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.8
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.6
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.5
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.1
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.7



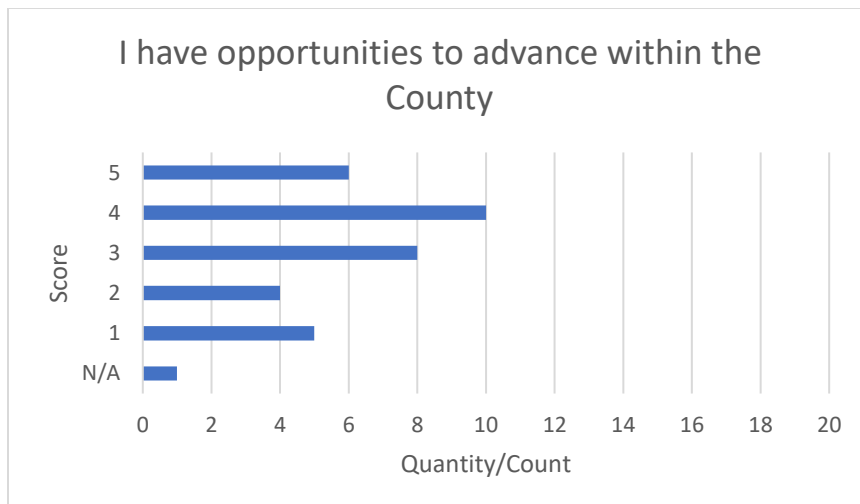
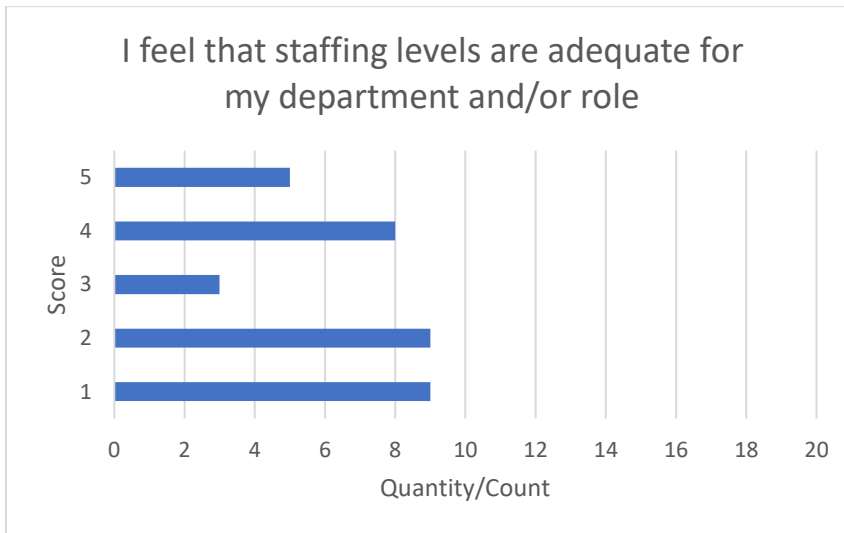
Survey Statement	Average Score
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.7
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.4
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.2
I am proud to work for the County	4.2
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.1

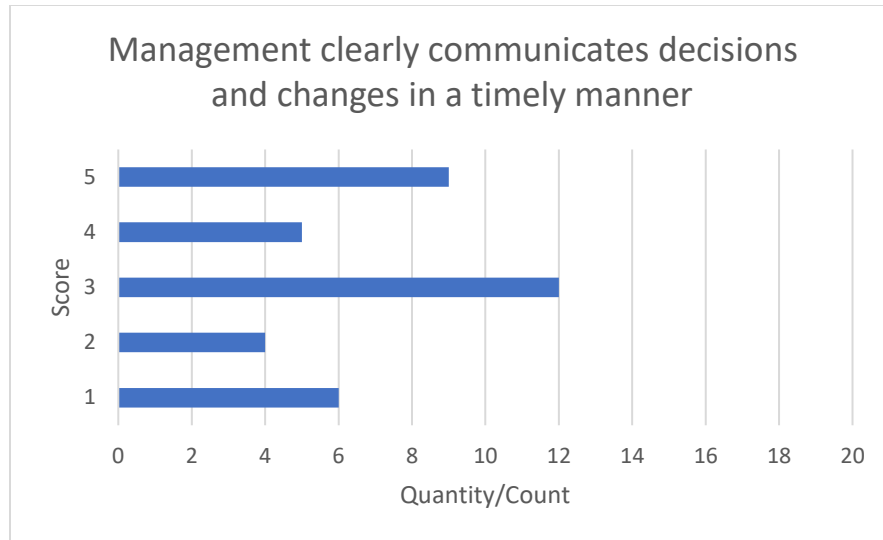
The average score for all the survey statements is 3.7. The lowest score is 2.6 and the highest score is 4.3. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Support Services' people are the Department's greatest strength, with strong emphases on teamwork and customer service.
- The Department is reactive, with limited long-range planning.
- The Department's management appears not to trust staff, micromanaging all aspects of the work done within Support Services.
- Support Services needs to better embrace changes in technology, work on going paperless, and consider better technologies and systems to create efficiencies.
- The Department needs a more streamlined process for approval, with bottlenecks in the process resulting in inefficiencies.
- The responses are split on communication – some consider it a strength for the Department, others a weakness – indicating non-uniform communication practices across various divisions and sections.
- Employees who provide internal services to other departments feel their services are often under-valued by the departments served and their needs are often secondary to those of the departments served.
- The Department has limited authority to guarantee accountability, both with its own staff and with other departments.

## 3.A.1 Department of Support Services – Director’s Office Division

The Director’s Office houses the Director and Deputy Directors, as well as administrative staff who provide HR and IT support to the Department, and Conference Center management to the entire County.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Reviewing Departmental Timesheets and Tracking Leave
- Managing the Conference Center
- Coordinating Departmental HR and IT Activities
- Issuing Access Badges
- Coordinating Departmental Agenda Items for BOC

#### Reviewing Departmental Timesheets and Tracking Leave

The Department process currently requires that HR administrative staff in the Director’s Office review all timesheets prior to final approval. The Department maintains an Outlook calendar where each supervisor is responsible for entering their staff’s approved leave requests. At the end of each pay period, the Administrative Support Associate III in the Director’s Office reviews each employee’s timesheet and compares it with the Outlook calendar approved time off. If there are discrepancies between the timesheet and the leave calendar, the Administrative Support Associate III emails the supervisor of the employee whose timesheet is in error, to request clarification or revision, as appropriate. These Outlook calendars are also printed, scanned, and then physically filed.

#### Managing the Conference Center

The Division is responsible for all aspects of coordinating use of the County’s Conference Center. Currently, the Division uses Outlook calendars for each eligible space. Internal requests take priority over eligible external requests, such as non-profit groups.

Internal users may request conference center space through an online form available in GC Workplace, or the Gwinnett County employee portal. Forms may also be submitted directly through Outlook. The Department prefers requests come through the online form. All completed forms come into a shared email alias and are reviewed for space availability and facility-setup requirements.

Non-profit groups may also request use of Conference Center space; applicants must call or email to request an application at least two weeks before the desired use date. All applications are sent to the Assistant to the Director for review; many are also sent to the Department Director for final review and approval.

The Outlook calendars are shared with the Operations and Maintenance Division, who provide staff to assist in room setup. All reservations are also printed detailing the reservation date, time, and location as well as request instructions and a setup diagram. Each week, the Administrative Support Associate II in the Conference Center also prepares a printed calendar with a page for each date showing the scheduled uses of all Conference Center space. This calendar is provided to Communications, IT, Operations and Maintenance, the Commissioner's Offices, and other departments or divisions that may need to be aware of scheduled events.

### Coordinating Departmental HR and IT Activities

Administrative staff in the Director's Office are also responsible for coordinating all Departmental HR and IT functions, including submitting forms to HR for any organizational changes, and serving as the liaison for any hiring, inter-County employee transfers for Department staff, or separations of Department employees from County employment.

Currently, the Department does not coordinate a departmental onboarding or orientation process for new hires; each division is responsible for their own orientation, resulting in differing levels of onboarding and information shared.

For IT, the Office Manager submits all IT help desk tickets on the requesting employee's behalf. Since the help desk is now electronic, the Office Manager has to capture staff acknowledgement with a screenshot that the requesting employee must either sign and email back, or email back the compliant language to acknowledge acceptance and understanding.

Administrative staff in the Director's Office also review performance appraisals and make edits for content, spelling, and grammar.

The Administrative Support Associate III also maintains an Access database that integrates a variety of HR-related information available in other County systems. The database tracks information such as promotion eligibility timelines, disciplinary actions, FMLA, and sick leave usage to provide to Departmental and Division leadership, as relevant.

The Administrative Support Associate III also maintains a SharePoint database with all certifications held by employees in Fleet and Operations and Maintenance, included tracking of expiration or renewal deadlines. The database will automatically send employees emails with their recertification dates and the requirements necessary to maintain licensure or certifications.

### Issuing Access Badges

The County currently has two systems used for access badges – Galaxy and Facility Commander, depending on the building and the area where the employee works. Staff who may need access to multiple areas may be assigned a separate additional badge to provide access to different buildings or suites based on whether Galaxy or Facility Commander is utilized for that area. The County is in the process of moving all County buildings to Galaxy. The Administrative Support Associate II positions assigned to the Conference Center are responsible for processing access badge requests and setting up users in the two systems.

The Engineer IV in the Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for managing the entry access systems and creating access groups, to help streamline assignment to a batch of doors, instead of individual door assignments. While Galaxy is being established with access groups, these groups may not always align with department's specific requests for access.

The request form for badges is available on GC Workplace. Initial requests are typically submitted by each department's HR liaison. The Administrative Support Associate II positions review the request and determine which doors or access groups the employee will need access to. Since there are not currently maps of all security readers, the Administrative Support Associate II may have to physically go to the building and determine which doors have readers and record the reader's identifying information so that they can complete the badge access request.

### Coordinating Departmental Agenda Items for BOC

Administrative staff in the Division are also responsible for preparing summaries of agenda items being submitted by each of the Department's divisions. Currently, staff are preparing both a physical book and a Microsoft Teams version of the agenda items and supporting documentation, based on individual leadership preferences.

### Communications

The Department Director hosts monthly meetings for all Department staff. These meetings are less strategic and more for discussion of workload, duties, upcoming projects or initiatives, and to discuss general Departmental operations, and updates on upcoming County-wide changes or new initiatives.

There are also weekly leadership meetings that include the Department Director, Deputy Directors, the Division Directors, and the Assistant to the Director.

Most Departmental communications are top down; there are not as many opportunities for communications and engagement between Division Directors, especially around process design and procedure updates that may impact multiple divisions, or where actions in one division impact the processes and workload of another division.

For informal communications, or those that do not need to wait until a Departmental meeting, the Director's Office may communicate internally or with other divisions by email. These communications typically must be reviewed and approved by the Department Director before transmission.

### Strategic Initiatives

The Department Director's Office is primarily focused on supporting the strategic initiatives of the Department as a whole, and providing support and oversight to individual divisions in meeting their goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, a lot of the Division's workload is focused on rote, overly detailed items, such as leave calendar review and entering data from other systems in an Access database, or processing Outlook requests for conference center scheduling. The Department Director also prefers to be very involved in the day-to-day operations of the Department, including frequent review, editing, and approval of individual documents for agenda item submission, or other items for external dissemination. The amount of time spent on these rote and day-to-day tasks and Departmental operations reduces the Director's Office's ability to shift towards more strategic, proactive projects.

Currently, the shift towards strategic thinking and action is also hindered due to lack of Division Directors in several divisions. Additionally, there are currently two vacant Division Director positions. Each of the Deputy Directors are also having to perform Division Director duties, in addition to providing general Departmental support and oversight. Filling these Division Director positions may assist in freeing up some time to support strategic initiatives.

## Systems and Applications

### Duplicative Systems

Since the County has two different access control systems, the Administrative Support Associate IIs may have to issue employees two badges to ensure access is available to all appropriate areas. This requires entering the requesting individual's information in both systems to process each badge. Additionally, Facility Commander does not have access groups that allow for selected a group that provides access to a pre-selected group of security readers. While Galaxy has access groups, the groups aren't always reflective of the types of access needs of individual end-user departments or divisions.

### Manual Processes

The Conference Center calendar is managed using Outlook calendars that allow internal requesters to review room availability before submitting requests. The overall process is still very manual, with requesters able to submit either Outlook calendar invites or request forms. External requesters must use request forms available on the County website, or request a copy of the form from staff in the Conference Center. Management believes that an event space management software would assist in automating a portion of the process and ensure that high-priority requests are appropriately identified and addressed.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Currently, the Director's Office does not have any formal performance or data outputs that are being tracked. The Conference Center staff distribute regular calendars for scheduled use of the Conference Center and other available meeting space, but there are no other measures.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Administrative Support Associate III is currently responsible for reviewing all Department employees' timesheets and ensuring that it matches the approved leave requests, as entered by the employee's supervisor onto a shared calendar.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should consider transferring initial leave use review authority to each end-user division, with Director's Office staff serving in a spot-check and quality control capacity.

The Department may also want to research if there are more automated processes or workflows that could review for appropriate reporting of leave taken that reduce the manual review process.

**Observation 2:** The Division does not offer a departmental orientation or onboarding process, resulting in inconsistent onboarding and orientation for new hires in different divisions.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should develop a standard for new hire orientation and onboarding. Administrative staff in the Division should either be responsible for offering these orientations, or providing training to division staff to ensure consistent onboarding and information is provided to all new hires.

**Observation 3:** There are not currently consistent grouping for entry access based on end-user department or division needs. Additionally, there is not current maps of all security readers. This lack of updated information leads to the staff responsible for establishing employee access badges having to physical review and identify specific entry points and identifying security reader information that need to be authorized for individual employees.

**Recommendation 3:** The Administrative Support Associates responsible for issuing badges should coordinate with the Operations and Maintenance Division to ensure that there are updated maps reflecting the placement and identifying information for all security readers in County buildings. The Division should also consider working with end-user departments to create standard access groupings for specific divisions or user titles within each department, to standardize security access and better document when requests for access exceed norms for a position or division.

**Observation 4:** The Department does not create or encourage opportunities for inter-divisional communications or collaboration without the direct involvement of the Department Director. There are several strategic opportunities for collaborative efforts and implementation that are not being optimized.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department Director should create and encourage inter-divisional communication and collaboration that focuses on integrated and efficient process design and process improvement.

**Observation 5:** The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of division directors. This emphasis has led to the Department operating in a more reactive than proactive fashion, missing opportunities for strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts. This current environment is exacerbated by the vacancy of two division director positions, whose day-to-day responsibilities are currently being managed by the Department's Deputy Directors. While there are ideas for strategic priorities and longer-term planning and vision, there isn't staff or resources to support the implementation of these ideas.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department needs to prioritize filling the two vacant division director positions. Once those positions are filled, the Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.



## 3.A.2 Department of Support Services – Facility Construction Division

Facility Construction oversees and manages new facility construction and significant renovation projects across County buildings. This includes new construction, capital renovations, as well as roof and HVAC replacements and parking lot paving projects.

The Division uses the e-Builder document management system for project management coordination and document retention.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Project Management
- E-Builder System Administration

### Project Management

Members of the Facility Construction Division are responsible for providing project management for the new facility construction projects and major renovations within the County. Smaller projects, typically budgeted for \$2 million or less, such as roof replacements, HVAC replacements, parking lot paving, etc. are assigned to Construction Managers. Construction Managers have, on average, 15 projects assigned at any one time. Larger capital projects, such as new building constructions, are assigned to Program Managers. Capital project assignment varies on the size, length, and expertise needed to supervise the project.

Annually, the Division works with end-user departments on requested capital improvements or construction and complete a smartsheet. The smartsheet is a County form that captures information about the project, its design, construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment (“FF&E”) and annualized operation costs, and how the project aligns with the Board of Commissioners’ priorities. The smartsheets are submitted as part of the annual budget process. There are, on average, 60-80 smartsheets submitted each year. The Division provides cost estimates and, as appropriate, works with contractors in determining the estimates. There are also select five-year Capital Improvement Plans, but there are not long-range projections of needs for major renovations or capital construction projects based on population growth, increased service needs, etc.

Once projects are assigned and budgets are approved, the assigned manager coordinates with one of several architect engineering firms on a list of firms procured for design service. The County does not have an architect on staff, so all space planning and design must be coordinated with external firms. For very large projects, such as the recent addition to GJAC, the County will perform a full public bid for design services. The design firm coordinates with the project manager, the Operations and Maintenance Division, and the end-user departments, as appropriate, on the project design and necessary specifications. Once the design is complete, the assigned project manager completes the project-specific RFP information and sends the procurement packet to purchasing agent for

procurement. The Division currently relies on consultants and contractors for FF&E design work, rather than using an on-staff interior designer to assist in ensuring consistency between projects.

Once responses are received, the project manager and Division Director review the proposals for conformance with County requirements and standards, along with specification requirements. Currently the procurement process is separate from e-Builder, as procurement staff are not using e-Builder. The contract approval process timeline also is in conflict with the contract terms. Currently, RFPs state that the contract must be awarded within 60 days, but all projects over \$100,000 must go before the Board of Commissioners, which hold two business sessions monthly and require coordination to place items on the agenda for approval. The Division has had several successful bidders not execute contracts and perform the services due to the timeline and the changes in the construction costs and contractor availability.

The Division uses e-Builder for project management. The Project Coordinator serves as the power user and is responsible for application administration and workflow initiation and assignment. Vendors can submit all invoices and construction updates through e-Builder, and Division staff can review and approve within the system, as well as track project progress and timeline. Invoices must still be submitted to the Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Department for payment processing.

Project managers are also responsible for coordinating any change orders associated with their assigned projects, even though they have minimal authority to authorize or approve changes. Currently, the County's process is time-consuming and based on absolute value, rather than considering the overall project budget. The change order timeline for construction projects often impacts project timelines, causing delays or extensions due to the number and sequence of approvals required to execute a change order. Additionally, the County's requirement for physical signatures means that physical copies must be sent to all involved departments. There is not transparency in the process or workflow, so Facility Construction doesn't always know where a change order is in the overall review and approval process. In the current construction environment, these delays may also impact overall costs. The lengthy and unclear change order process also impacts vendor relationships and may cause the County to lose relationships with quality construction firms who cannot, or choose not to operate under the current process.

Project Managers are also responsible for supervising contractor and vendor performance and ensuring that all construction, renovation, and installations are completed in accordance with the contract as well as within code requirements and Gwinnett County standards. Project Managers also maintain contact with the client/end-user department, providing updates on timeline and serving as their primary point of contact for any questions or concerns about the project.

Project Managers do not currently have a formal process for complaints about vendor performance, either from their own observation, or end-user/client departments who may come into the contact with the vendors during the construction process, or have issues after the project is complete.

#### [e-Builder System Administration](#)

e-Builder system administration is the responsibility of the Division's Project Coordinator. Currently there is not a backup trained on e-Builder, although the Department is working to train someone in Fiscal and Solid Waste Management.

System administration includes user administration, training and onboarding for new contractors, vendors, and employees into the system, working to update and refine system processes and workflows, and developing workarounds for departments or end-users who may not use e-Builder, as well as general technical support. The Project Coordinator has also created test projects in the system to support training for new users.

Since e-Builder is relatively new, responsibilities also include some quality control review and ensuring that the system is accurately implementing the designed workflow and routing approvals and reviews to the correct users. The introduction and growth of use of the e-Builder system has resulted in a shift to e-Builder system administration as the primary role. The use of the Project Coordinator as system administrator has created gaps in the ability to perform other administrative tasks, including assisting with drafting memos, correspondence, as well as other minor duties associated with larger facility construction projects.

## Communications

Given the visibility of many of the Division's projects, the Division meets with the Department Director weekly to discuss the status of active projects. These meetings are also used for general County-wide updates or other discussions that may impact the Facility Construction Division.

The Division also holds monthly meetings with the Operations and Maintenance Division to discuss projects and coordinate handoffs between Facility Construction and Operations and Maintenance at the completion of construction. The Division is also leveraging a project questionnaire in E-Builder to better document the initial timelines.

The Division holds weekly team meetings to keep all Division staff updated on the status of all projects, to share institutional knowledge and help trouble-shoot, and plan for assignment and coordination of upcoming projects. The meetings are also used to review current project status in e-Builder, to ensure workflow is working and Division users are receiving notifications of pending reviews and approvals.

Project Managers also host Owner/Architect/Contractor meetings every other week for all active projects. In preparation for these meetings, Project Managers conduct site visits and confirm that the project is on track for timeline, and that the work is being performed to contract specifications, or notes exceptions.

The Division is working to formalize a communications process to include the Operations and Maintenance Division in design review. The new formal communications will assist in maintaining standardization and keeping the Operations and Maintenance Division updated about potential new systems or technologies that Operations and Maintenance may be required to support in new buildings or renovated spaces.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division is working to migrate as much of their workflow and documentation into E-Builder as possible, creating a seamless digital process. E-Builder is designed to serve as a single repository for documentation and workflow management, as well as a way to communicate with contractors, vendors, and internal departments involved in the construction and project management process. Other divisions and departments are not currently on e-Builder, limiting Facility Construction's ability to improve efficiency beyond the current processes. The Division is also currently limited by the County

not allowing the use of digital wet signatures, such as DocuSign. The lack of full system integration results in process workarounds, inhibiting the full use of e-Builder, and also creates the potential for duplicative “originals” as there are both physical copies of contracts and change orders with signatures, as well as the original digital document.

There are still opportunities to better leverage e-Builder for creating forms and templates to standardize documents across the Division, including memos recommending change order approval, RFPs and other procurement documents. e-Builder could also be better leveraged to capture institutional knowledge, through the development or capture of checklists, processes, or forms that are currently being used by different employees for project management. Process consistency would be enhanced by better leveraging e-Builder.

The Division is interested in moving towards a more proactive Facility Planning Lifecycle, but does not currently have the staffing or knowledge base needed to support this consistently throughout the County. The Division has recently contracted for facility condition assessments and operation assessments for certain departments to document current facility conditions as well as to better understand current and future office space needs. Using the results from the completed assessments, the Division will work to create more detailed five-year projections on maintenance budgets, renovation or construction updates for departments completed to-date. This will require continued collaboration with the Operations and Maintenance Division and the Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division to ensure that planning and analysis includes appropriate consideration of current costs and available staffing.

The Division is also working towards improved communications with other divisions within the Department, especially with Operations and Maintenance. While still in the early stages of determining enhanced processes and workflow, the Division acknowledges the need to involve Operations and Maintenance in project design and scope review, as well as formalize the transition process once construction projects have been completed so that Operations and Maintenance have the correct information, vendor contacts, and details for maintenance and repair responsibilities.

The Division has strong customer service processes in place, including continual communication with end-user departments for facility construction projects. The Division has also developed relationships with vendors and provides training and resources to assist them in using e-Builder. The Project Coordinator has provided one-on-one training and assistance, and is working on recorded and written tutorials, and additional guidance documents.

## **Systems and Applications**

### **Centralization of Information**

Purchasing is difficult, as reviewing invoices requires using multiple systems that do not communicate, which results in manual work. Specifically, the Architect and Program Manager review and track invoices in e-Builder, then manually send to the Fiscal Division, who enters the data into FileNet and utilizes another system to manage invoices before payments can be processed. The division also uses FileNet reporting but must manually reconcile invoices in FileNet and e-Builder to ensure timely processing. e-Builder is not being used by Purchasing, so the team must use manual workarounds in the e-Builder workflow to communicate with Purchasing. However, Management sees opportunities to better leverage e-Builder for reporting.

e-Builder has effectively standardized many processes between different program managers, file structure, reporting, and invoice processing but lacks capabilities for internal communication. This results in emails being used primarily for communication. Management sees opportunities with e-Builder to maintain templates commonly used in project management and the proposal process. Management believes better workflows and communication are possible using e-Builder, but Finance and Purchasing are hesitant to use live system interfaces.

### Lucity

Building Services uses Lucity for work orders and special requests. The unit must rely on the division's Program Analyst to effectively use Lucity, which could pose an issue if they change positions or leave. Increased training of Lucity would help the unit better understand the system and use it more effectively. Another challenge is that some individuals who submit requests do not have access to Lucity, so they must call or email the Facilities Help Desk or the supervisor to input the request.

### Data and Performance Analysis

The Division has developed some internal metrics to help assess workload and provide insight into internal workflow delays that may impact project timelines. Currently the Division is reviewing to ensure they are processing invoices within five days, processing change orders within 30 days, and processing system closeouts within 30 days of stage completion, but these metrics may be impacted by other divisions and departments, so aren't fully within the responsibility of the Division.

e-Builder has some additional available metrics, such as tracking how long users are taking to complete their part of a given workflow or process. These metrics may be beneficial for workload analysis and insight into process steps that may be delayed. The Division is still reviewing these functionalities to determine which data points can be best used as performance metrics.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division does not currently have an in-house designer to support FF&E efforts, relying predominantly on consultants and contractors. This has led to design and furnishing inconsistencies between projects.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should perform more detailed cost-benefit analysis around the use of contract FF&E designers to determine if it would be more cost-effective to hire an interior designer, given the projected upcoming capital renovations and capital construction projects. The designer could also collaborate with the Operations and Maintenance Division on smaller renovation projects.

**Observation 2:** The current processes for contract approval and execution, along with the process for contract change orders, is lengthy and is impacting the County's ability to award contracts to the most successful bidder. The length of the process may also increase project overall costs.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should work with the County to develop more expedited timelines for contract and change order approval. This may include an executive review and approval function for contracts associated with projects that have been approved by the Board of Commissioners, only requiring Board of Commissioner approval for projects that exceed a specified dollar amount, reduced reviews for change orders within initial contract award amount or within a certain percentage of initial contract amount.

**Observation 3:** The Division does not currently have a formal process for either the project managers or end-user departments to complain about vendor performance, either during or after completion of the project. This may result in continued award to vendors with problematic prior performance.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal complaints about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Observation 4:** The Project Coordinator's responsibilities have shifted to focus on e-Builder system administration and user support. This has reduced the time available to provide Division staff with administrative support. As a result, Construction Managers and Project Managers are having to perform more rote tasks, which may also increase the inconsistencies in the documents being produced by the Division.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider hiring an additional support staff to assist in administrative tasks associated with project management.

**Observation 5:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. This increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 6:** The Division does not have a formal schedule for facility assessment and lifecycle management, including long-term planning for facility construction and renovation needs. The current staffing levels do not allow for assignment of these responsibilities.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should consider developing creating a position to assist with coordinating facility condition assessments and strategic, comprehensive facility lifecycle management. This should include space planning and needs assessments to ensure that decisions are taking all impacted divisions and departments into consideration, and factor in projected growth and future space needs. This position could also help determine the need for staff positions for architect and interior design work, as longer-range planning and projections would be available.

## 3.A.3 Department of Support Services – Fleet Management Division

The Fleet Division is responsible for maintaining all equipment and vehicles throughout the County, coordinating the purchasing and disposal of vehicles and equipment, and purchasing and distributing fuel throughout the County.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Service Coordination and Maintenance
- Fuel Management
- Purchase and Disposal of Vehicles/Equipment

### Service Coordination and Maintenance

Gwinnett County owns its fleet, and is responsible for all service, with the exception of transit, as well as engine and transmission repair, which is performed by vendors. The Fleet Division's Maintenance Section is responsible for coordinating all fleet service, including both preventative maintenance ("PM") service and repair services. The Division uses the AssetWorks system for asset management and work order tracking for maintenance and repair services. For regularly scheduled maintenance, end-users receive emails automatically from AssetWorks reminding them of upcoming service timelines. The Dispatcher also enters all recalls or warranty-related work into a spreadsheet, and also enters into AssetWorks. AssetWorks utilizes mileage entered by the end-user when fueling the vehicle, although end-users have learned that an entry of 000000 is accepted by the system.

The County has a contract with NAPA Integrated Business Solutions ("IBS") for an onsite parts operation. NAPA is primarily used by the light-side Technicians or general parts. There is currently some inconsistency in how AssetWorks task codes are entered between front office staff, technicians, and NAPA.

For preventative maintenance, the Auto Tech Light shop completes a 109-point inspection in addition to the scheduled preventative maintenance. If any issues are identified, the issues are noted on the PM work order, and then a repair work order is created to provide the repair service. Technicians enter the time worked on each work order.

If the vehicle comes in for repair, the Technicians will often check to see if the vehicle is within one month of scheduled PM and will perform the PM while the vehicle is also in the shop, if time allows.

For repair work, the end-user physically brings the vehicle or equipment to the Fleet Shop. The end-user manually completes a form documenting the asset number, date, department cost center, mileage, and a general description of the service needed or issues with the vehicle. The Dispatcher accepts the keys and the completed form. The Dispatcher inputs the information into AssetWorks and then scans the form and attaches it to the work order to ensure no details of the work order are subsequently deleted or altered. All keys are provided to the appropriate shop supervisor for assignment of work. There is no notification provided to the Shop Supervisor about new workloads until the Supervisor receives the

keys for recently processed work orders. The Supervisor reviews current workload and considers technician skill set when assigning work orders. AssetWorks doesn't have the ability to display the full workload for the shop, or for an individual Technician, so this may require some communication and reassignment. The Supervisor assigns the work order to a Technician in AssetWorks and places the keys on a board in the Supervisor's office by the assigned Technician's name for the Technician to pick up.

For Police Department requests, the vehicles can be left in the back lot, with the asset number noted on a clipboard in the Dispatcher's office. The Police Department completes the forms and sends to the Dispatcher electronically. The Dispatcher obtains the backup key for the vehicle and enters the service request information into AssetWorks.

All work is tracked through work orders; policy requires that preventative maintenance and repairs must be completed on separate tickets. The County has a contract with NAPA Integrated Business Solutions (IBS) for an onsite parts operation primarily for the light-side Technicians or general parts. The system is designed so that Technicians can submit the work order number to NAPA electronically, but it requires the Technician to know the specific part number, and there have been issues with orders being placed and the correct part number being pulled or with part number changes. Many Technicians physically bring work orders to the NAPA parts counter in order to get a ticket; no parts will be provided without an associated work order.

Heavy Side and Fire Technicians use the NAPA IBS where applicable but may also coordinate with manufacturers and other vendors to look up and source needed parts.

When needed, Technicians may drive the vehicles in an attempt to replicate the problems noted by the end-user. For some vehicles, especially for police, fire, and first responder vehicles this can be challenging to recreate on the road, as the initial problems are often noted in exceptional circumstances.

Fire Technicians may also go to fire stations to complete physical inspections and make repairs on fire vehicles and apparatus. There are currently only two service trucks, so between on-call demand and on-site repairs, coordination may be a challenge and there may not be a vehicle available to perform the needed services.

The Division also utilizes a road call/on-call schedule for the Fire Technicians, using a flip-phone that is assigned for a seven-day period. Technicians receive an extra worked hour per day that they carry the on-call phone; each actual call is recorded as a minimum of two additional worked hours, plus the actual call length. There are also laptops that the Technicians can use to enter work order information in the field. Not all the laptops have cell service, which limits usefulness in the field. There are also tablets available for use, but the tablets don't have keyboards, which makes them challenging to use for entering case notes or searching for parts. Additionally, the assigned phones don't receive multimedia texts, so the end-user cannot submit pictures of the issue to assist in diagnosing and bringing the right parts for the repair. On-call Technicians often have to drive to the vehicle or apparatus, review for needed repairs, obtain the part from either the maintenance shop or another location, and then return to the vehicle or apparatus to complete the repair.



The Division does not perform engine or transmissions repairs. To save transportation time, vendors may use the Gwinnett County maintenance shop bays to perform these repairs, which limits the available bays for county technicians during an engine or transmission repair process.

Once the work is completed the technicians bring the equipment back to the lot, placing it in the “Ready for Pickup” line. The keys are provided to the Dispatcher. If the vehicle that was worked on does not have keys (such as a trailer) then the Technician will note the asset number and date completed on a log in the Dispatcher’s office.

Once the repairs are complete, the Dispatcher notifies the end-user that the vehicle is ready for pickup.

For County vehicles or equipment that are damaged in an accident, the Accident Coordinator is responsible for liaising with the end-user department and the Financial Services Department’s Risk Division for all repairs. Once vehicles are brought to the lot, the Accident Coordinator identifies the vehicle and takes pictures documenting the current state of the vehicle. Financial Service’s Risk Division is responsible for sending the Accident Coordinator a Loss Notice, typically by email. The Loss Notice provides information about the end-user department, the claim number, asset number, and information about the accident and whether the County or a third-party is responsible for paying for repair work.

The Accident Coordinator enters the Loss Notice information, along with pictures into AssetWorks. The Accident Coordinator works with several local body shops for bodywork, and coordinates internally with the fleet shops for repairs as appropriate. The Accident Coordinator works with the Supervisor to determine who is available and trained to complete the work.

If needed, the Accident Coordinator can order parts through NAPA or specialty suppliers and have the parts sent over to the body shop, rather than have the body shop attempt to source the parts.

Once all repairs are complete, the Accident Coordinator completes a vehicle review to ensure completion of the needed work, and will coordinate completion of any non-body work, such as adding County decals.

When the County is responsible for paying for the repair work, the Accident Coordinator is responsible for paying the vendors. The Accident Coordinator can use their assigned P-card for costs up to the P-card’s limits, or can request invoices and process through the Division’s administrative team.

### Fuel Management

The Fuel Operations Section is responsible for management of the County’s fuel inventory, equipment, sales, and compliance. Fleet Management maintains 23 in-ground tanks at 11 sites around the County, supplying gasoline and diesel fuel to all County-owned vehicles. Fuel Operations remotely monitors fuel tanks through Veeder-Root. Veeder-Root is an automated tank gauge fuel management system, automatically sending alerts for low fuel levels and any issues with the equipment, such as leaks. Reports on fuel levels in all tanks across the County allows Fuel Operations to generate fuel orders on a daily basis, refilling tanks as their inventory becomes depleted. Fuel Technicians are onsite for every delivery of fuel. This fuel is sold to County employees operating County-owned vehicles, as well as to the Gwinnett County School District and the 16 municipalities within the County. As fuel levels shift throughout the day, Fuel Operations reconciles the inventory based upon deliveries, reported sales, and remote monitoring of the tanks to guarantee all shifts in inventory are being accurately reported. Each applicable vehicle or other equipment has a fob associated with it which activates the fuel pump and

transmits key information to the pump, such as the vehicle's maximum allotted fuel amount based and appropriate fuel type. Users are issued pin numbers which they input into the pumps after activating the pump with the vehicle's fob, and then are supposed to manually input the vehicle's mileage. However, many users get around entering the vehicle's mileage by entering zero for the mileage, resulting in an error – after three errors, the system automatically defaults to allowing fueling, resulting in inaccurate tracking of mileage for vehicles, which is necessary for other functions of the Fuel Operations Section, such as the replacement of vehicles. This may also impact the Fleet Section's ability to identify maintenance needed based on mileage. Outside of delivery of fuel through the fuel sites, a County-owned diesel fuel truck will visit County-owned facilities upon request to refuel diesel generators. All fuel is billed back to the end-user department or applicable government – all users except the Gwinnett County School District are charged a five percent markup, while the School District pays at-cost due to contributing half the cost of all fuel center capital improvements.

The locations of the fuel sites are based upon historical demand, with significant input from the School District. When Fuel Operations recommends a new fuel site, they will look at sites with significant usage to determine if those sites are servicing vast numbers of transactions coming from underserved portions of the County and will consider anecdotal recommendations from users. The most recent proposal for a new fuel site, which had not yet been acted upon as of the review period for this assessment, was in the eastern part of the County (toward Barrow and Walton counties) to coincide with the establishment of the Police Department's Bay Creek Precinct. Fuel Operations is currently researching the demand for a new fuel site within this police district.

In addition to fuel purchases and sales through the County-owned pumps, Fuel Operations also manages the County's WEX fleet cards, which are payment cards for fuel management. Gwinnett County permits the use of WEX cards for two purposes: the purchase of fuel inside the County for vehicles that take fuel types not dispensed by the County's fuel tanks, and the purchase of fuel outside the County. The latter requires the user to request a temporary WEX card when attending an out-of-County event, such as a conference or a training. At the end of the month, all WEX cards are reconciled and, like direct fuel purchases, billed back to end-user departments.

Throughout the fuel management process, Fuel Operations tries to rapidly address equipment failures in order to comply with regulations set by the federal government. Fuel Operations collects test data from all tank monitors at least monthly, maintaining those records for three years. Underground storage tanks ("USTs") are governed by U.S. Code, Title 42, Chapter 82, Subchapter IX; O.C.G.A. Title 12, Chapter 13; and Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. Department 391, Chapter 3, Subject 15. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") inspects each of the fuel sites every three years to ensure compliance. Additionally, the Division hires a contractor to perform annual testing at each site for further compliance validation. The contractor hired to perform the leak detection tests at fuel sites has traditionally not been on a long-term contract with the County, and the Section expects the County will need to put the contract out to bid in the future.

### Purchase and Disposal of Vehicles/Equipment

The Fleet Management Division is responsible for the purchase and disposal of all County-owned vehicles and fleet equipment. For both replacement and new vehicles, the Division sends out a template at the beginning of the year with each department's vehicles and equipment, including mileage, value, and other data. Departments complete the template by notating in what year they want

to replace each vehicle, as well as identifying any new vehicles the department wants to request. For new vehicles, the requesting department provides Fleet Management any technical specifications required or preferred, and then the budget must be approved by the Department Director and the Department of Financial Services based upon quotes provided by the County's contracted manufacturers and dealerships. The Board of Commissioners provides final approval or denial of all new vehicle requests.

The County replaces vehicles through the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Plan ("VERP"). The VERP is governed by a comprehensive County Administrator Policy and determines what vehicles may be approved for replacement. Like with new vehicles, end-user departments submit requests to the Fleet Management Division, but must first ensure that the requesting department has attended VERP training, submitted the appropriate forms and templates, and verified the vehicle or equipment to be replaced meets at least two of the following criteria:

- The vehicle's mileage is greater than or equal to those identified in the Fleet Management Policy,
- The age is greater than or equal to that identified in the Fleet Management Policy,
- The total of any repair costs for the vehicle is greater than or equal to 80 percent of the vehicle's purchase price,
- Replacement parts for the vehicle are not available, and
- The vehicle is no longer cost effective to maintain.

The end-user department submits the vehicle to Fleet Management to confirm the above criteria and to inspect the vehicle's condition. Fleet Management then submits the request to Financial Services to verify funding sources and operating cost centers, and calculate the appropriate budget and departments' contributions. Fleet Management solicits quotes for replacement vehicles based upon the end-user department's requested specifications from the County's contracted manufacturers and dealerships. Any replacement vehicle must be approved by the Department Heads of the end-user department, Support Services, and Financial Services before being elevated to the Board of Commissioners for final approval.

Disposal of vehicles occurs when those vehicles are being retired and replaced through the VERP, have been confiscated by the Police Department or Sheriff's Office, or when a vehicle has been in an accident and is considered a total loss. Fleet Management disposes of retired and confiscated vehicles through the surplus process, in addition to any other equipment or furniture an operational department no longer needs. For non-vehicle surplus, end-user departments govern which items are selected for surplus; Fleet Management has no governance over the surplus policy except for vehicles. General surplus items are currently sold through Public Surplus, surplus vehicles and equipment are sold through GovDeals, and confiscated vehicles are sold through Copart. The Board of Commissioners must approve any asset listed and sold as surplus. The profits from sales of surplus vehicles and items above a set dollar threshold are collected by the Board of Commissioners; profits below that threshold are collected by the County Administrator.

Vehicles and equipment that are not in good condition – especially those vehicles that have been in an accident and are considered a total loss – are not considered surplus. Total loss vehicles are salvaged, if

possible, or destroyed. Fleet Management is responsible for updating the titles of any vehicle disposed of by the County.

## Communications

The Division has worked to improve relationships with end-user departments. The Division utilizes liaisons within individual departments to communicate general information and updates. There are also monthly meetings with many departments to discuss the preventative maintenance and repairs that are being performed for that department. As appropriate, the Division also brings in the purchasing manager.

Internally, the Division may also host shop meetings to communicate information and updates to employees.

Internal Division communications are inconsistent for the vehicle replacement or new vehicle purchase process. Fleet purchasing and the end-user department communicate frequently on the status of the purchase, but communication with the maintenance shops is less consistent. Often end-user departments may not understand the technical specifications required for their vehicles, which may result in the purchase of vehicles that do not meet all of their needs or in the addition of features that cannot be utilized. Fleet can also build in training on the maintenance and repair of vehicles into the purchase price, and has done so with several vendors, such as Harley-Davidson for Police motorcycles. The inconsistent inclusion of the Fleet Section in the purchasing process may result in missed opportunities to negotiate training costs, or may result in vehicles that lack needed features. It may also result in new or different equipment that requires technical servicing needs or equipment that the department is not fully equipped to support.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division has worked to shift towards preventative maintenance to better manage the County's assets, implement better cost controls, and extend asset lifespan. The Division has developed policies and procedures to support this effort and worked to improve communication with end-user departments about proper care and maintenance of vehicles and equipment. Unfortunately, many end-user departments are not supportive of these efforts, and Department and County leadership have not been helpful in enforcing these expectations for care.

The Division's success in providing timely preventative maintenance and customer service is limited by both the physical space available to perform maintenance and repair work, as well as hiring challenges.

The Division has created several strong plans and processes to ensure ongoing staff training, both in current maintenance and repair trends as well as new trends and technical changes, such as electric and hybrid vehicles, A/C changes, hydraulics, etc. Due to current staffing levels, many staff are unable to dedicate the time to the training, beyond what is required to maintain their certifications.

## Systems and Applications

### Asset Management

Asset management is the primary concern for Fleet Management, and the division expressed the need for mileage tracking, fuel reconciliation, and fleet purchasing capabilities from a formal fleet management process. The current AssetWorks modules used by the County do not provide the detailed

tracking the Division requires. One challenge is that asset numbers are not the same in AssetWorks and SAP, which poses a challenge to staff who manually reconcile the numbers.

The County is currently assessing how non-vehicle assets should be tracked and managed in a single system with work orders and preventative maintenance, as Management feels that there are opportunities for a more uniform asset management process that could also assist with the fleet purchasing process. AssetWorks is currently used for work order management, but the Division would like to have asset management and work orders/preventative maintenance in a single system. AssetWorks is also limited in its ability to allow for automatic queueing or assignment of work orders to technicians who are not currently assigned a work order. Currently, either the Dispatcher or the Shop Supervisor must manually review technician workloads and determine who can be assigned work orders. The Division needs a ticketing system to intake and assign requests to technicians for processing and communicate when requests are complete. The Fleet Management Division tracks standard preventative maintenance schedules for all vehicles through AssetWorks, with the system generating notices about upcoming preventative maintenance needs. Division staff send emails to end-user departments when vehicles are due for preventative maintenance.

With fuel tracking, there are also some opportunities for improved automation to reduce the potential for incorrect or missing data. While the current fuel fobs provided to end-users are integrated with AssetWorks, there are issues with the accuracy of the data that is entered by end-users. Management would like to automate mileage tracking to eliminate manual work and errors and provide more transparency and reporting. This involves a high up-front cost for purchasing and distributing fobs to users and setting up fuel sites for wireless fueling but eliminates the need for staff to manually enter mileage or pin.

Additionally, the County is currently in the process of adding to AssetWorks' fuel focus module to allow for the automation of fuel reconciliation between what the Fuel Focus module reports and what physical inventories and fuel order volumes support.

Outside of the AssetWorks' fuel module, the Division is experiencing issues using hardware and equipment – particularly those that do not integrate with AssetWorks, such as lightboxes.

### Increased Resources

Auto Light Side Technicians noted that the Department only had one diagnostic scanner, which has resulted in several staff bringing in personal diagnostic scanners in order to be able to provide services in a timely manner.

### Data and Performance Analysis

The Division is able to track and report on a variety of performance data metrics. Work order data, for example, can be viewed by work order type, shop, or technician. The work order data presented below should be considered with the acknowledgement of a few caveats. First, the reports provided to Mauldin & Jenkins were not consistent in terms of total number of work orders – work order costing data showed a different number of total work orders each year than the technician data. One example of these data discrepancies is shown in the following table:

Total Number of Work Orders				
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Light Side Work Order Cost Data	10,470	10,879	10,922	9,399
Light Side Technician Data	9,321	9,579	9,829	9,620
Heavy Side Work Order Cost Data	4,639	5,144	4,655	4,027
Heavy Side Technician Data	9,795	10,034	9,637	9,721
Fire Side Work Order Cost Data	2,154	2,046	2,055	1,998
Fire Side Technician Data	5,361	5,215	5,128	4,857

When different data sets are inconsistent, the data is not usable for comparative or holistic analysis, limiting the Division’s ability to made data-driven decisions. Furthermore, inconsistencies between datasets suggest data entry is not being monitored for accuracy nor are established processes and policies being followed and enforced.

As a second caveat to the data presented in this section, the 2021 Technician data is complete through the end of November; the remaining 2021 datasets are only complete through the end of October. Additionally, the Technician data lists every Technician by the shop they are currently in or were in immediately before leaving County employment; the data does not reflect any shifts of Technicians from one shop to another. Finally, the Technician data does not reflect technicians performing work for other shops; the work orders reflect the assigned Technician’s shop regardless of the vehicle’s classification.

The first set of the following graphs provide insight into the total number of work orders completed each year by the Division, broken down by shop. This data only reflects through the end of October 2021, and the scale of each graph is different in order to best demonstrate the year-over-year change.

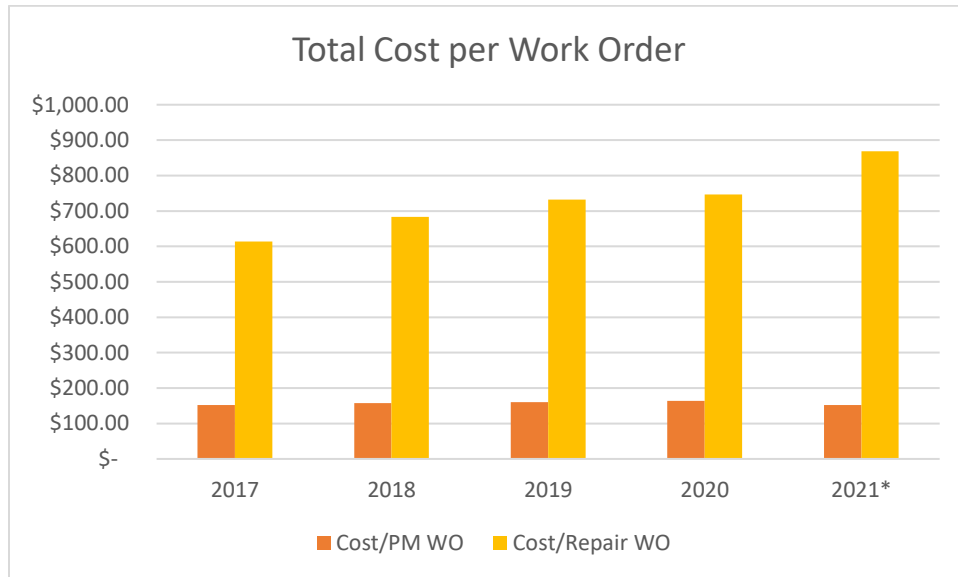




As expected, the number of light side work orders greatly outweighs the other two shops – unsurprising as the majority of the County’s fleet is comprised of vehicles classified as light. The data indicates all three shops have seen a decrease in work orders since 2019, possibly due to less vehicle use during the height of the pandemic.

One data point either not tracked or, at least, not provided to Mauldin & Jenkins in the dataset is the number of preventative maintenance work orders that lead to repairs. The Division could use this data to identify how often end-users are having issues with their vehicles but are not bringing those issues to the awareness of the Fleet Management Division or their own department's Fleet liaison. Furthermore, this data could be used to help demonstrate the amount of vehicle downtime the Division is saving by proactively performing full inspections during preventative maintenance work orders.

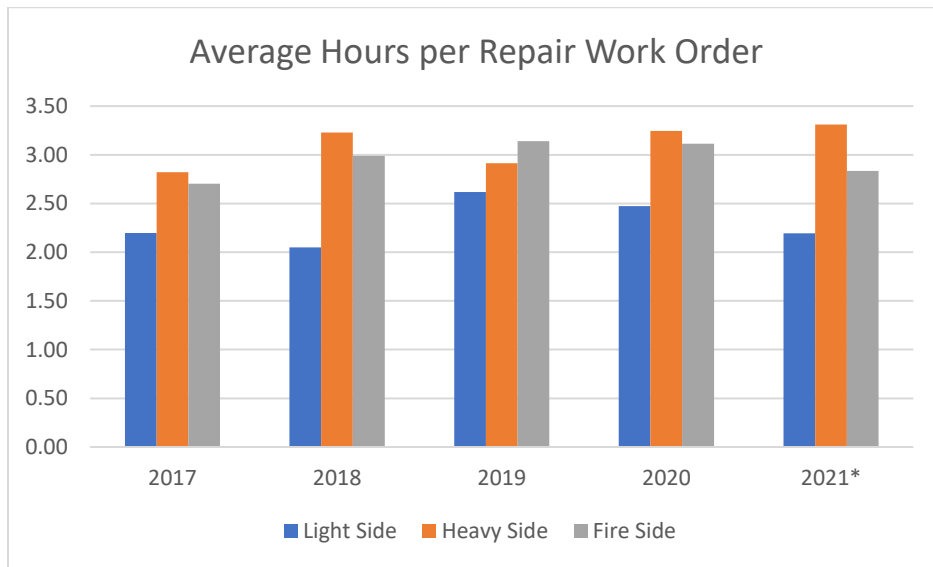
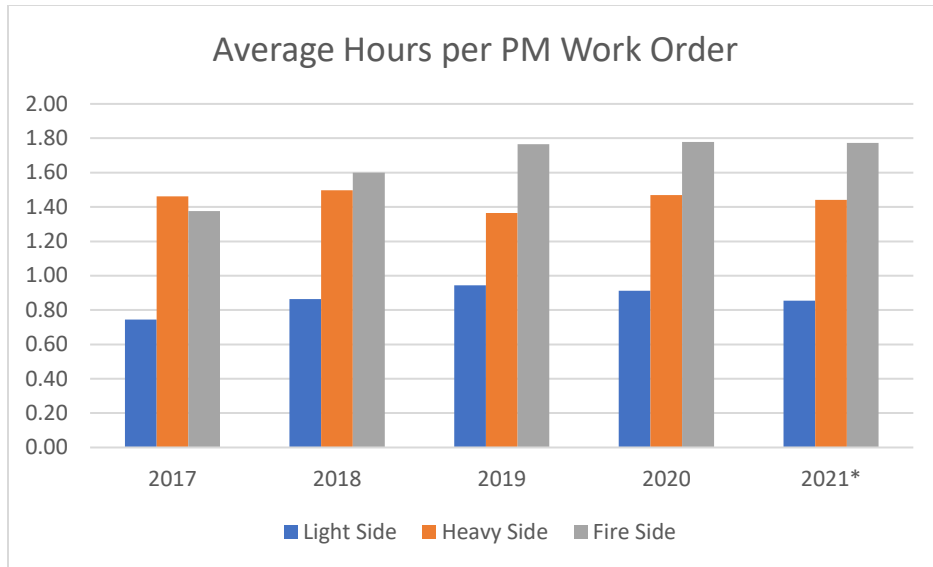
As the number of work orders has decreased, the cost per work order has increased. The following graph looks at the total cost per work order for the Division.



The cost per preventative maintenance work order has remained very consistent over the last five years. The cost of repair work orders, however, has continually increased. While larger global context could be applied to this change, the Division is not analyzing the necessary data to explain why these costs are rising. The Division should be capturing attribution data to indicate whether the cost of labor is increasing, either due to an increase in staff size or an increase in staff pay; whether the costs of parts are rising, either due to older equipment requiring larger replacements or newer vehicles requiring more technical repairs; and whether non-compliance by end-user departments regarding established preventative maintenance processes and practices is causing more costly repairs. Ultimately, the Division should want to be able to justify the increase in cost for the average work order.

The following graphs similarly show data collected that could provide a beneficial set of performance metrics with additional context. These graphs illustrate the average number of hours each shop spends on preventative maintenance and repair work orders. Of note, these graphs are not at the same scale to better illustrate the year-over-year change.





The operational metrics presented by the Fleet Division in Management Framework each month includes two metrics intended to address the time spent performing work orders: percent of work orders completed within a target number of days and percent of preventative maintenance work orders completed on time. Neither of the operational metrics in Management Framework are strong indicators of the Division’s performance. Average number of hours per work order is a step in the right direction, as it is a better metric than total downtime. The amount of time spent on a particular work order is less contingent on end-user departments, parts suppliers, and other external factors than vehicle downtime. However, the Division should develop leading indicators that add pertinent context. For example, the Division should better track service time spent per task code. The Division should have an idea of the amount of time a Technician should spend on a tire replacement – if that average task service time is not reflective of expected service time, the Division would be able to recognize an issue that requires addressing. This data should be measurable per Technician, per shop, and per the Division as a whole so as to best address concerns and report on performance.

Additional data provided allowed Mauldin & Jenkins to review the number of work orders completed by each technician each year, as well as the number of total hours each technician spent completing work orders. While this data can be useful in indicating workload, the data cannot fully explain performance without additional context.

The data provided by the Fuel Management Sector included a breakdown of the amount of each type of fuel used by each entity (Gwinnett County government, Gwinnett Library System, Gwinnett County Board of Education, Northside Medical, and the seven municipalities with which the County has fuel purchase agreements). The Division should consider collating data into reports on the amount of fuel distributed at each fuel site in order to better utilize data to make data-driven decisions, such as locating new fuel pump sites or sunsetting currently under-utilized sites.

The final operational metric in Management Framework is moderately fuel related: the count of hybrid vehicles in the County's fleet. This metric doesn't speak to performance and is more indicative of decisions made by end-user departments than the Fleet Management Division. If departments set hybrid vehicle percentage goals for their specific departmental fleet, departments could report on their progress to achieving their goal. But the metric is not an appropriate indicator of performance for the Fleet Management Division.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** There are currently some inconsistencies with how different Department staff enter task codes into AssetWorks, which may create issues with parts-sourcing and data analysis.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should create standardization guides for task code use and perform regular quality control checks to ensure task codes are used consistently and accurately.

**Observation 2:** Other than the Police Department, end-user departments are physically completing a form while dropping off a vehicle or piece of equipment for repair. This provides no insight for the Fleet Division about when vehicles may be in for repairs, or about the potential types of repairs needed. Once requests have been entered into AssetWorks as work orders, there are also no notifications for the Supervisors about pending work orders for assignment, or summary-level review of Technician workloads.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider allowing for electronic submission of repair requests, with the potential for upload into AssetWorks after acceptance by the Dispatcher. The Division should also work with AssetWorks to understand if additional capabilities or modules are available that allow for better functionality in understanding current workload and assignment of work orders by the Supervisors.

**Observation 3:** Technicians often drive vehicles on the road to replicate problems noted by end-users. Some problems, especially those for emergency response and first responders are challenging to recreate, given the exceptional circumstances that initially created the problem.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider identifying or developing non-public roadways that Technicians could utilize to recreate problems that cannot be recreated safely on the County's public roads.

**Observation 4:** The Division only has two service trucks, which are used for both on-site repairs for the Fire Department as well as on-call Fire Department repair needs. Demand may be beyond what two service trucks can provide.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should collect and assess data on the current number of on-call repairs, as well as scheduled repairs at the fire stations. This data should be leveraged to determine the appropriate number of service trucks, and technicians to staff the trucks, to support the current on-call and on-site workload.

**Observation 5:** Many staff cited challenges with the current physical location of the Division, including limited bay access and available space to park vehicles and equipment pending service or repair.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should include the Fleet Management Division in the next round of facility condition assessments, to determine the current and future space needs of the Division.

**Observation 6:** Many end-users are entering incorrect mileage data when fueling vehicles. The system currently allows end-users to receive fuel even when entering “zeroes” for the mileage. This results in inaccurate data available to the Division to use for tracking needed preventative maintenance, as well as tracking and identifying the need for replacement vehicles based on mileage.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should require end-users to enter accurate mileage data in order to obtain fuel. If the fueling system does not allow for enforcement of actual mileage entry, then the Division should run reports identifying the end-users that are consistently entering inaccurate data and provide that information to end-user Department Directors, requiring enforcement of the policy. The Division may need to consider alternative disciplinary actions, in collaboration with County leadership.

Alternatively, the Division should consider investing in an updated fueling system that tags each vehicle and automatically transmits information at each fueling on mileage, idle hours, and other relevant data points.

**Observation 7:** The current process for Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Plan (“VERP”), along with the plan for new vehicle requests, fails to consistently involve technicians or supervisors in the shops where the majority of the service and repairs will take place. This may result in missed opportunities to leverage technician training into purchase prices, increased price based on unnecessary or unsupported technical specifications, or failure to include needed features in the purchase and after-market costs of installing and maintaining these features.

**Recommendation 7:** The Division should develop a comprehensive process that includes proactive engagement of the Fleet Maintenance Section of the Division in all VERP and new vehicle specification developments. VERP and new vehicle cost estimates should, as appropriate, consider the costs of additional equipment or training that may be necessary to service or repair the purchased equipment or vehicles.

**Observation 8:** The Division has developed several processes and practices to improve preventative maintenance efforts and asset management of the County’s fleet, including regular inspection of vehicles by end-users, and automated notification of needed preventative maintenance. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented by the end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** Departmental and County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Division-developed processes and practices for maintaining vehicles and equipment.

**Observation 9:** The Shop Section collects a variety of data points in AssetWorks, but is not consistently performing quality control on the data that is being entered by staff and contractors. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how data is reported in different datasets, which leads to concerns about completeness or accuracy of any given dataset. The Division is also leveraging some of this data to track workload and performance, which may result in inaccurate data utilization in decision-making and performance assessment.

**Recommendation 9:** The Division should consider developing comprehensive policies and procedures for data entry and introduce better quality control processes to ensure data entry is complete, accurate, and consistent throughout the Division. Furthermore, the Division should review AssetWorks to determine whether data is being accurately shared between modules and reports. Finally, the Division should ensure established procedures do not require duplication of data entry into different modules or reports.

## 3.A.4 Department of Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division

The Fiscal and Solid Waste Division is divided into two sections – Fiscal and Solid Waste.

The Fiscal Section is responsible for all financial administration for the Support Services Department. Responsibilities include processing all payments, coordinating procurement and contract renewals as appropriate, managing p-card administration and reconciliation, and preparing agenda items for submission to the Board of Commissioners.

The Solid Waste Section is responsible for providing customer service for the solid waste contracted servicers who provide trash, yard debris, bulk and recycling services, and overseeing the contracted solid waste haulers. Gwinnett County currently has five haulers; each hauler is assigned geographically. Solid Waste bills are included in the annual property tax bills. The Solid Waste Section is separate from Gwinnett County Clean and Beautiful.

Haulers are responsible for setting their own schedules, including schedules for bulk debris pickup. The current scheduling is inconsistent from hauler to hauler, which may result in some haulers scheduling less frequent bulk pickup, or cancelling or delaying bulk pickup within their assigned geographic area.

Gwinnett County has a Solid Waste Plan, which was drafted in collaboration with the County's municipalities. The plan documents solid waste management practices and programs as well as education and outreach efforts to reduce waste and increase sustainability and recycling efforts. The current plan was last updated in 2008.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Fiscal Purchasing and Contract Administration
- P-Card Administration
- Accounts Payable and Receivable Processing
- Budget Management and Maintenance
- Solid Waste Customer Contact
- Solid Waste Community Outreach and Education

### Fiscal Section

The Fiscal Section is currently drafting and adopting written policies and procedures for financial processes, as there historically have not been financial operations manuals for the Department, just general policies that lacked adequate detail to define procedures or operating steps. This lack of defined or standardized process has led to individual employees' personal preferences and developed processes being understood as the official procedures during new staff onboarding. This has also led to different employees having very different processes to complete the same task, some of which may be overly duplicative or inefficient.

### *Fiscal Purchasing and Contract Administration*

The Fiscal Section's two Business Officers are responsible for all purchasing and contract award coordination with the end-user division. Each Business Officer is assigned approximately half of the divisions to support. For Facility Construction, a Business Services Associate is assisting some of the project managers. The Business Officers serve as the liaison between the Division and County purchasing staff. The Business Officers maintain spreadsheets of all procurement and contract expiration dates, in addition to what County purchasing maintains. The Business Officers send Outlook calendar invites to Division staff to notify them of the deadline and provide supporting documentation that will need to be completed. The Business Officers also prepare the award memos for new contract award. These award memos are submitted to the Division Director and Deputy Director, who are reviewing the award memos for available budget, grammar, and punctuation.

For items that require approval by the Board of Commissioners, the Business Officers also enter the agenda items for routing and submission to the Board.

The Business Services Associates are responsible for entering requisitions for purchases into the SAP modules and then Business Officers review and approval all purchases.

### *P-card Administration*

The Purchasing Card, or P-card program is administered within the Department by the Financial Analyst, who works with the cardholders and their managers to ensure that all transactions are entered, reconciled, and approved. The Financial Analyst also provides P-card training to all card holders.

### *Accounts Payable and Receivable Processing*

The Fiscal Section has two Business Services Associates (BSAs) who are responsible for processing all invoices. Each BSA is responsible for specific divisions within the Department, with Operations and Maintenance split alphabetically by vendor name.

Invoices for Operations and Maintenance and Facility Construction come through SharePoint; other divisions may submit physical invoices or emails with invoices attached for payment. All invoices must have physical wet signatures documenting appropriate approval – the requirement to physically obtain wet signatures for approval creates delays in invoice processing.

The Fiscal Section uses SharePoint for payment processing approval workflow. The County uses FileNet, a content management system, to transfer invoices and supporting documentation between end-user departments and the County's Finance Department. The Fiscal Section is responsible for uploading all approved invoices into FileNet for submission to the Finance Department for processing. End-user divisions may also maintain copies of invoices and other related documentation on their shared drives, creating some confusion about which record the County views as the official system of record.

The Fiscal Section is also responsible for SAP recording of payments collected throughout the Department, such as fleet payments accepted for surplus sales or payments accepted for badge reissuance. The division that accepts the payments maintains a record of payments accepted and sends it to the Business Officer for recording.

### *Budget Management and Maintenance*

Fiscal Section staff also help prepare and submit the annual budget requests for all of the Department divisions. Fiscal Section staff also track budget-to-actual expenditures, and assist other divisions in making budget amendments or requesting additional funds. The Fiscal Section predominantly uses internally developed and maintained spreadsheets for this tracking, as information at the desired level of detail is not currently provided from the SAP system.

The Section is working on developing SharePoint templates and workflows to assist in capital project budgeting moving forward.

### *Solid Waste Section*

#### *Solid Waste Customer Contact*

The Customer Service Associates (“CSAs”) in the Solid Waste Call Center receive a variety of calls and emails from Gwinnett County solid waste customers. There is not currently a way for customers to submit complaints or issues via the website.

Customer Service Associates are responsible for all new customer set-ups and requests for service upon move-in. Each solid waste hauler owns the containers used for trash and recycling pick-up in their contracted area, so the Customer Service Associates must submit requests for service in order to have the containers delivered. The Division uses a customer relationship management system (“CRM”), which all haulers can also access, that has account information auto-populated using tax data. There are often delays in the tax data being uploaded and updated into the CRM. If the customer requesting service doesn’t match the owner information in the CRM, the customer must provide proof of ownership or tenancy in order to have trash service established. Customer Service Associates review account information in the CRM and then send information to the hauler assigned to that address to initiate service. For new construction, the Division confirms that all releases have been completed by other departments, such as water and planning and development, before trash service can be authorized.

The Solid Waste Customer Service Associates also receive complaints about hauler service. Complaints can include missed service, container placed in the street, oil spills or other leakage into the street, etc. Customers can communicate their complaints to either Gwinnett County or directly to their assigned haulers. The haulers are supposed to be putting information into the CRM with any complaints or requests that they receive directly. Tickets are created in the CRM to document the majority of customer complaints. Certain complaints, such as those submitted prior to the time frame in which a non-pickup is considered a “missed pickup” or a complaint where the hauler has already notified the Division of a missed service area and has a solution in place, may not be entered into the CRM as individual complaints. The CSAs email the complaint tickets to the haulers. These emails are drafted by the CSA and are not automated from the CRM. The haulers are responsible for entering updates into the CRM. There is currently no active communication between the CRM and the haulers’ systems to ensure all entries are included and accurate in both systems.

Hauler contracts have service level agreements for response time, but haulers are not consistently entering updates into the CRM, and the CRM doesn’t currently have an effective way to track and identify complaints that have not been resolved. The Section Manager is currently manually aggregating

data to track issues and identify persistent or repetitive concerns since the contract enforcement mechanisms have not adequately encouraged hauler compliance.

If customers have provided an email address, then the customers receive an email customer service survey at the completion of each call or email submitted to the Division. This survey collects information at both the CSA and the Hauler level.

#### *Solid Waste Community Outreach and Education*

The Solid Waste Section is also responsible for community and citizen outreach and engagement, including information about recycling efforts, CHARM (Center for Hard to Recycle Materials) facility access and other drop-off locations throughout the County, information about recycling inclusion, etc. This includes participating in the County's sustainability efforts as well as County employee outreach and engagement about efforts around recycling and sustainability throughout County locations.

The Project Coordinator and the Resources and Marketing Coordinator are also responsible for coordinating volunteers who can serve as additional avenues for community education and engagement. There are currently no formal metrics for marketing and outreach.

### **Communications**

The Fiscal Section currently holds weekly meetings with the Division Director. The Division Director and Solid Waste Section Manager meet every two weeks. The Solid Waste Section Manager also holds regular meetings (both scheduled and informal), with members of the team to review current schedule and issues. The meetings are designed to discuss current workload and general activity status, rather than serve as strategic planning meetings.

Members of the Division state that they often learn about larger strategic changes, or organizational or process changes in other divisions informally, or after the changes have been made.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

This Division has two very diverse sections, representing two very separate functions. Having these two functions under a single Division Director makes strategic initiatives and prioritization of time a challenge since there is no Section Manager over the Fiscal Section, so all of the employees report directly to the Division Director. This split focus and lack of time for strategic planning and initiative means that the division is more workload focused, reacting to issues and addressing them as they arise, rather than seeking to create processes and initiatives that proactively mitigate and manage risks.

The Solid Waste Section is interested in increasing the County's efforts in sustainability, recycling and green initiatives. This will require coordination across multiple divisions and departments, and will need robust leadership and guidance at the County level to ensure buy-in and comprehensive planning and implementation. These efforts will be complicated by the current sanitation hauler contracts, which do not have strong enforcement mechanisms, or many incentives or mechanisms to encourage sustainability and recycling efforts.

Customer Service is also a priority for the Solid Waste Section, but they struggle to manage oversight of the haulers, since each hauler has its own call center and CRM that isn't communicating with the County's CRM to ensure updated and accurate data about ticket response and resolution.



## Systems and Applications

### Labor/Performance Tracking

While the haulers own their own trucks and currently own all of the solid waste and recycling bins distributed to customers, the lack of transparency into routes and missed or skipped deliveries causes communication issues for the Solid Waste Management Section. Management would like to use geotagging on trucks to track routes for increased visibility and transparency. Additionally, management would like to add asset tags to recycling bins to enable haulers to track and optimize routes, notify customers if their items are ineligible to be picked up, and better monitor the level of services needed throughout the county more easily.

### CRM

The Solid Waste Management Section feels that its CRM processes and systems could be enhanced by requiring the haulers to integrate with the Gwinnett County CRM system. Currently, Section staff must manually aggregate, analyze, and review daily spreadsheets of data sent by the haulers to follow up on complaints and service issues logged in the County CRM, which lacks efficiency and may compromise data integrity. There is a decentralized customer service intake process that management feels can be streamlined by integrating hauler data into the County's Customer Service system so that all requests are made, reviewed, and resolved in one location. Another challenge is that integration with the County's CRM system is not a priority for IT now, so there is no clear plan or pathway as to how this need may be met.

### ERM

The Fiscal Management Section produces the Asset Under Construction Report, which management feels should be inputted and automatically managed in the new ERM system or better managed in SAP if maintained in that system. Additionally, there are opportunities to better integrate activity in department-specific systems, such as e-Builder, with activities performed by the Fiscal Management section, such as insurance confirmation, change order creation, or creating purchase orders.

## Data and Performance Analysis

For the 2020 Service Award Breakfast, the Fiscal Section calculated that they processed more than 6,000 invoices, 50 agenda items, 20 change orders, and 40 annual contracts over the last year. There are no formal performance metrics tracked by the Fiscal Division, other than working to ensure they meet the County's standard for processing all invoices within 30 days of receipt.

The Solid Waste Section provides monthly data on average hold times for incoming customer service calls. While average hold times can sometimes be used as an individual performance metric, as a whole, the metric is misleading and does not provide any significant Section-wide performance measurement. Hold times in the Solid Waste Section may represent the time a CSA spends calling a hauler on the complainant's behalf, the time a CSA spends doing research into whether or not a complainant lives in unincorporated Gwinnett County or the system's tax information is updated, or may represent a system timeout as the CSA attempts to transfer the complainant. When presented without context, hold time data can be misleading – suggesting a lack of attention to customers' complaints, when in reality the customer is on hold so the CSA can best address the complaint.

Better metrics for the Solid Waste Section to report fall into two categories: data addressing complaint response times/data relating to the Service Level Agreements (“SLAs”) present in haulers’ contracts, and workload data for the Section. The data provided to Mauldin & Jenkins shows the metrics tracked within the system can be used to create beneficial reports measuring these categories, but may require larger changes around how data is tracked and the CRM is used. The Customer Service Supervisor is currently working with the IT Department to improve data collection and reporting within the CRM. However, unless all calls are routed through the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Customer Service Center, data may still be incomplete and only represent a portion of the customer service requests being submitted.

One key metric the Department can track is how responsive haulers are being to tickets and complaints, and whether they are meeting the SLAs detailed in their contracts. Tracking hauler responsiveness to tickets and complaints and measurements against SLAs can be sourced from various sets of data. The Section can look at complaint response time – the time between receiving the complaint and the hauler addressing the complaint; this would, however, require a shift in CRM utilization to ensure tickets are being closed in the system. The Section can also analyze patterns in complaints per hauler, both in terms of when complaints are the heaviest (e.g., if a certain hauler has an uptick in complaints the third week of every month, etc.) or what types of complaints are most prevalent. The Section can also review liquidated damages per hauler as another data source for measuring performance, though this may require additional tracking within the CRM.

If the Section wants to report upon the work the CSAs perform, the Section can review call data, but should consider different data points than are currently being reviewed. Number of calls received and placed by CSAs can be a good measurement of their workload. Data could be collated to determine if there are spikes in particular months or weeks within each month to see if workload demand is higher for particular periods of time. Number of outgoing calls can also show how quickly CSAs are responding to missed complaint calls or following up on complaints. The number of outgoing calls specifically to haulers could speak to performance of both Section staff and the haulers.

Currently, haulers are not consistently entering call data into the CRM and they have their own call centers, meaning not all calls received and addressed are being reported in Gwinnett County’s data source. To provide a complete view of the performance of the haulers, the County needs stronger requirements for haulers to enter data into the CRM or needs to shift to having the Gwinnett County Solid Waste call center receive all customer calls.

For Solid Waste community outreach and education, the Solid Waste Section should incorporate measurable outputs for the outreach efforts into the outreach and education plan. Effective initial output measures could include number of outreach events, number of individuals engaged, number of volunteers, etc. The County should also consider using data for CHARM utilization, volume of recycled materials collected, participation rates of citizens enrolled and/or utilizing curbside recycling, community recycling event attendance, and leverage changes in these data points over time to help understand the impact of the community outreach and education efforts. These efforts may require additional methods for data capture, such as tagging of trash and recycling containers for more accurate and reliable data points.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Customers with solid waste concerns or issues may contact either the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Call Center, or the individual hauler assigned to their address. This results in inconsistent and incomplete tracking of customer requests, complaints, and issues.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should require that all calls about service within Gwinnett County should go through the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Call Center, to ensure a complete and accurate depiction of the customer service requests and hauler performance.

**Observation 2:** Customers currently do not have a way to utilize the Gwinnett County website to look up whether their address is within unincorporated Gwinnett and therefore eligible for Gwinnett County solid waste pickup. Additionally, there are no options for citizens to submit solid waste issues or complaints directly via the website.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should update the Solid Waste landing page of the Gwinnett County website to allow for customer lookup of address eligibility for inclusion in County solid waste pickup. The County should also consider allowing citizens to submit complaints through the website, including missed pickup, damage or spills occurring during routes, or other requests.

**Observation 3:** Haulers are inconsistent in updating complaints or requests in the CRM to document resolution or responses, even though hauler contracts have specific service level agreements for response time. Additionally, since the two systems do not communicate and do not collect date and time information in the same way, there are inconsistencies in measuring appropriate response time. This has resulted in the Section Manager manually tracking and request responses from the haulers.

**Recommendation 3:** Gwinnett County should review the hauler contracts and ensure that they are enforcing all penalties for failure to meet SLAs for customer request response time. The County may also want to consider updating the contracts to reflect increased penalties and enforcement mechanisms for the County to ensure compliance and appropriate levels of customer service.

**Observation 4:** The Fiscal Section has historically not had comprehensive written policies and procedures for operations, which has resulted in individual preferences and practices being identified and implemented as procedure, rather than preference.

**Recommendation 4:** The Fiscal Section should ensure that comprehensive written policies and procedures are finalized and adopted. Procedures should include regular review and revision to ensure that written procedures align with practice. The adoption process should include the clear delineation of personal preference for task performance from standardized processes.

**Observation 5:** The County requirements for physical wet signatures may cause delays in invoice processing, as this requires the transfer of invoices for printing, signature, and scanning back into the systems used for processing.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should research and implement signature policies and practices that allow for the use of secured digital signatures for invoice approvals and other tasks.

**Observation 6:** The Fiscal Section does not have a Section Manager, which requires the Division Director to directly oversee Fiscal Section staff and provide support and resolution assistance with daily issues or concerns. This limits the Division Director's time available for strategic planning and continuous improvement. Additionally, the inclusion of solid waste and fiscal sections into a single division represent a conflict in prioritization for the Division Director, and two distinct strategic directions.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should divide the Fiscal and Solid Waste Division into two separate divisions. It may also make sense to incorporate other departmental responsibilities into the new Fiscal Division.

**Observation 7:** The Solid Waste Section is currently working on a variety of sustainability, recycling, and green initiatives. These initiatives are predominantly currently planned and implemented within the Division, rather than representing a County-wide buy-in and effort. This may result in lower participation and outcomes, and may result in conflicting initiatives between the Solid Waste Section and other County departments or divisions with similar goals and efforts.

**Recommendation 7:** The County should determine a comprehensive strategic direction and prioritization of sustainability, recycling, and green initiatives. County leadership will need to adopt a County-wide plan and strategy for these efforts, and create a collaborative team to ensure appropriate coordination and buy-in across all County departments.

## 3.A.5 Department of Support Services – Operations and Maintenance Division

The Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for providing full preventive maintenance, ongoing repair, and support services for 52 County facilities and properties and partial support for 90 county facilities and properties, for a total of 142 County facilities and properties. The Division is organized into sections based on various trades.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Building Services
- Carpentry and Furniture
- Contract Services Supervision
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Program Analysis and Asset Management

### Building Services

The Building Services Section provides custodial, housekeeping, and groundskeeping services to the 52 fully maintained facilities for which the Operations and Maintenance Division provide support. The housekeeping teams are divided into work-shifts for adequate coverage during normal business hours, and support prior to and after normal business hours. Two Housekeeping Teams start their shifts at 5:00 a.m. at the GJAC building, to provide cleaning and custodial services before most staff report to work. Typically, after they complete the housekeeping tasks at the GJAC building by latter morning, the Teams then shift to cover their assigned buildings and properties located throughout the County. Some of the buildings require daily services, others only require weekly services. There is also a smaller afternoon shift and a large night shift that provides housekeeping and custodial services near the end of typical workdays, as well as during evening/overnight hours when most staff assigned to the GJAC building have already left for the day. The night shift allows staff to provide additional deep cleaning services or tasks without the worry of interrupting staff during their work, or creating unsafe pedestrian access (e.g., mopping/cleaning the floors in high-traffic areas used regularly by staff and customers).

Providing exemplary customer service is vitally important to the Building Services Teams. The Teams transport all the equipment, supplies, cleaning solutions, etc., that is needed to provide all of the requested services to the assigned buildings.

Section management modifies building assignments and tasks based on staffing availability to ensure all responsibilities and tasks are completed, especially during the peak COVID-19 periods – which impacted availability of staff and social distancing requirements.

The Building Services Section also includes a team of five staff who are responsible for providing groundskeeping services or oversees a contractor that provides groundskeeping services for the 52 buildings that receive full support services, and a number of other facilities in the County (e.g., parks, walking trails, etc.).

### Carpentry and Furniture

The Carpentry and Furniture Section is responsible for general carpentry, finishing carpentry, general maintenance, preventative maintenance, historic preservation, furniture assembly and moving, and minor electrical and outdoor concrete work for the 52 buildings that Operations and Maintenance provides full support and also periodically provides support for the additional partially-supported 90 buildings and facilities.

Carpentry and Furniture Section staff receive work orders and requests for services from the Lucity system. Lucity provides the monthly preventive maintenance tasks at the beginning of each month, which allows the Section Supervisor to integrate preventive maintenance tasks throughout the month along with other work orders and requests that come through based on priority and geographic proximity, which allows staff to operate more efficiently.

The Section manager created cross training opportunities for employees in all areas of carpentry and furniture assembly. New staff that may need additional skills (especially in the areas of carpentry and historic preservation) are paired with more seasoned staff who are carpentry artisans and masters of historic preservation.

In addition to work orders and preventive maintenance responsibilities, the Carpentry and Furniture Section is also responsible for moving furniture in the Support Services Conference Center, Conference Rooms A, B, and C – to set up the rooms based on customer requests. If the conference rooms get reserved multiple times throughout a day, staff from the Section must stop working on repairs and maintenance to go to the GJAC Building to rearrange furniture. In cases where the customer did not include the desired set-up of the room at the point of reservation and make the request upon arrival to use the room, Section staff are required to stop work on repairs and maintenance and go to the Conference Center to move the furniture. The desire to allow customers to make on-demand requests creates inefficiencies and frustration on the part of Carpentry and Furniture staff.

It has been also noted that the tables purchased for the Conference Center conference rooms are not intended to be moved and/or collapsed on a regular basis. Unlike the tables in the Human Resources training rooms, Conference Center conference room tables are not on casters and are not easy to fold and collapse. This creates additional inefficiencies requiring multiple staff to move the heavy tables and equipment, and possibly creates a safety hazard for the staff moving the tables.

With the myriad of tasks and responsibilities staff in this Section are responsible, renaming the Section to a title similar to “Light Construction” is more indicative of their responsibilities.

### Contract Services Supervision

The purpose of the Contract Services Supervision Section is fourfold:

- Oversee contractors that perform services which do not naturally align within one of the trades sections of the Division (e.g., contractors to perform service and maintenance on elevators, overhead doors, fire extinguishers, roofs, etc.)

- Serve as a quasi-project managers over small renovation or construction projects involving multiple trades sections within the Division on County buildings or facilities
- Assist Supervisors over each of the trade's areas to address performance or quality issues with contractors
- Serve as a liaison between the Facility Construction Division and the Operations and Maintenance Division with the closeout of new facility construction, specifically transitioning the ongoing maintenance requirements with the specific trade's sections or with private contractors to provide preventive maintenance at required intervals

At the current time, there is only one employee working in this Section. In providing contract oversight and management of contracts and vendors for non-trades-specific contracts, this position manages all interactions with the vendors, including the scheduling of maintenance and repair appointments, processing the requests for payments, and providing quality reviews and assurance for the work performed by contractors.

Serving as a quasi-project manager over small renovation and construction projects requires working with the customer divisions to determine the requirements for the project and funding, scheduling with the individual trades supervisors for technical work to be provided by trade's staff, and closing out the project after all required work is completed. As a component of the project management role, the position maintains a log of positive and negative experiences with contractors used by the Division. The data is stored on a shared drive and made available to Trades staff from Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Departments, as each of Department has its own Trades sections.

Since each of the Trade's Supervisors is responsible for holding contractors accountable for performance and quality standards, the Trade's Supervisors may not have experience or knowledge of the County's internal processes to address contractors whose work and performance do not meet the quality standards of the contract. The Contract Services Supervision position provides technical guidance to the Trade's Supervisors on County protocols to hold the contractors accountable, provide direction on how to document the lapses in performance and quality standards, and assist with the internal mechanisms to request the County Procurement Division to formally address the matter with the vendor.

The Contract Services Supervision position assists with the transition of maintenance responsibilities from the Facility Construction Division at the close of a construction or renovation project, to the Operations and Maintenance Division, whereby the required preventive maintenance or repairs will be conducted either by one of the trade's sections or by a private contractor. This position started scheduling regular, monthly collaborative meetings with Facility Construction and Operations and Maintenance staff to update each section on upcoming project closure timelines and with the scheduling of training for the separate trade's staff. It is often a component of the construction contract that the vendor must provide onsite training for the required preventive maintenance and repair to County staff. Division staff have also recognized that having the Trades teams participate in final walk-throughs and punch-list development gives the Trades teams insight into the detail of the buildings they will soon be responsible for, as well as provide more technical reviews by Trades staff so the construction vendor will be held accountable to a higher standard.

During these transition periods, the Contract Services Supervision position enters required repairs or maintenance into the Lucity system, which is assigned to the appropriate trade's section based on the type of work to be performed. The need for these collaborative meetings became evident as the construction of the Judicial building was nearing completion. The Trades sections, in particular the Electrical Section, had not been trained on the operations and maintenance/repair requirements for the new, state-of-the-art lighting system installed in the building. Current Electrical staff had not been trained on the operations or maintenance of the new system when they became responsible for maintaining it. Since time has elapsed beyond the warranty period provided by the construction vendor, the vendor is now charging additional fees to have someone come onsite to provide training to the Electrical staff.

These collaborative meetings have proven beneficial to understanding and recognizing that the Facility Construction Division could benefit from involvement of the Trade's staff earlier in the planning and design phases of project development. Introducing Design Reviews by Trade's Supervisors earlier in the construction planning process will allow the Facility Construction Division to benefit from the technical construction and maintenance expertise from staff within their own Department.

The Contract Services Supervision position regularly visits construction sites or buildings/facilities to observe the work performed by contractors for whom they are responsible. The position conducts visual inspections, either in person or using drone technology, to ensure that the contractor is meeting the quality standards required in the contract. Since the Section does not own a drone, a drone is borrowed from another section to use for inspections – which requires coordination and time for retrieving/returning the drone.

### Electrical

The Electrical Section is responsible for electrical, power, lights, and fire alarms for all buildings and facilities assigned to each staff. The Section Supervisor assigns specific buildings/facilities to each staff person so they become familiar with the systems in each building, the history of problems or repairs needed for the building, and ongoing preventive maintenance requirements. Although the Lucity system creates its own history of repairs and maintenance for individual buildings, having staff already familiar with the nuances of the system within assigned buildings and having familiarity with the history of repairs and maintenance of those systems have proven very efficient for staff.

As mentioned in the above Contract Administration Section, Contract Administration is working to create collaborative meetings between the Trades sections and the Facility Construction Division prior to, during, and as construction projects near the end of construction periods. These meetings, if conducted regularly and in the spirit of full cooperation and collaboration, will hopefully avoid the previous experiences where construction vendors charge the County to provide training on proper operations and maintenance of the building and facilities.

### HVAC

The Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Section is responsible for maintaining the HVAC systems in all 52 buildings that are fully maintained by Support Services, as well as 45-50 additional County buildings, for a total of 95-100 buildings of full HVAC support. This includes the core County administration building, libraries, fire stations, police precincts, health departments, senior centers, etc. The HVAC Section provides both operational repairs as well as preventive maintenance, both of which



are typically assigned in the Lucity system. The HVAC Section is also required to provide technical support for Capital Improvement Projects in planning equipment replacement that is approaching or passed its normal life expectancy.

Technicians in the HVAC unit are assigned groups of County buildings and facilities within a specific geographic area. Assigning buildings by zones helps create efficiencies for staff in that they drive shorter distances between the buildings and facilities. Assigning buildings by zones to the HVAC Technicians allows staff to become more familiar with the systems and repair history for their assigned buildings, and familiar with the Support Services liaisons for each building – which creates a more effective experience for each customer. If the primary HVAC Technician is not available due to working on a higher priority repair or other reason, the HVAC Supervisor assigns another Technician based on workload and technical experience to address the problem or repair.

HVAC Technicians transport requisite supplies and standard equipment in their assigned vans, but they also have County P-cards if specialty parts or devices are required for the repair. The HVAC Supervisor approves amounts for larger purchases based on the degree of failure of the equipment, and the level of urgency to getting the equipment back online as quickly as possible.

Recruiting for staff with HVAC certifications and experience has been very difficult. Private companies typically offer higher starting pay rates than the County and provide more opportunities for accelerated advancements depending on certifications attained and skills acquired. In the State of Georgia, a State Contractor's license/certification is required to be certified as an HVAC Control Technician. With the housing marketing booming in recent years, applicants who already have attained the State Contractor's license/certification typically demand higher salaries than the County has been willing to approve. The HVAC Section uses contractors on the County's approved list of vendors to provide HVAC services beyond that which the Section has the expertise to provide or workload permitting.

### Plumbing

The Plumbing Section provides Plumbing services to the 52 buildings that Support Services fully maintains, and approximately 50 more buildings/facilities, with a total of close to 100 buildings for Plumbing services. The Plumbing Section consists of the Plumbing Supervisor and three Trades Technician III positions. The Plumbing Section is allowed to hire staff at the Technician III level, bypassing the Technician I and II levels. However, there is no promotional opportunity for the staff within the Plumbing Section until the Plumbing Supervisor position becomes vacant.

The Plumbing Section also uses contractor services from the County's list of approved contractors to augment the support for repairs and maintenance that workload prohibits them from addressing. Reputable Plumbing contractors did not express interest in submitting bids for County services, as they perceive the County contract to not be very profitable, given the perception that it will require significant overnight and weekend work, which typically requires premium pay to their own employees. The Plumbing Section staff expressed frustration in the quality of work provided by contractors on the list of approved vendors for plumbing services, so they seldom use the contractors.

### Program Analysis and Asset Management

The Program Analysis and Asset Management Section is responsible for the following:

- Providing administrative support for all of the Trades sections

- Overseeing the Asset Management program for the Operations and Maintenance Division
- Managing the Building Plan digitization project
- Serving as the technology liaison for connecting Facility Construction Division's e-Builder program to the Operations and Maintenance Division's Lucy program
- Oversee the EnergyCap energy utilization and tracking program

In providing administrative support to each of the Trades sections, the Program Analysis staff provide training to all Trades staff on the use of Lucy, as well as review all content entered by Trades staff into the Lucy system. The training includes how to document technical notes of the repairs and maintenance for the work order, lists of equipment and supplies used, and the total work time spent on the work order. Division management assigned the Program Analysis section to review all entries by Trades staff to ensure accuracy and completeness as a final quality review.

The Asset Management program requires not only inventory of all equipment and supplies, but also the ongoing preventive maintenance work orders aligned on requisite cycles to ensure timely action so as not to void the warranties provided by the construction vendor.

The Building Plan digitization project was assigned to the Program Analysis Section to digitize historical building plans that are currently on scroll-paper and onion-skin paper. Since the Department began requiring building plans be submitted electronically three years ago, the digitization project primarily addresses historical plans, which are often decades old. Because the size of each sheet of paper is so large, it is cost-prohibitive to send the plans to a vendor for digitization. Section staff estimate it may take two to three years at their current rate to complete the project. The project plans are sent to the Records Management Department for storage after the digitization is completed.

The EnergyCap energy utilization and tracking program requires the entry of utility utilization for all County departments, including the utilization amount and costs for electricity, water, gas, etc. for every County building and facility. Although the Section is transitioning to where end-user/customer departments will enter their own utilization and cost data directly into the EnergyCap system, Section staff must still manually enter a significant number of customer's data into the system for each month. The next phase of technology enhancements will be to convert to "bill capture" functionality, where the system will convert and import bills and invoices directly into the system, foregoing manual entry. Bill and invoice data is often requested by Facility Construction Division Project Managers to assist in anticipating energy and utility costs for new construction based on similar sized buildings and facilities.

With the Program Analysis Section having only two staff members, they split their time between Program Analysis duties and providing administrative support to each of the five Trades teams. At least two additional staff will be required over the next three-year period in order to complete the technology and digitization projects, as well as provide the ongoing administrative support for the Trades sections.

## Communications

There is an ongoing need for better communications between Trades sections, the Capital Project Team, the Facility Construction Division, and the Technology Services Department. As buildings are nearing completion of renovations or nearing the end of life expectancy for major system, increased communications are required regarding current state of buildings, historical repairs and maintenance considerations, long-term planning, etc.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Program Analysis and Asset Management Section is embracing the newest technology initiatives in digitizing older, paper copies of building plans of all County buildings to electronic format. The Section Manager will soon be collaborating with the Facility Construction Division and the Planning and Development Department to research the equipment they use for digitizing their records in hopes of borrowing their equipment to expedite completion of the project.

The Program Analysis and Asset Management Section is also moving forward with the next phase of technology enhancements to the EnergyCap system, which will provide additional functionality for invoices/bills to be converted and imported directly into the EnergyCap system, which will no longer require manual entry of invoice information.

## Systems and Applications

### Asset Management

There are opportunities for better asset management, specifically for work order automation, building inventory management, and better tracking of drive time and labor costs. Management would like assets to be tracked in an internal inventory that utilizes barcodes to track assets. There is little space to store assets, so for the little assets they have, they do not use a tracking system. Lucity is currently being utilized as a preventative maintenance system, which is limiting because it is designed for piping rather than maintenance. Management sees a need to expand the County's focus on strategic asset management. Specifically, greater management of preventative maintenance and assessment of replace/repairs.

### Manual Processes

Manual processes are still in place within the Division and County that can be addressed through digital automation. Currently, wet signatures are still required throughout the County, which is time-consuming and wastes paper. There is a need for secure and encrypted digital signature capabilities on documents which would significantly decrease the time to process and eliminate the use of printers, paper, and ink.

The Division struggles with end-user entry of work order requests. Some end-users submit inaccurate or incomplete work orders; others call staff or stop them when they are physically in the end-user's area to request maintenance or repair assistance. These efforts are not always entered into Lucity, which may result in an underreporting of work performed.

Additionally, the invoice process involves emails between vendors, trades staff, and the Fiscal Management Section, which could be automated within a system for increased transparency and ease of use. Currently, trades staff go to the office and print out work orders and complete the work. They also call their supervisors throughout the day to see if anything urgent arises, then return to the office to update and close tickets at the end of the day.

### Outdated IT

The use of flip phones was a repeatedly brought up topic that produced challenges for the team, as they lack the capabilities to email, text, or take photos. Trades Technicians currently use flip phones and laptops in the field. The flip phones provide minimal functionality, and the laptops are cumbersome,

which results in technicians not using them. Management feels that a shift to smartphones would enable technicians to perform their jobs better and more efficiently on site.

Another issue is that Technicians use Toughbooks without cellular capability, so they must locate and access Wi-Fi in their field location, which is very time-consuming and may compromise security if technicians use public Wi-Fi.

### Lack of Visibility/Tracking

The Operations and Maintenance division monitors power usage and promotes green initiatives. Currently, there is little tracking of energy usage data, but the Department recently obtained software to input invoice data from Georgia Power.

Another issue is that Supervisors cannot see everything employees buy in the new P-card automation process through Bank of America.

### Data and Performance Analysis

The following table provides data that is tracked for Service Requests completed on time by the Operations and Maintenance Division. The Target amount of 98% did not change for the three years included in the table.

Further analysis needs to be completed by the Division of what additional steps need to be taken or issues to be addressed in order to reach the targeted amount of 98%, since the Target has only been met in one month during the three years of data that was tracked. Additional analysis may be required to determine if the Target amount is appropriate, or if factors beyond the control of the Division are impacting the realized rates.

Metric	Target	Month	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021
Service Request Completed (SLA)/ Operations & Maintenance: Service Requests Completed On Time	98%	January	100%	92%	93%
		February	96%	95%	91%
		March	95%	90%	90%
		April	97%	77%	93%
		May	97%	80%	95%
		June	95%	92%	93%
		July	97%	94%	93%
		August	96%	93%	92%
		September	95%	92%	89%
		October	NA	89%	91%
		November	NA	93%	94%
		December	NA	92%	97%

The following table provides data that is tracked for Preventive Maintenance tasks completed on time by the Operations and Maintenance Division. The Target amount of 90% did not change for the three years included in the table.

Further analysis needs to be completed by the Department of what additional steps need to be taken or issues to be addressed in order to reach the targeted amount of 90%, since the Target has only been met in three months (only in 2019) during the three years of data that was tracked. Additional analysis may be required to determine if the Target amount is appropriate, or if factors beyond the control of the Department are impacting the realized rates.

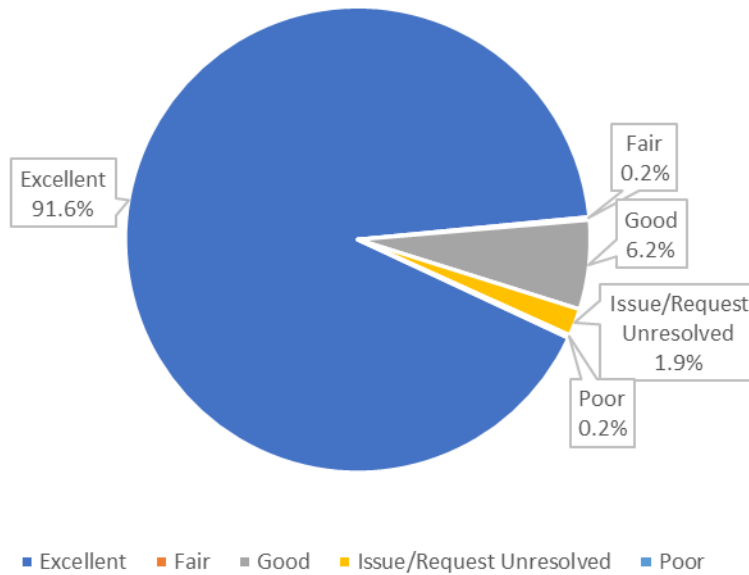
<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Month</b>	Actual	Actual	Actual
			<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Operations and Maintenance Preventive Maintenance Tasks Completed On Time	<b>90%</b>	<b>January</b>	NA	85%	54%
		<b>February</b>	NA	74%	60%
		<b>March</b>	NA	59%	62%
		<b>April</b>	NA	58%	81%
		<b>May</b>	NA	59%	66%
		<b>June</b>	100%	37%	55%
		<b>July</b>	91%	43%	78%
		<b>August</b>	100%	68%	63%
		<b>September</b>	83%	86%	81%
		<b>October</b>	NA	55%	79%
		<b>November</b>	NA	76%	75%
		<b>December</b>	NA	71%	86%

The following charts provide Customer Service ratings feedback on the Operations and Maintenance Division for the years 2018 to 2021. Customers provided an overall experience rating of one of the following:

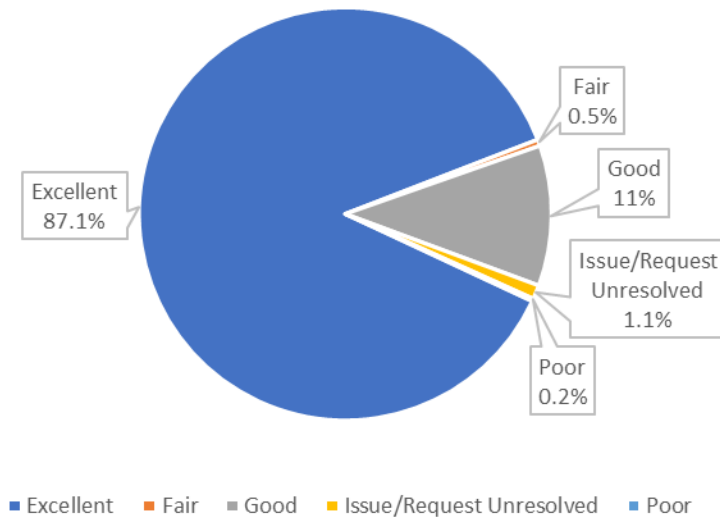
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Issue/Request Unresolved
- Poor

For all four years of data provided, the Division’s customer service rating was consistently in the 97 to 98% range for the combined ratings of “Excellent” and “Good”. There was a slight dip in overall Excellent rating in 2020, but that could be attributed to the staffing limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was also impacted by supply chain access to parts and equipment. Overall, for the four years of data provided, the Division is to be commended for their Customer Service ratings.

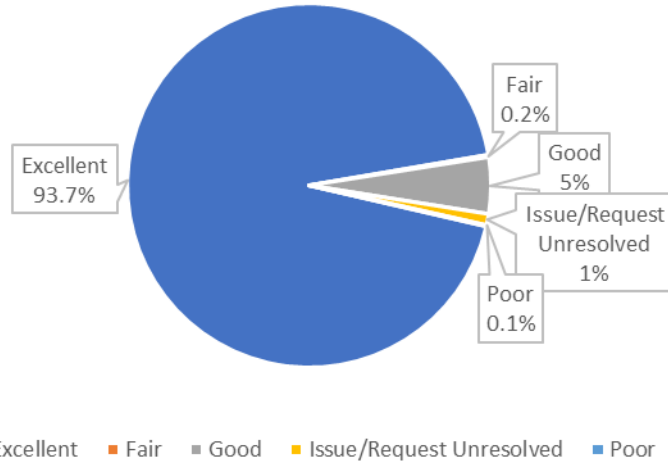
## Operations and Maintenance: Customer Service Feedback for 2021



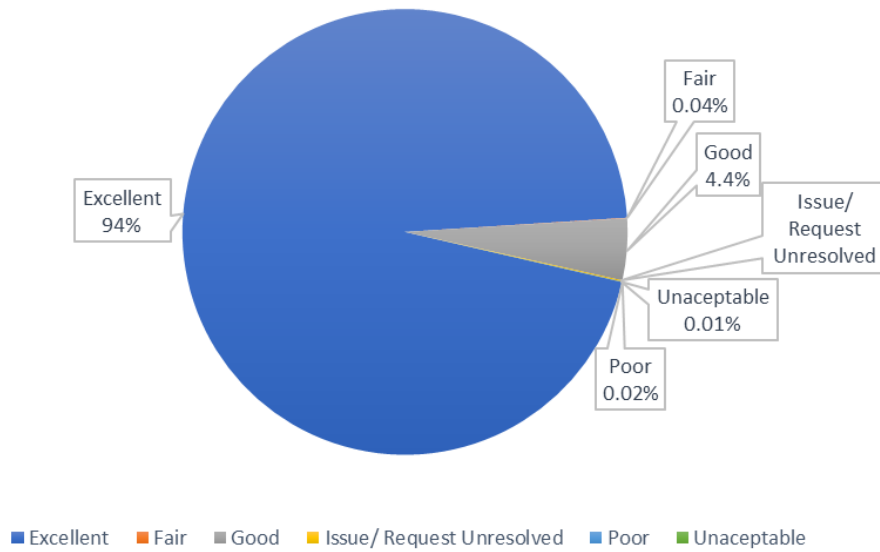
## Operations and Maintenance: Customer Service Feedback for 2020



## Operations and Maintenance: Customer Service Feedback for 2019



## Operations and Maintenance: Customer Service Feedback for 2018



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Carpentry and Furniture Section is responsible for moving furniture in the Support Services Conference Center conference rooms, based on the requested layout of the group using the conference rooms, or based on last-minute, on-demand requests from customers. The tables purchased for each of the conference rooms were not designed for regular dismantling and moving, as they are heavy, difficult for one person to move without assistance, and the tables are not on casters. By comparison, the tables in the Human Resources training rooms are designed for frequent dismantling, breakdown, and easy for one employee to move around the room.

**Recommendation 1A:** The Department should consider at an appropriate time replacing the current tables with tables that are lighter, designed to be moved on castors, and provide more flexibility in how the equipment is utilized.

**Recommendation 1B:** The Department should encourage customers who use the Conference Rooms to provide layout and design requests for the set-up of the room at least three business days prior to the reservation. The Department should also consider prohibiting or limiting last-minute, on-demand requests to move furniture in the Conference Rooms.

**Observation 2:** The Contract Services Section is responsible for managing and overseeing contracts for which they are responsible, e.g., those contracts that do not naturally fit within one of the trades sections. A component of the management of the contracts is the Section holds the contractors accountable to service level agreements, quality assurance standards, and performance standards that are a component of the contract. Each Trades Section Supervisor is responsible for managing the contractors assigned to their Trades Sections. However, most Trades Section Supervisors are not trained nor are they savvy at contract management and the protocols to hold contractors accountable to contract standards.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider shifting the management and responsibilities for holding contractors accountable to performance and quality standards to the Contract Services Section for all contracts for which the Division is responsible. Division management should collaborate with both Trades Section Supervisors and the Contract Services Section to assign tasks and responsibilities needed as components of the steps to hold contractors accountable. With the current workload of the Contract Services Section, if this recommendation is implemented, additional staff will be required for the Section as current staffing cannot support these additional responsibilities.

**Observation 3:** The Contract Services Section currently serves as a liaison between the Facility Construction Division and the Operations and Maintenance Division as new construction projects are closed out. In addition, Facility Construction started including Operations and Maintenance Supervisors and staff in the review of Facility plans and as consultants throughout the construction process to ensure the Contractor is held to required quality and performance standards.



**Recommendation 3:** The Contract Services Section should expand utilization of the expertise available from the Operations and Maintenance Division in support of Facility Construction projects. Additional Contract Services Section staff is needed to expand the focus on the internal support and expertise available within the Department would benefit the Department in short- and long-term advantages – especially as the Operations and Maintenance Division becomes responsible for the long-term maintenance and warranties of the newly built properties. In addition, Contract Services Section staff should ensure that Operations and Maintenance staff are a component of the final steps of a construction project, including the final punch-list development and training by the vendor and/or vendor’s subcontractors on the warranty and maintenance requirements.

**Observation 4:** Trades Section Supervisor conveyed experiences with the selected contractors for Trades Services underperforming and/or providing less-than acceptable quality standards in performance of the contract. With County Purchasing Division’s selection of contractors who submitted the lowest-bid, the Trades Section are not aware if there is a component of the selection process to include considerations of quality workmanship or past performance/experiences (reference checks).

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should collaborate with the County Purchasing Division to ensure the involvement of Trades Section staff in the development of future Requests for Proposals for Trades services, and possibly in the selection process for those contracts. Contracts for Trades services should include service level considerations and performance standards. Trades Section Supervisors and Division management should be trained on the steps to addressing contractors whose workmanship does not meet “The Gwinnett Standard” and/or expected quality standards.

**Observation 5:** The Program Analysis and Asset Management Section is responsible for the digitization of older building plans for all County buildings and properties for which the Department is responsible. The equipment they use to scan and store the documents is very slow and unable to scan the size of the existing paper documents. The Planning and Development Department and Support Services, Facility Construction Division currently have similar equipment and may provide insight with equipment and digitization processes.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should collaborate with Technology Services and Planning and Development Departments and the Facility Construction Division to identify appropriate scanning and storage equipment available for the digitization project. The Department should use the insights of the collaboration to include in future budget requests for additional or replacement equipment.

## 3.A.6 Department of Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management Division

The Real Estate and Records Management Division is responsible for the acquisition, management, and disposal of real estate for the County; records management storage and management for County departments; and the provision of mail services for County buildings and facilities.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Real Estate
- Records Management
- Mail Services
- Cafeteria Contract Management

### Real Estate

The Real Estate Section's mission is "to provide for the acquisition, management, and disposal of real estate interests for Gwinnett County Government". The Section, in conjunction with the Law Department, works closely with departments – including Transportation, Water Resources, Community Services, and the rest of Support Services – to ensure the necessary exchange of real property, easements, leases, and encroachment agreements.

#### *Acquisition of Real Property*

The first of the Section's responsibilities is the acquisition of all County-owned real estate, except for the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation ("DOT") which acquires its own real estate. The Real Estate Section acquires all property for public safety, water/sewer and stormwater improvements, parks and recreation, libraries, government offices and facilities, and other real property as approved by the Board of Commissioners. All acquisitions of real property are governed by the Gwinnett County Land Acquisition Policy as approved by the Board of Commissioners on July 19, 2011. The Law Department is currently reviewing the Land Acquisition Policy to determine if updates to the policy are necessary.

Acquisitions are initiated in one of two ways: internal requests from another department, and property offers made by landowners. For internal requests, if no land parcel is identified with the request, the Real Estate Section will prepare a list of properties for review by the requesting department. For offers made by landowners, whether the property is offered as a sale or a donation, the Section will notify the County Attorney and, upon their approval, circulate the property to County departments in order to determine if the property is needed/desired. Once a property or multiple properties have been identified as necessary for a project, an "Acquisition Report" is prepared for the Board of Commissioners who may authorize the Section to continue with the acquisition process, request additional information from the property owner, or deny the request. If authorized to continue, the Real Estate Section will follow the steps laid out in the Land Acquisition Policy and County Policies and Procedures Manual, including obtaining an appraisal, negotiating an offer, ordering a title examination, and requesting surveys and environmental testing.

Throughout the process, the acquisition goes before the Board of Commissioners multiple times for approval and may be canceled per decision of the Board at each of the approval steps. If the final request to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement is approved by the Board of Commissioners, the Real Estate Section will provide the necessary documentation to the Law Department in order to prepare the closing package and will file a “Property Transfer Form” in order to obtain the property deed. Offers made to property owners are set at the appraised value; counteroffers received from property owners are reviewed by the Director of Support Services and the Law Department, and those regarding water/sewer or stormwater projects are negotiated under the terms of the Gwinnett County Settlement Ordinance. The Gwinnett County Settlement Ordinance allows for the County Administrator, Director of Financial Services, Director of Support Services, Director of Water Resources, and Risk Manager to approve negotiated prices that exceed the appraised value by up to \$100,000. Any counteroffer above that threshold for water/sewer and stormwater projects, or above appraised value for all other projects managed by the Real Estate Section must be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

If all reasonable attempts to negotiate an appropriate compensation for the purchase of a property are exhausted, the Real Estate Section can, in conjunction with the Law Department, recommend condemnation. This recommendation goes before the Board of Commissioners who will determine if the property need is great enough to serve the good of the County, and therefore exercise its right to eminent domain per O.C.G.A. Titles 22 and 32. Condemnation is rarely utilized by the Real Estate Section, as it is expensive and can take six months or longer to complete the process, including court proceedings – most condemnations are used for transportation projects.

#### *Disposition of Real Property*

The disposition of real property owned by the County involves two primary processes: abandonments and surplus/sales.

Abandonment is the process of determining County-owned property is no longer in use by the public and maintaining that property serves no public interest, allowing the County to relinquish its ownership of the property. In Georgia, abandonment is primarily utilized for public roads and rights-of-way, and is governed by O.C.G.A. Title 32 Chapter 7. Abandonments in Gwinnett County can either be requested by DOT or by members of the public who complete a “Petition for Abandonment”, including a survey, a legal description of the section of public road requested for abandonment, and notarized signatures of all petitioners and anyone for whom the road is the only access to their property. The Real Estate Section develops a file for abandonment requests, including a GIS map, and circulates the requests to County departments, utility companies, and the relevant municipality if the road is within a city’s jurisdiction. Any department, utility company, or municipality affected may object to the abandonment; if the Section is not able to help facilitate resolutions to objections raised, the process ends. If there are no objections, or all objections are resolved, the Section prepares an agenda item for the Board of Commissioners, who may approve or deny the request during a public hearing. The original owner of the property – or the current owner of the parent property – has first right of refusal to acquire the property back from the County. If the previous owner waives the right to reacquire the property, it may be sold by the County through public auction, sealed bid, or on the open market through a contracted broker.

Any other real property determined to be unserviceable, and therefore surplus, by the Board of Commissioners may be disposed of per the Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance and O.C.G.A. § 36-9-3. As the Real Estate Section does not currently maintain a list of potential surplus properties, these properties are most often identified when a member of the public requests to purchase unutilized County real estate. Just as with roadway abandonments, the Real Estate Section prepares a file for the property and circulates the file to County departments and utility companies for objections. If any entity raises an objection, the Section will attempt to facilitate a resolution. Should the Section not succeed in addressing an objection, the process ends. If no objections are received, or all objections are resolved, the Section prepares a Disposition Report for the Board of Commissioners, who may authorize a property appraisal. The Board will review the appraisal and authorize the Section to proceed with the sale. Surplus properties are almost exclusively sold via sealed bid, a process managed by the Purchasing Division of the Financial Services Department. If bids meet the established criteria (transportation property must be sold for at least 85% of the appraised value while all other real estate must be sold for 100% of the appraised value), the highest bid is presented to the Director of Support Services. Because surplus properties must be sold through sealed bids, there is no guarantee the original requestor will be the winning bid. Once the Director has recommended acceptance, the Purchasing Division issues a notice of award and the Real Estate Section begins the closing process, sending the Quitclaim Deed and Closing Statement to the Law Department for approval and Board Chairperson's signature.

After a real property has been abandoned or sold, the Real Estate Section will notify the Department of Financial Services to remove the property from the Fixed Asset List, as well as have GIS remove the property from the County Owned Layer.

#### *Land Exchange*

In addition to acquisition and disposition of real property, the Real Estate Section can exchange properties of similar value to simultaneously acquire and dispose of County property. Any property acquired by the County through such an exchange must be of equal or greater value than the County's property. Land exchanges can be initiated through outside inquiry or internal acquisition request, generally for property neighboring current County real estate. The process for a land exchange is similar to that of an acquisition and a disposition: the Section creates a file that is circulated for objections, appraisals and surveys are ordered for both properties, and the Board of Commissioners is provided several opportunities to approve or deny the request. Similar to dispositions, land exchanges are governed by O.C.G.A. § 36-9-3.

#### *Easement Acquisition*

Along with real estate acquisitions, the Real Estate Section is also responsible for acquiring easements for various County departments. Easements are legal arrangements in which property owners retain ownership of their property but grant rights to another entity (in this case the County) to cross or otherwise use part of the land for a specific purpose. Most easements acquired by the Section are for Department of Water Resources ("DWR") projects; however, the Section also commonly acquires easements for the Community Services and Support Services Departments.

The Real Estate Section works with Community Services to acquire easements used to build parks and greenway trails; the Section works with Support Services' Facility Construction Division to acquire easements for capital construction projects. The easements for these departments are acquired through a similar process to real property acquisitions: the requesting department completes an

Acquisition Request form which is transmitted to the Board of Commissioners for authority to order an appraisal, after which the Section proceeds with ordering any necessary title examinations and land surveys, preparing the option sale agreement, and assisting the Law Department with the closing package.

Easements for the Department of Water Resources are utilized for water and sewer construction and for storm water utility. Easements that are acquired for water and sewer construction projects do not require individual approval from the Board of Commissioners, as long as the Board has approved the overall project per the Land Acquisition Policy; DWR and the Real Estate Section can approve counteroffers on the easements up to \$3,500 or 25% above the appraised value of the property, whichever amount is greater, without exceeding \$5,000 over the appraised value. Storm water utility requires both easements and rights-of-entry for improvement projects; storm water utility easements are generally requested as donations since the projects provide property improvements. In addition to the easement, the Real Estate Section will obtain a notarized right-of-entry from the property owner, which permits the County's staff and contractors to access the property in order to complete the required work. Right-of-entry documents are maintained in DWR's tracking system but are not filed with the Superior Court like other property-related documents. Like projects initiated for Community Services and Support Services, water and sewer construction projects are initiated through an "Acquisition Request" form, however storm water utility projects are initiated, tracked, and reassigned to DWR in Lucity.

Most projects, especially those for DWR, require multiple easements, all of which the Real Estate Section is responsible for acquiring. Only upon acquisition of all required easements is the project turned back over to the requesting department's project manager.

#### *Leases and Lease Management*

The Real Estate Section is not only responsible for the purchase and sale of properties (those transactions resulting in a change of ownership) but also for the leasing of properties. Leases can occur in one of three situations: internal requests for space, external requests for property use, and leases involving communications towers. Internal requests for leasing space come from any County department that requires additional space but not the purchase of additional real property. The requesting department transmits pertinent information to the Real Estate Section, including the purpose, length of lease required, and available funding, as well as any possible properties that have been identified. If no properties have been identified, the requesting department will provide general spacing and location requirements and the Section will prepare a list of potential properties. As with property acquisitions, lease acquisitions are performed in conjunction with the Law Department and are subject to approval by the Board of Commissioners upon receipt of an "Acquisition Report" and agenda item during an executive session and public hearing.

External requests for property leases occur when a request is made regarding purchasing a County-owned property, but the Board of Commissioners decides it is not in the best interest of the County to sell the real estate. Alternatively, if the County has just purchased a new property, but is not being put to immediate use, the Board may approve the Real Estate Section arranging a month-to-month or short-term lease. As with property disposition, County property being made available for leases must be public knowledge, with public notice published for a set period of time. The Section must also publish the requirement that any improvements made to leased properties are insured at the lessee's expense

and remain after completion of the lease for the County's benefit. After negotiations are complete, the Board of Commissioner will approve all leases for execution.

The Real Estate Section facilitates the leasing of County-owned real property for communications towers, leasing space (also known as colocation) on County-owned towers, and leasing for cellular transmission equipment in or on County-owned facilities. Leases involving communications towers and equipment are governed by the County Administrator Policy Concerning Placement of Cell Towers on County Property (CA-ADM-210). Requests for communications tower leases come into the Real Estate Section from an external source and are routed to the relevant department that manages the property, the Law Department, Information Technology Services Department, and the Planning and Development Department ("P&D"). Requestors are required to pay an application fee, and all plans require review and approval by all relevant departments before going before the Board of Commissioners for approval. As with other leases, the Real Estate Section manages the process and ensures all approvals are received before drawing up the Lease Agreement.

#### *Developer Projects and Encroachment Agreements*

In addition to assisting other County departments with easements, the Real Estate Section also assists the Planning and Development Department with developer easements. Developers looking to secure permits for new construction will work with P&D to file all necessary paperwork and submit all necessary exhibits. Many of the developer projects involve new connections to existing water and sewer infrastructure and the installation of new water meters – improvements which may require easements from neighboring properties. P&D will connect the developer with the Real Estate Section, and a real estate specialist will review all necessary forms, permits, exhibits, and easement agreements.

One specific type of documentation the Section reviews on developer projects is encroachment agreements. Encroachment agreements are the result of negotiations between property owners when the structure of one (such as a fence or a wall) extends onto the property of another. When a County structure extends onto private property or a private structure extends onto County-owned property, the Section will coordinate with the Law Department to establish an encroachment agreement for the situation. These documents are reviewed by the Section for developer projects due to specialized knowledge and experience. All encroachment documents – both for developer projects and those involving County-owned land – are reviewed and recorded by the Section as necessary.

#### *Records Management*

Records Management staff, consisting of four Technicians and one Supervisor, are responsible for the secure storage of over 80,000 cubic feet of County records in a secure, well-maintained warehouse environment.

Departments throughout the County submit boxed records to Records Management for storage for designated periods of time based on State of Georgia retention requirements for the type of document being stored. Department protocols require that documents with the same retention requirements are boxed together, i.e., personnel records may be stored in one box with specific retention requirements, while departmental programmatic records with the same retention requirements should be stored in a separate box from the personnel records. Based on previous records management directives, Records Management staff are functionally managing the organization and retrieval of records storage boxes, not the content (documents) that is stored inside the boxes.

County departments desiring to transfer boxes to the Records Management Warehouse for storage complete a County “Records Transmittal” form (form RM01) for each box. The RM01 form provides details of the content of the box, including:

- The official name of the records in the box (based on the official name of records identified in the Georgia Archives “Local Government Record Retention Schedules” or the “Official Judicial Branch Retention Schedules” publications)
- The type of records, e.g., “2019 personnel files”
- The retention requirement, e.g., “7 years”
- A range descriptor of the files in the box, e.g., “From: Smith, Andrew -- To: Smith, Robert”
- Records Event Year, which is the year the retention period begins, e.g., “2019”

As Records Management staff process the incoming boxes of records, staff research the current retention requirements on the Georgia Archives website based on the type of records indicated in the box to verify the accuracy of the retention period listed on the form. Records Management may hold records for longer periods than the state-mandated retention period, but not shorter periods than the mandated retention period.

If a County Department needs to request a file located in a box stored in the Records Management Warehouse, the Department must complete a “Records Request” form (form RM02) identifying each record or box they are requesting. The County department must include on the form the following details of the record they are requesting:

- Records Center Location of the box,
- Records Center Box Number of the box
- File Name / Case Name / Plan Number / Name of the file
- Request Type, i.e., is the Customer requesting the original file, a copy of the file, the entire box, or permanent retrieval of the record

When a County department requests that Records Management pull boxes for destruction/disposition, (which is typically near the end of or after the required retention period) the requesting department submits a, “Records Disposition Authorization” form (form RM03). Form RM03 requires the requesting department to identify the following information:

- Records schedule number
- Retention Period
- Official Record Series Title (type of documents)
- Inclusive Dates of the records
- Volume of the records (approximate cubic feet of the total records for destruction)

After Records Management staff have pulled the requested records scheduled for destruction, a representative from the requesting department that owns the records has to visually inspect and verify the set of records before destruction can take place. Once the approval is attained, Records

Management staff schedules a records destruction vendor (from the County's list of approved vendors) to come to the Records Management warehouse and complete the destruction process on-premises in the presence of a Records Management staff person. When destruction of the records is complete, Records Management staff sign the "Records Disposition Authorization" form certifying the destruction is complete.

Records Management uses the Versatile Retention system by Zasio Enterprises, Inc., which is a content management system used to manage the lifecycle of physical and electronic records. All physical records stored in the Warehouse are entered into the Versatile Retention system. While the County upgraded the Versatile Retention system in 2016, staff reported that some of the modules and functionality within the system are not fully operational. For example, certain system modules are not accessible by staff, and scanning features are not operational, which are used in labeling and locating boxes of information in the warehouse. Based on documents reviewed during the upgrade in 2016, the County Information Technology Services Department participated in the upgrade process. However, Support Services nor Technology Services created a plan or path forward to implement full functionality of the system.

County departments have been inconsistent in the storage and retention of digital and electronic records since there is not a current County administrative policy nor County Resolution concerning records management requirements for digital and electronic records. Records Management staff indicated that this issue was previously submitted to the County Law Department for research and recommendation but has not yet received a response.

Records Management staff are preparing training for customer departments on the processes and procedures for storing records at the County Records Management Warehouse. While a few departments submit records regularly and/or frequently to the warehouse, a significant number of departments seldomly submit records for storage. A refresher training for all departments will provide an opportunity to train customers on the use of current forms and processes, as well as discuss the requirements needed to dispose of records as they near the end of the required retention periods.

Records Management staff have the equipment and supplies they need to conduct their assignments. However, when the lift machine (machine used to safely reach the high-level storage shelves on the filing system) is out of service, staff resort to using a tall ladder to reach the storage boxes on the highest shelves. This presents a safety hazard to the employees and an increased potential for injury and liability to the County. A second lift machine that can be used simultaneously with the current lift machine and serve as a back-up, would increase efficiency of staff being able to work in separate parts of the warehouse at the same time, as well as decrease the risk to employees' safety and liability to the County.

### Mail Services

The Mail Services Section processes more than 1.1 million pieces of mail each year during a normal year, including incoming and outgoing pieces of mail, which does not include the number of parcels being sent out or received. The number of outgoing mail items decreased by roughly 25% during the pandemic due to employees working from alternate locations and the shift to web-based applications and email communications.



The County leases the mailroom equipment from Quadrant. As part of the agreement, Quadrant provides two postage-meter machines, a desktop computer with scanning capabilities, and utilization of their Web Tracking System (WTS). This WTS tracks packages and mail when a signature is required/requested, if a tracking number is included on the item.

The desktop computer provided to Mail Services by Quadrant is very slow to process and react to scans. The WTS program is very functional, however its utilization is stymied by the slow processing time of the desktop computer.

Mail Services staff only have access to one County-issued computer which has Microsoft Outlook. This curtails Mailroom employees from checking their County emails, as well as slows down the processing of incoming mail. For example, if incoming mail is addressed to a County employee's name that they are not familiar, the Mail Services staff utilize Outlook to research the employee's name to determine which County department the employee works, the physical location within that department, and the department's phone number. This greatly reduces the efficiency of staff when processing and sorting incoming mail.

The Mail Services Supervisor is responsible for monitoring the value of postage that is loaded on the two postage-meter machines and anticipating the short-term future needs of outgoing postage requirements so the postage machines will not run out of postage. The process to get postage added to postage meter machines changed recently from a very quick electronic process to a very slow, manual process which requires requesting a County-issued check be mailed to a U.S. Postal Service location in Pennsylvania.

The physical space allocated to the Mailroom is modest and barely accommodates the number and size of the postage/mail equipment, the number of computers needed for processing mail, and the number of staff working in the space. During the pandemic, the space limitation makes it impossible for all Mailroom staff to work simultaneously during peak periods in the Mailroom space and remain appropriately socially distanced. There is space immediately adjacent to the Mailroom that is currently assigned to and used by the Tax Commissioner's Office to store old computers and outdated furniture/equipment. The proximity and size of this space makes it an ideal consideration for renovation and expansion of the Mailroom space, if comparable storage space could be provided elsewhere to the Tax Commissioner's Office.

### Cafeteria Contract Management

The Records Management and Mail Services Section Manager is responsible for the management and oversight of the food services contract for the cafeteria located at the Gwinnett Judicial and Administration Center (GJAC) building, operating under the name of GJAC Café. Food services are available to County employees, jurors, and the public including, breakfast, lunch, snacks, made-to-order grill items, full-service deli items, self-service salad bar, and hot and cold beverages.

The current vendor, selected through an open procurement process, is Southern Foodservice Management, Inc. The original contract period was from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020. The contract renews automatically at the end of each annual period for up to a total maximum of five years, unless the County provides a notice to cancel the contract within 60-days of the expiration of the contract.

During the first 90-days of the contract, the GJAC Café discontinued food service operations due to COVID-19 on March 24, 2020. The Café reopened operations on June 8, 2020, but then discontinued food service again on July 10, 2020. The Café remained closed of all operations until it reopened on May 17, 2021.

During the periods when the GJAC Café discontinued serving food items due to the pandemic, the Section Manager coordinated with private vendor food trucks to provide food services in the parking lot of the GJAC building. The County did not enter into contracts with the food trucks, it was simply offered as a convenience to employees, customers, and the public at the GJAC building. Staff reported that the novelty of the food trucks wore off quickly due to the higher prices of food truck items compared to items offered by GJAC Café. The food trucks made determinations individually when it was no longer profitable for them to service the GJAC building.

Throughout the duration of the contract with Southern Foodservice Management, Inc., there have been four contract modifications approved by the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to provide financial subsidies to the vendor for each day food services are provided at GJAC Café through 12/31/2022, which are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

While the burden remains on the vendor to attain and maintain all required food service and public health permits, certifications, and licenses, the Section Manager must ensure vendor compliance with those requirements, often requiring evidence and supporting documentation of the required licenses, permits, and employee certifications and health permits prior to the expiration of the documents.

The County is contractually obligated to provide an array of food service, kitchen, and food preparation equipment for use by the vendor. Some of the equipment items identified in vendor's contract that the County will provide and maintain includes:

- Walk-in cooler
- Walk-in freezer
- Air curtain
- Dishwasher
- Mixer, meat slicer, and coffee maker
- Ovens
- Broiler
- Deep fryer
- Gas ranges
- Flat-top grill
- Microwave ovens
- Warming tray with warming lights
- Cash register
- Drink dispenser

- Drop-in cold and hot wells
- Shelving

The Section Manager schedules and coordinates preventative maintenance and repairs to ensure that all equipment that the County provides the vendor is fully functional and operational. Since the County is responsible for providing fully operational equipment that is regularly used by the vendor, the Section Manager must regularly verify accurate utilization and operation of the equipment to ensure compliance with food service standards, e.g., ensuring proper temperature of the walk-in cooler, walk-in freezer, and undercounter refrigeration. The Manager coordinates repairs of the County-owned/County-provided equipment through the Department's Operations and Maintenance Division.

In addition to contract management and oversight responsibilities, the Section Manager staff serve as an unofficial liaison between customers and the food service vendor for customer complaints that are not resolved by the vendor. While the Division staff do not serve as an official advocate for either party, the Manager tries to remain neutral and gather information from all parties to a situation to provide the service as a neutral third party.

## Communications

The Real Estate Section has to maintain constant communication with other County departments in order to keep all projects involving real property transactions on track. In addition to regular internal status meetings, the Section regularly meets with other departments – especially DWR, Community Services, and the Law Department – to provide and receive updates on current projects and discuss future projects. Because the Section does not handle most DOT real estate transactions (only road abandonments), Real Estate has not traditionally met with Transportation; however, in an effort to start standardizing processes across all departments, the Real Estate Section and DOT have begun meeting regarding current and future transportation projects.

## Strategic Initiatives

### Real Estate

The Real Estate Section has put strategic importance on its staff. In order to best utilize staff time and skillsets, the Section has focused on cross-training staff to understand all aspects of government real estate acquisition, maintenance, and disposition. Whereas some staff join the team with extensive right-of-way experience, others may be more familiar with title searches or acquisitions. Regardless of initial skillset, all members of the Section are trained to serve as backups for one another and to manage any project required. Additionally, the Section manager is developing a tracker for non-routine work performed by real estate specialists (such as responding to questions from the public) in order to best manage their schedules and determine additional training and staffing needs.

Another key strategic initiative of the Real Estate Section is to develop a better understanding of interdepartmental processes and responsibilities for decision making. To this end, the Section has met with the Law Department in order to review the Land Acquisition Policy, which was approved in 2011 and has not been subsequently updated. While the current policy allows for flexibility in acquiring easements and negotiating settlements for DWR and DOT projects, that same flexibility does not exist for other common projects. The Land Acquisition Policy is under review to determine potential changes needed to address changes in real estate and government within the last decade, establish clearer

interdepartmental processes and responsibilities, and consider more autonomy for the Real Estate Section when it comes to routine processes (such as acquiring easements for departments other than DOT and DWR), ordering appraisals and surveys, and negotiating settlements on non-transportation and water projects within reasonable thresholds.

The Gwinnett County Internal Audit Department released a draft audit report in August 2021, for the County's real estate management function. While the report found no evidence of abuse or significant non-compliance, Internal Audit did make four primary observations and recommendations to improve compliance activities. The four observations were:

- Internal Audit was unable to validate surplus status of undeveloped real estate,
- Reports regarding suitability of land not prepared prior to acquisition,
- The purchase price and market value disclosures may need enhancements, and
- Real estate documents were unavailable for inspection.

The Department of Support Services responded to each of these observations, often noting when the Department felt the observations were related to unclear interdepartmental processes and uncertainty regarding where decision-making authority lies – issues that the Real Estate Section is working with the Law Department to resolve through a review of the Land Acquisition Policy. However, the Section has acknowledged that it does not currently maintain a list of potential surplus properties – those properties are only identified through external purchase requests. As a result, the Section has begun to meet with DOT more regularly to identify potential surplus properties and the Division Director for the Real Estate and Records Management Division has started compiling a useable list to identify surplus properties. The Section has also recognized the challenge of document retention and has considered various project management systems for better records storage.

### Records Management

With the County's recent purchase of real estate with the intentions of renovating and relocating the Records Management Division, Records Management supervisors and staff desire to propose a new County Resolution and/or County administrative policy regarding County-related records management administration. The most current County Resolution related to records management is from 1997 and does not contain modern language and guidance related to up-to-date records management standards, administrative requirements, retention requirements related to digital records, nor a disaster recovery plan for records. The proposed resolution will address best practices in records management administration, expectations and utilizations requirements, the expansion of records administration requirements to all types of records categories, and the inclusion of disaster recovery planning for records management.

### Mail Services

Mail Services management desires to propose new internal deadlines for internal customer departments to drop off outgoing mail and parcels, in order to allow enough time for Mail Services staff to process and add postage to the items before the USPS or alternate delivery service arrives to pick up the outgoing mail and parcels. The current mandate outlining the internal deadlines for mail drop-off are not respected by customer departments. Late arriving mail/parcels require Mail Services staff to work unanticipated overtime when a customer brings outgoing mail/parcels to the Mailroom near or

after the current deadlines – that must go out in that day’s mail, in order for Mail Services staff to add postage to the items and prepare them for pickup. On some occasions, Mail Services staff have to drive the outgoing mail/parcels (after their normal workday ends) to the U.S. Postal Service Office in Buford in order to get it included in that day’s outgoing mail.

In an effort to address the Mail Services space needs and to expedite delivery of parcels to customer departments in the Judicial Building, Mail Services purchased lockers and placed in the Judicial Building for use by the Courts Departments. Mail Services staff place the parcels in the lockers, then lock it. One-time use Personal Identification Number codes (PIN-codes) are assigned when the parcel is placed in the locker. Mail Services staff send an email to the designated Courts employee responsible for retrieving the parcels, which contains the locker number and the PIN code. Courts employees retrieve the parcels from the lockers at their convenience, using the PIN codes emailed to them. This has been well received by customer departments as they have immediate access to the parcels once they receive notice it has been placed in the locker – which means they do not have to wait for Mail Services staff to complete their delivery route to deliver the parcel to their office.

## Systems and Applications

### Work Tracking

Real Estate frequently works with a variety of other County departments to support real estate-related transactions. Individual departments are tracking their requests within a variety of systems, and the Real Estate Section does not have access to all of these systems. Real Estate frequently coordinates with the Law Department, but does not have access to Aderant, the Law Department’s software used for case management and document storage. This is problematic because it has resulted in disparity between real estate request tracking, no comprehensive file tracking, and the use of outdated and manual processes. The Division currently uses multiple spreadsheets to track the current status of DWR, abandonment, and other Law-submitted requests.

The Planning and Development Department uses Accela, which is used for development easements, but the initial submission and corresponding documents are physical forms that must be manually inputted into the system. For stormwater acquisition, Lucity is currently being used to track the status of these requests.

### Records Management

Real Estate and Records Management are looking to procure and transition to Enterprise Records Management.

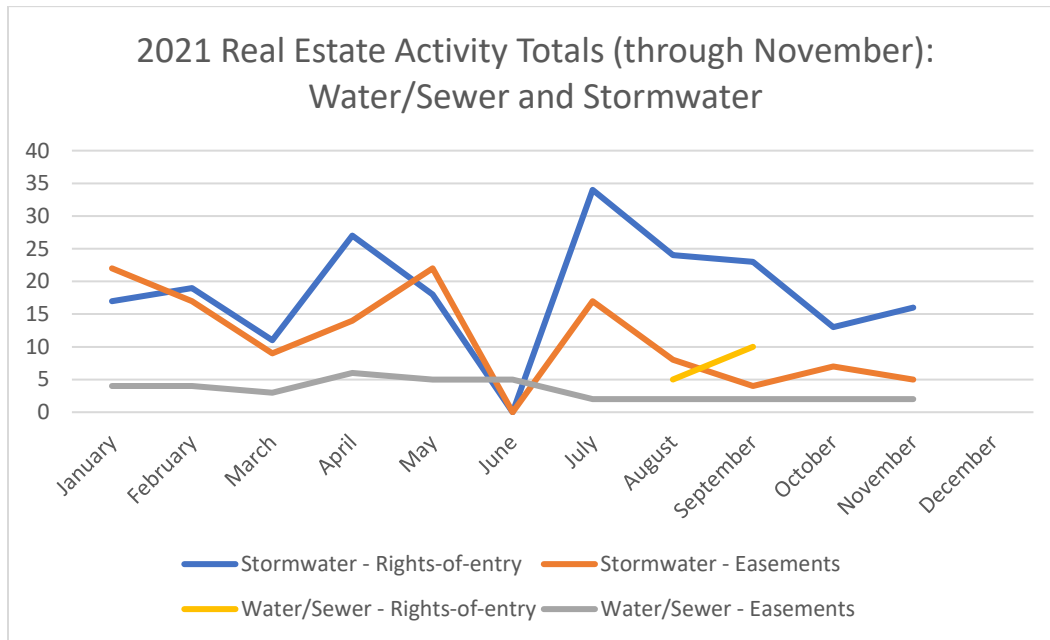
### Versatile

Versatile is only being used at the warehouse, but management would like a system that can be used on the County level, which they requested in the past. However, Versatile lacks internal communication capabilities, so requests are made via email. Management feels that if a new ERM system is procured, it must replace or interact with Versatile.

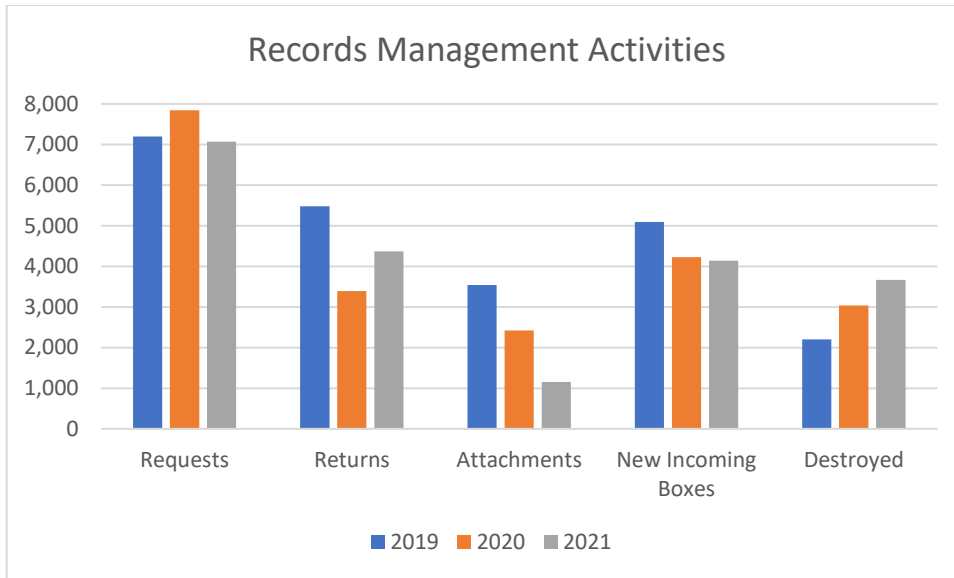
Also, there is a lack of standards and processes in place to manage records, which negatively affects current efforts that could benefit from accessing records.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Real Estate Section does not perform regular project number tracking beyond stormwater and water/sewer rights-of-entry and easements, nor does it track other performance data. Due to redundancies between the Section and other departments' project tracking, most real estate transactions are now tracked in the operational departments' systems. The Section was able to provide some data on stormwater and water/sewer projects for 2021 through the end of November. As shown in the table below, the Section was busiest in April and then July through September, with rights-of-entry for stormwater projects making up the majority of activities tracked.



Some Records Management activities have remained consistent year over year throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, while other activities have reduced or increased. The number of Requests for Records Management services have remained consistent year over year – which is not surprising, since the types of records that would typically need to be stored off the premises of the customer departments have not changed. However, some of the administrative functions have shifted during the pandemic, as some activities have fewer requests to process.



The number of Returns and Attachments reduced significantly between 2019 to 2021, most likely impacted by the number of staff working in-office that would yield work on historical records and hard copies of files. However, the number of items destroyed increased by 67%, in part because staff had more opportunities during the 2020 and 2021 to prepare and box records for transfer to Records Management.

Mail Services logs utilization of the U.S. Postal Service (“USPS”) postage equipment on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. The utilization reports are shared with Finance to assist with internal billing processes to appropriately charge the customer departments for postage issued on their behalf. The following chart provides details of the number and value of outgoing First Class and Priority mail items in which Mail Services staff processed and affixed with postage:

<b>USPS Outgoing Mail</b>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Pieces</u>	<u>Carrier Charges</u>
2019	1st Class	812,574	\$474,094.686
	Priority	3,016	\$23,096.870
2020	1st Class	612,245	\$372,925.227
	Priority	2,684	\$21,286.130
2021	1st Class	556,820	\$346,878.956
	Priority	2,088	\$16,896.960

The number of outgoing pieces of mail processed decreased between 2019 and 2020, due to the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2020 year, not only were staff teleworking a significant amount of time, but the County also shifted more operations and communications to on-line and email environments, reducing the need to mail hard-copy communications to County customers. In 2021, even though most departments reduced the number of employees assigned to telework, more

departments continued to benefit from the bolstered efforts to increase programmatic efficiencies across the County and reduce reliance on paper and hard copies being mailed to customers. Staff project that utilization numbers for 2022 will remain on par with 2021 utilization numbers, depending on continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Observations/Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Real Estate Section has limited autonomy on routine processes, which is exacerbated by a lack of clarity in interdepartmental processes and decision-making responsibilities. Process workflows for each type of project, including routine projects, require a high number of touchpoints with Support Services executive leadership, end-user department executive leadership, Law Department executive leadership, and the County Administrator and Board of Commissioners. The high number of touchpoints with executive leadership on routine processes can slow down projects, sometimes significantly.

**Recommendation 1:** As the Real Estate Section and the Law Department reviews and recommends updates to the Land Acquisition Policy, the County should consider providing more clarity to interdepartmental processes, identify those responsible for decision making, and allow more autonomy for the Section in routine processes.

**Observation 2A:** The Real Estate Section does not maintain a comprehensive tracking system of work being performed and projects in the queue. The Section instead enters projects into a series of separate systems, generally owned by end-user departments. By not utilizing a system which shows all ongoing projects and workload, project tracking can be inconsistent and lacking in standardization.

**Observation 2B:** Documents are currently stored in a network folder during the duration of a project and subsequently uploaded to FileNet upon completion. Without a project management system, a project tracking system, or a document management system, required documents are not always stored properly and the process of collecting all necessary documents for upload to FileNet can be time consuming.

**Recommendation 2:** The Real Estate Section should consider a project management or project tracking system for their internal workflow, to maintain standardization of and consistency across all projects and work being performed by the Section. At the very least, the Section should consider purchasing a file management system to maintain standardization and record of all necessary documents, if not a more comprehensive program to track the entirety of the project.

**Observation 3:** While doing research into properties, the Real Estate Section often needs access to utility records, law enforcement records, property records, and other types of records to determine property ownership and contact information. Much of the information needed by the Section is available in other departments' systems, however the staff members of the Real Estate Section have limited to no access to other departments' systems.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should review the list of departments' systems which store information needed by the Real Estate Section and evaluate whether the Section staff could be granted a level of access to these systems, and what level would be most appropriate.



**Observation 4:** Staff in Records Management use the Versatile Retention software to support the management and location assignments of all boxes in the Warehouse. However, not all modules in the Versatile Retention system are fully operational.

**Recommendation 4:** Support Services should collaborate with the Information Technology Department for assistance in assessing the functionality of the Versatile Retention system and determine additional system and budgetary requirements for full-operational efficiency of the system.

**Observation 5:** Records Management does not have a County administrative policy which outline records management and records retention requirements and processes for the County's digital and electronic records.

**Recommendation 5:** Support Services should collaborate with the County Law Department to assess the need for a County administrative policy related to records management and records retention processes for the County's digital and electronic records. If the need for a new or updated policy is identified, Support Services should continue to collaborate with the County Law Department in the creation/modification of a County administrative policy for these purposes.

**Observation 6:** The Records Management Section has developed processes and practices for records management, including proper check-in/check-out procedures, timelines for returning archival documents, expectations on documents to be archived, and timelines for destruction of archival material. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 6:** Departmental and County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Section-developed (or Division-developed) processes and practices for records management.

**Observation 7:** The desktop computer used in Mail Services provided by the vendor Quadrant is used for scanning mail/parcels to Gwinnett County offices. There is only one computer assigned by vendor, and it experiences very slow processing speeds. Only one employee can operate computer at a time.

**Recommendation 7A:** Support Services should collaborate with the County Purchasing Department to determine requirements for vendor to provide state-of-the art/current computer equipment with minimum processing requirements. The Purchasing Department may recommend the re-bid of this service to achieve current pricing and equipment standards.

**Recommendation 7B:** Support Services should request that Information Technology Services provide an assessment of the number and type of computers and ancillary equipment needed to support the number of full-time Mail Services Staff, then follow appropriate protocols to purchase the additional computer equipment.

**Observation 8:** The process to add additional postage to the postage-meter machines is a very manual process which requires requesting a County-issued check be mailed to a U.S. Postal Service location in Pennsylvania. The consequence of this manual process is that the Mailroom Supervisor has to anticipate the need and utilization in the near future to allow enough time for the internal processing for the County-issued check, and the mailing of the check to a U.S. Postal Service facility in Pennsylvania.

**Recommendation 8:** Support Services should collaborate with the County Finance Department and Purchasing Division to determine if alternate methods of electronic payments may be submitted timelier or efficiently to the U.S. Postal Service and/or to the postal equipment vendor Quadrant when adding postage to the postage-meter machines.

**Observation 9:** The County contract for the provision of food services in the GJAC Cafeteria (GJAC Café) has had four contract modifications in order to provide financial subsidies to the vendor as a result of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on cafeteria operations. The financial subsidies are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

**Recommendation 9:** Support Services should collaborate with Financial Services Department to review the ongoing financial viability of this contract and funding to prepare for when the current funding source for the supplements expires. Additionally, terms of the contract should be proactively reevaluated in order to provide optimum opportunities for current or future vendors, as well as reducing financial risk to the County.

## 3.A.7 Department of Support Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division within Support Services to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and additional relevant information, to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Observations

#### Asset Management

- AssetWorks and NAPA parts order system do not communicate, and NAPA parts-ordering system is disjointed. AssetWorks should be updated on the ETA of parts ordered by NAPA, but it is not. Staff must physically go to the NAPA Desk to ask about status, and often learns that NAPA forgot to order the part – which delays the repair. This negatively affects repair metrics, despite relying on NAPA to provide parts. AssetWorks confirms the type of vehicle and service being conducted, then sends the parts order to NAPA. Yet if NAPA has changed its parts-numbering system, there is a disconnect, which delays getting the parts ordered timely or receiving the correct part(s).

The team also expressed having issues with some hardware and equipment at fuel sites, especially those which don't integrate with AssetWorks (such as lightboxes).

- The Fleet Management Division expressed interest in creating more automated processes for reconciling the current fuel inventory and fuel usage levels by end-users. Currently, mileage tracking is manual, which leaves room for error, lost costs, and lack of data analysis. Division staff identified better controls at fuel stations and resources for communication directly between vehicles and the pumps regarding mileage, fuel type, and tank size.

Additionally, the Division has begun utilizing the FuelFocus module of AssetWorks to develop more automated calculations, eliminating the number of calculations done by hand. FuelFocus is an automated fuel management system that supports directly with the pumps to provide continuous, real-time fuel management over virtually any communication platform. Its sophisticated combination of hardware and software provides accountability for metered or pulsed consumables, including gasoline and diesel. With the correct equipment installed in fleet vehicles, FuelFocus could be utilized to an even fuller extent, helping provide better controls for fuel management.

- The Operations and Maintenance Division would like to leverage asset management within the same system used for work orders. Asset management integration could assist to automate work orders, create and maintain accurate building inventories, and manage drive time, labor costs, and contract approval. Additionally, there is a need for automated processes during inspections to eliminate manual work of managing checklists before, during, and after inspections.

#### Increased Training/Knowledge Transfer

- Fleet Management Division staff would like the opportunity to provide more insight to IT and Division and Department leadership about the functionality of the AssetWorks system. Additional training and use of the system would enable the team to better understand and utilize the system. Additionally, increased training and knowledge of AssetWorks would eliminate information silos preventing the system from being fully utilized.
- The Fleet Management Division also expressed the need for the system to get more information from the Vehicle user. More experienced workers give details about how a vehicle is running, but new employees have not received training on vehicle maintenance, even for their vehicles.

#### Labor/Performance Tracking

- The Fleet Management Division would like to increase the accuracy of labor and performance tracking. Currently, labor is billed in AssetWorks, and the system automatically bills one hour of labor for all preventative maintenance, which cannot be changed in the system. Additionally, repairs are billed according to actual time spent – technicians manually report labor time on repairs, which may be selected for supervisor review, but not all work orders are reviewed, which may result in inconsistent or inaccurate data.
- The Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division would like to implement asset tags on recycling bins, such as a QR code, that would enable haulers to notify customers if their items are ineligible to pick up. Asset tags would promote better customer service by eliminating the need for customers to call a service desk to report missed collections, only to learn that the requested pickup was ineligible.
- Manual Solid Waste Management Section customer service processes could be eliminated through the integration of hauler CRM and County CRM systems. Additionally, self-service systems, such as an online help desk, for customers to submit requests or access resources rather than submit them through phone and email would provide better access and transparency for customers. An automated process would eliminate the need for customer service staff to intake and process each request manually.

#### Increased Resources

- Fleet Management Division reports having only one diagnostics scanner to be shared between all Auto Light-Side Technicians. The Fleet Management Division would like more scanners to efficiently retrieve diagnostics from vehicles.

## Preventative Maintenance

- There is a need for better preventative maintenance management for vehicles. The Fleet Management Division's tracking of the need for preventive maintenance is based on mileage entered each time a driver fills up gas tanks at County fueling sites. If the driver enters incorrect mileage, the system may send a notice about needed maintenance that may not be accurate. For example, if the driver enters a keying error of 75,000 miles instead of 45,000 miles – the system will send notice that the vehicle is severely out of maintenance requirements – even though no way the vehicle can be driven 30,000 miles since their last gas fill-up. Drivers can also enter "000,000" as the current mileage and still be allowed to access fuel.
- Certain Fleet Management Division processes in AssetWorks are not user-friendly, such as assignments of vehicle (heavy vs. light vs. fire) when work is done by tech outside that shop (e.g., a light shop tech changes wiper blades on a vehicle normally handled by the heavy shop). Supervisors cannot see the technician portal in AssetWorks, so they are unable to see each technician's workload without individually searching each ticket number.

## Purchasing

- Current, the Fleet Management Division has a contract with NAPA for vehicle part purchasing, but there is not a proper data connection with AssetWorks. When AssetWorks is updated with parts purchases from NAPA, there is a disconnect with the NAPA system, which sends incorrect data over on each work order. It sometimes adds multiple parts purchases that are inaccurate. This requires the Technicians to manually correct the incorrect data or add notes within the order that the incorrect data is imported from NAPA system to clarify. Additionally, AssetWorks only links parts purchases that come from NAPA and will not carry over if parts are purchased from other vendors.
- The Fleet Management Division sees opportunities for increased communication and collaboration in the fleet purchasing process, as well as opportunities for process automation. Managing payment vouchers and requests is still partially manual and can be automated.

## Online Services

- Paperless processing using secure digital signatures would eliminate the need for everyone to manually print and sign documents and can maintain a high level of security by requiring authentication to sign documents.
- An Enterprise Record Management ("ERM") tool would provide governance, standards, and processes for the 115 lines of business to utilize. The tool must resolve duplication of maintained documents and ensure "official" versions of documents are identified and tracked.

## Customer Relationship Management: Work Order Management

- The Solid Waste Management Section has a CRM system, but the haulers do not use it or input data in an untimely manner. Currently, CRM sends an automated email to Hauler contacts with all complaints logged, such as missed pickups, damaged trashcans, etc. Haulers are currently sending daily spreadsheets to Customer Service, which requires the Solid Waste Management Section staff to manually aggregate this data and compare it with CRM data to determine if

complaints or issues have actually been resolved. This process can be automated through Gwinnett County's existing CRM system, and requests can be submitted and processed in one place.

#### e-Builder: Increase System Use

- The Department uses e-Builder to manage the construction and maintenance of County facilities. The process is partially automated but still includes manual processes such as wet signatures on paper, using multiple systems for financial and procurement transactions, and lack of standards between departments. For example, the Department uses FileNet reporting but manually matches invoices in FileNet with invoices in e-Builder to ensure timely processing. Moreover, for each project the Architect and Project Manager review and track work orders in e-Builder, then manually send approved invoices to the Fiscal Section of the Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division, who must enter data in FileNet, and then record the goods receipt number in SAP before payment can be processed.

#### Equipment: Replace Outdated Technology/Equipment

- County-issued laptops and tablets do not have cellular service. Tablets are not functional when not near a County facility to use Wi-Fi. Most times, when Fleet Management Fire Section Technicians are responding to an emergency or on-call repair, they need internet access to research issues or look for parts. Technicians must wait to get to the County facility or back home to complete research and to update AssetWorks on the work order ticket. Additionally, if Technicians are on the road all day going from one fuel center to another, they have no way to check emails or to get updates from vendors about delivery of fuel, and laptops are too cumbersome for ease of use, so they are not consistently used for work order updates, email checks, etc.
- Flip phones are issued by County for Operations and Maintenance Division Technicians and lack the functionality to receive/send texts and pictures and cannot check email. This results in a huge burden on staff to take the laptop out of the truck, take it inside the building to use their Wi-Fi.

#### Enterprise Record Management Process Automation

- The Real Estate and Records Management Division sees a need for a formal ERM system that includes governance processes and procedures that are standardized across Support Services and potentially the County. There are approximately 115 lines of business that require a solution to eliminate duplicated documents and track "official" versions.
- Currently, every department has its own retention policy/division between electronic and physical records, so the Records Management Section is tasked with maintaining multiple policies. Additionally, the process is still very manual, with physical files and wet signatures being used. The Records Management Section currently doesn't have governance over digital records retention nor a disaster recovery plan for records.
- Implementing an ERM system with standards and procedures would eliminate the divergence and lack of traceability while also providing secure storage of documentation.

## Lucity

- The Operations and Maintenance Division uses Lucity to process work orders and ad-hoc requests but struggles with end-users consistently and accurately using the system. Additionally, the Department builds processes and practice around Lucity components that they do not have, rather than purchasing necessary modules. Moreover, the Department relies on the Division's sole Programmer Analyst to help efficiently use Lucity, which creates a silo of knowledge. The solution to these issues is to ensure staff has the knowledge and training they need to fully utilize Lucity, including all necessary modules that may not have been purchased yet.

## Summary Recommendations

There are multiple systems within the Support Services Department and the assessment revealed many improvement opportunities. Although individual recommendations could be made for each observation, we recommend taking a strategic approach and looking at each system holistically to develop a system improvement plan for each application and incorporating the individual system plans into a detailed technology plan for the Department. Our summary recommendations are as follows:

1. Conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in AssetWorks and develop the associated projects and business cases.
2. Begin the process of implementing an Electronic Records Management System ("ERM"). Conduct a Needs Assessment to define the system requirements for a system procurement.
3. Solid Waste should implement a geotagging system for trash and recycling bins to better track inventory and report issues with items that cannot be picked up. Additionally, implementing a more comprehensive CRM system and ensuring it is being used fully by haulers can streamline the customer service practice and reduce the number of calls and emails that must be manually processed by staff.
4. e-Builder has successfully automated parts of the construction and maintenance of County facilities. The Department should conduct requirements sessions to identify opportunities to increase the use of the e-Builder such as increased system use between departments, electronic signature functionality, and determine where information from e-Builder could be automatically transferred to other County systems, such as SAP.
5. Conduct fit-gap sessions or a needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in Lucity and develop the associated projects and business cases.
6. Incorporate the results of the systems assessments above to develop the technology roadmap for the Department. Review the expanded roadmap with Department and IT leadership to prioritize the roadmap projects and determine if there is a business case for funding to accelerate the implementation of the projects on the roadmap. Conduct monthly or quarterly reviews of the roadmap with the Department and IT leadership.

7. Replace laptops and flip phones with smartphones. This would eliminate the burden of connecting to Wi-Fi at various locations and carrying around cumbersome laptops. The smartphones must have cellular service so that they do not require Wi-Fi to access the internet. Although this service would incur a monthly cost, it would also reduce manual labor and time.



## 3.A.8 Department of Support Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of division directors. This emphasis has led to the Department operating in a more reactive than proactive fashion, missing opportunities for strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts. While there are ideas for strategic priorities and longer-term planning and vision, the current staff focus limits the available staff and resources to support the implementation of these ideas.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader Departmental priorities.

**Observation 2:** The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism of certain divisions and staff. The disparity is felt through inconsistent communications and visibility of leadership. Some staff reported learning of changes impacting their division or workflow through staff in other divisions, or even in other departments throughout the County. Leadership often appears to be most involved in those functional areas in which they have experience and knowledge, or those that are highly visible with County leadership. This leaves staff in other functional areas to feel leadership is only involved in their work when issues arise, having often decided how to act without consulting the staff involved in the day-to-day activities.

This perception of lack of knowledge or specific understanding about how all of the divisions and departmental functions may also result in inconsistent consideration of departmental staff as customers or stakeholders who may be impacted by decisions designed to improve the workflow or workload of one division or section.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Some divisions and sections feel that there are informal or organic opportunities to engage with leadership and make recommendations or discuss opportunities for efficiency or improvements. Other divisions feel that there are minimal opportunities, or that all information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information. The divisions that perceive these opportunities often receive assistance in resolving their problems, without consistent consideration of how these potential resolutions may impact other divisions engaged in the same or similar processes or functions.

**Recommendation 2:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions.

Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Observation 3:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. This increases the risk of a lost document and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 4:** Divisions within the Department often make modifications to internal processes and protocols without consideration of or consultation with all Divisions impacted or which participate. On occasion, one Division may make changes to a policy or protocol, then Divisions which are downstream to the process find out about the changes through informal conversations, or when they recognize a change which is contrary to historical practices or written direction.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should provide strategic direction to all Divisions requesting modification to Department policies, processes, or protocols, to seek active participation, consideration, and input from all Divisions within the Department which are or may be impacted by the revision or modification.

**Observation 5:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department. Additionally, the Department is revising its strategies for data collections and analysis, which may create discrepancies between prior data collection methods and current data collection methods for similar or the same data point.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department’s key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Observation 6:** Staff in several divisions cited interest in, or ongoing work in a variety of sustainability, asset management and preventative maintenance, cost-savings, and green initiatives. These initiatives are predominantly currently planned and implemented within the Division, rather than coordinated at either the Department or County level. There is minimal cross-division discussion of strategic initiatives or broader efforts, which may result in either conflicting or duplicative efforts throughout the Department and potentially the County. This may result in confusion, or disengagement from other stakeholders or end-user departments, who do not believe that these efforts have the support of Departmental or County leadership.

Additionally, where divisions have taken the initiative to develop plans and practices to assist with reducing costs, improving sustainability and other green initiatives, these efforts do not have the full support of Department leadership, and the developing division may lack the appropriate authority to enforce these efforts with other divisions or end-user departments. If impacted divisions or other end-user departments push back against the initiatives, Departmental or County leadership may allow them to revert to prior processes or practices. This erodes the implementing division’s ability to enforce these efforts, as well as impacts the faith of the implementing division that they have the support of leadership.

**Recommendation 6:** Departmental leadership should engage with all divisions in strategic planning and goal setting. Where relevant, Departmental leadership should take the lead in creating cross-division lines of communication and collaboration, ensuring consistency in efforts, messaging, and performance tracking. As appropriate, Departmental and division leadership should engage with County leadership to adopt a County-wide plan and strategy for these efforts, and create a collaborative team to ensure appropriate coordination and buy-in across all County departments. Based on the identified initiatives and efforts, a strategic plan for staffing and systems and other costs should be identified and communicated to County leadership to ensure that appropriate resources are provided to assist in helping ensure success.

Once strategies, policies, and procedures have been developed by responsible divisions, Department leadership should support the new or revised practices and consistently enforce the expectations surrounding these efforts with County leadership and other end-user departments.

**Observation 7:** The Department does not currently have a formal process for staff to evaluate vendor performance, either during or after completion of the project. This may result in continued award to vendors with problematic prior performance. Additionally, the County tends to value low-bids as the primary evaluation metric for competitive proposals. This may result in not obtaining the best value for the funds, or may result in poor service delivery.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal complaints about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Observation 8:** The current ownership of certain strategic initiatives has been divided into task-based management and resides in several divisions within the Department, which misses an opportunity to create big-picture ownership and strategy. Specifically, Asset Management has components in Facility Construction, Operations and Maintenance, and Fiscal and Solid Waste Management.

Additionally, the inclusion of Fiscal Management and Solid Waste into a single division creates split priorities for that Division Director, which could result in neither section operating at a fully strategic level.

To assist with moving the Department towards more strategic thought leadership and initiatives, the Department needs to reorganize the divisions.

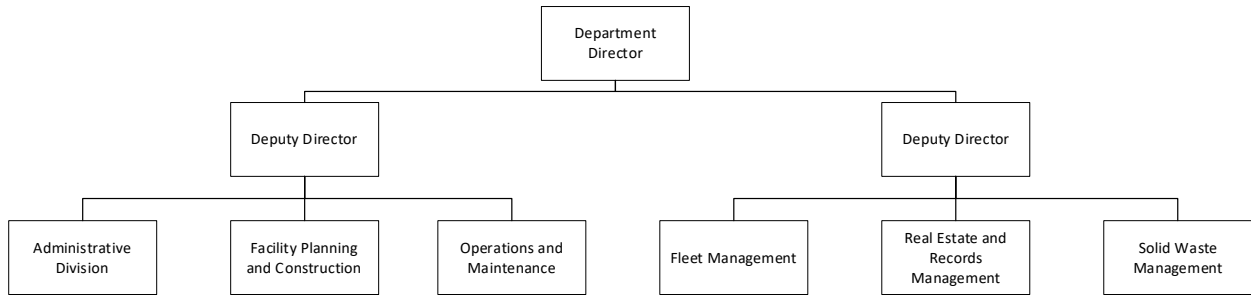
**Recommendation 8:** The Department should create a separate Solid Waste Management Division and consider adding additional staff to support contract oversight and enforcement. The creation of a position to support these efforts would allow the Solid Waste Management Division Director to focus on more strategic efforts, such as recycling and green initiatives and County-level coordination and buy-in.

The Fiscal Management Section should be merged with the Director's Office to create an Administrative Management Division. This Division should include financial and human resources functions as well as serve in a more strategic and analytical role that also works towards strategic efficiency and process improvement across the Department.

Facility Construction should be renamed Facility Planning and Construction and take a more active leadership role in facility planning and lifecycle management across the County. The Division should consider hiring an architect responsible for facility planning and lifecycle management, including regular condition assessments and operational assessments for County departments. This Division should assume responsibility for County-wide space planning needs and submit comprehensive capital and asset maintenance budget requests for the County, in collaboration with the Operations and Maintenance Division.

Operations and Maintenance should create a Strategic Asset Management Section, with a Section Manager. The Program Analyst I and II currently housed in Operations and Maintenance should report to this newly created position. This team would continue to focus on asset management and energy management, as well as more strategic trend analysis and data review to support asset management, preventative maintenance scheduling, and cost projections. The team should provide quality control to assist in ensuring complete, consistent, and accurate entry of work order cost and labor information into Lucity. Strategic Asset Management can also collaborate with Facility Construction to ensure appropriate data is captured. Work order data is often used to prepare operating costs estimates included in the initial budget request process for new facility construction and capital renovation projects. This team should develop and monitor metrics for sustainability and asset management, and ensure adequate time, staff, and budget are made available to support asset preventative maintenance.

Currently, the County budget process is “competitive,” with capital maintenance and renovation projects, and even smaller renovation projects such as flooring or paint, competing against the County’s other budget priorities and new facility construction needs. The County should consider 10-year maintenance costs in all new facility construction budget requests, including the cost of flooring or fixture replacement and repair, and commit to funding the 10-year maintenance budget without the end-user department or Support Services having to submit these requests through each year’s annual competitive budget process.



# 3.B Planning and Development Department

## Planning and Development At A Glance

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- 1 | Encourage high-quality development and promotes the maintenance and revitalization of existing neighborhoods and commercial properties
  - 2 | Process building, development, fire, and planning permits and certificates of occupation
  - 3 | Process all Occupational Tax Certificates and Alcohol Licenses for businesses in unincorporated Gwinnett County
  - 4 | Conduct building, development, and fire inspections
  - 5 | Investigate any property maintenance code violation for residential and commercial properties

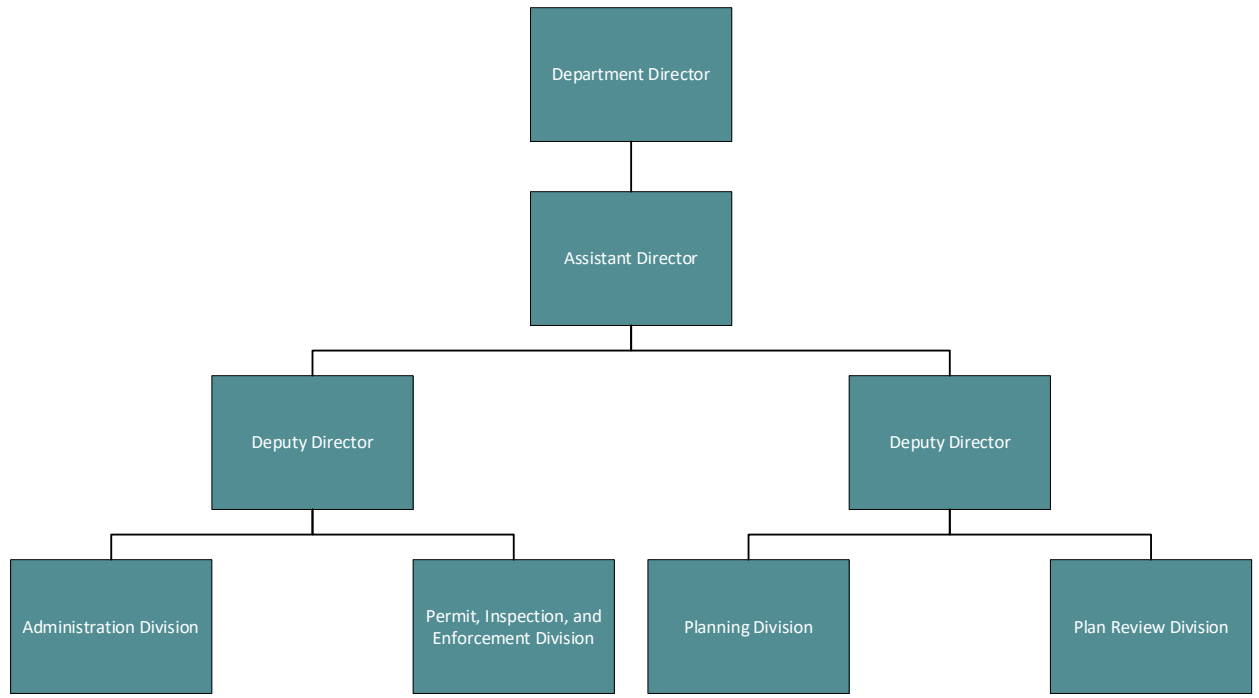
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):**

<b>\$26,543,102</b>	<b>\$422,952</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through December 2021	Planning & Development
	Filled	
Allocated		130

## Organization



## Commendations

### Data-driven Strategic Position



The Department established two positions – the Fiscal and Special Projects Manager and the Process and Technology Manager – in order to respond strategically to projects, processes, and systems, allowing the Department to make data-driven decisions.

### Wikis



The Administration Division maintains a series of wikis for standard operations, training guides, and system usage.

### Code Education



The Code Enforcement Section emphasizes the importance of public education on relevant ordinances and requirements. The Section provides explanatory documents to potential violators, and maintains a vanity URL to a webpage providing succinct explanations and beneficial resources.

### Alcohol License Education



As businesses apply for alcohol licenses, the Department reviews a one-pager with each applicant covering common issues and concerns.

### Construction Investigation Unit



The Department created a Construction Investigation unit, which provides citizens an opportunity to voice concerns about construction projects. The Department provides information and education to those who may be in violation of code and assist them to become compliant.

### Video Inspections for Minor Infractions



The Department has begun allowing for video re-inspections of minor building inspection infractions, more efficiently utilizing building inspectors' time, and reducing windshield time. The practice is an example of good customer service as it reduces the time between request and inspection, and assists the customer in moving forward with their project.

## Introduction

The Planning and Development Department (“Planning and Development” or “Department”) strives to develop a sustainable community through maintaining standards for new and existing structures in unincorporated Gwinnett County – those parts of the County outside of the 16 municipalities. The Department is responsible for zoning, long-range planning, plan review, permitting and the provision of occupancy certificates, and enforcement of property requirement ordinances.

## Organization

The Planning and Development Department is led by a Department Director, who is supported by an Assistant Director and two Deputy Directors. The Planning and Development Department is divided into four divisions:

- Administration
- Permit, Inspection and Enforcement
- Planning
- Plan Review

One Deputy Director oversees the Planning and Plan Review divisions, while the other Deputy Director oversees the Administration and Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement divisions.

The Deputy Director who oversees the Administration and Permit, Inspection and Enforcement divisions also oversees two staff members not assigned to specific divisions who support Department-wide efforts and initiatives.

The Process and Technology Manager works with the Department to ensure efficient use of systems and develops strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities to increase efficiency of processes and ensure effective consistent data tracking. The Process and Technology Manager also looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information. The Process and Technology Manager assesses the current key business functions and processes for the Department and then assesses the capability of existing systems, applications, and other technology. The Process and Technology Manager has spent the last two years working to maximize the use of the capabilities of Accela and ePermitHub – two of the Department’s primary systems for data management and system routing. The current Accela roadmap for improved efficiency and business process workflow has 25 projects that are proposed over the next few years.

The Fiscal and Special Projects Manager is responsible for working with each division and section within the Department in planning and managing their annual budget. This has included creating/updating templates for budgeting and cost centers, as well as creating additional checkpoints throughout the year to manage budget-to-actual, and improve division understanding of their spending patterns and budget needs. The Fiscal and Special Projects Manager has improved and redesigned the Department’s website, focusing on creating a user-friendly experience for a variety of audiences, and working to identify additional documents and guidance that need to be created. The Fiscal and Special Projects Manager is identifying better performance measures for the Department and specific divisions, leveraging the work of the Process and Technology Manager to ensure that consistent, accurate, relevant data is being collected through Accela and ePermitHub.

The Department doesn’t currently have a business intelligence software or application to analyze data.

### Administration Division

The Administration Division is responsible for internal office support services, and the Customer Service Team, which provides external customer service and technical support to Department customers. The internal office support section is supervised by an Office Services Coordinator and staffed by Administrative Support Associates II and III. The Customer Service team is supervised by the Planning Manager, and is staffed by Plan Review Technicians I and II.

### Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division

The Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division is divided into two sections:

- Permitting and Inspections
- Code Enforcement

The Permitting and Inspections Section is responsible for building and trades inspections on construction within unincorporated Gwinnett County. There is also a unit tasked with investigating complaints of inappropriate or unpermitted work. This Section also houses the team tasked with processing payments for building permits, as well as occupational tax permits and alcohol licenses.



The Code Enforcement Section is responsible for inspecting residential and commercial properties in unincorporated Gwinnett County for violations of code ordinances and providing education and issuing notices of violations or citations, as appropriate. The Department has identified plans to establish Code Enforcement as a standalone division in 2022.

The Department has made several significant organizational changes in the past few years, including the integration of the Licensing and Revenue and Permits teams, and the transition of Code Enforcement from the Police Department into Planning and Development.

As noted in more detail in the following division sections, many of the divisions are staffed adequately to support the workload, but the current staffing levels don't allow for adequate time for staff to receive training, education, or dedicate time towards process improvement, strategic updates, and process changes.

Some of the staffing level challenges are exacerbated by hiring concerns. The pay for working in government is typically not commensurate with private sector pay, and the lack of opportunities for growth, advancement, and diverse work assignments are an additional hindrance to retaining strong employees. The Department is exploring more opportunities to focus on entry-level hiring and providing cross-training across multiple divisions, but is struggling to create the titles and infrastructure necessary for program success.

### Planning Division

The Planning Division is responsible for long-range and current planning and zoning administration activities, as well as Geographic Information System (GIS) analytical support – with each section being supervised by Planning Manager positions. The Division is led by a Division Director and is supported by two Administrative Support Associates. The current planning team and long-range planning team is each staffed by one Senior Planner and several Planner 1 positions. The GIS team has one GIS Associate.

### Plan Review Division

The Plan Review Division is responsible for the review and approval of proposed plans and modifications for the following areas:

- Development Plan Review
- Stormwater and Water and Sewer Review
- Building Plan Review
- Fire Plan Review

The Plan Review Division is led by a Division Director and Plan Review Section Manager. Each of the four sections is managed by a Plan Review Manager. The Development Plan Review Section is staffed with Plan Examiner I and II positions. The Stormwater and Water and Sewer Review Section is divided into specialty areas of 1) Stormwater and 2) Water and Sewer, with each specialty area staffed each with one Engineering Manager position and multiple Plan Examiner and Senior Plan Examiner positions. The Building Plan Review section is staffed with multiple Plan Examiner 1 and Senior Plan Examiner positions. The Fire Plan Review section is staffed with a Plan Examiner III, and multiple Plan Examiner II positions.

## Strategic Priorities

The Department has prioritized a shift in performance and decision-making. Department leadership spoke of better utilization of data to guide decision-making and comprehensive planning efforts. Several studies have been conducted, or are in the process of being completed, to assist in guiding these efforts.

Department leadership has stated a desire to move towards data-driven, strategic, proactive decision-making. Comprehensive planning efforts, updated strategic plans, etc., are all discussed by leadership and throughout the Department. As much of the data analysis and planning is conducted by external contractors and consultants, however, staff do not feel they have an opportunity to participate and engage in the process. The lack of opportunity for “stretch projects” leaves staff feeling like there is a lack of opportunity for growth and continued development. This is exacerbated by the current workload; the current staffing levels allow for the completion of the assigned workload, but at a pace that staff do not feel is sustainable. Internally set deadlines are being met for the most part, but there are limited opportunities for staff to receive continuing education and training, and minimal training on new systems, technologies, and processes before the “go-live” dates. This leaves staff feeling “rushed” and afraid to fail. Staff feel rushed to meet deadlines, especially when internal deadlines are significantly shorter than state or industry standards, which creates a feeling of concern that things might be missed, or that staff don’t truly have the time to critically analyze and review their work. These internal deadlines, combined with the Department’s efforts to hire entry-level or less experienced staff, have resulted in fewer opportunities for cross-training, skills development, and functional knowledge acquisition.

The Department has prioritized increased efficiency and responsiveness to ensure a higher standard of customer service. There have been numerous updates in technology, such as ePermitHub and increased use of Accela.

The Department has committed to identifying opportunities for process improvement and automation, using Accela and ePermitHub for workflow automation and improved customer response times. The creation of the Process and Technology Manager within the Department has assisted in broadening the consideration of how current systems and applications can be leveraged throughout the Department. There are some inconsistencies in how different divisions are engaged, and the Process and Technology Manager’s lack of direct experience in Planning and Development has required some additional training and understanding to allow the Process and Technology Manager to best assist different divisions’ needs. The lack of direct experience also results in the Process and Technology Manager being reliant on Departmental leadership to provide insight and input on which areas to focus on, and how proposed process changes or introduction of new technologies will impact the Department as a whole.

The Department has also focused on website updates and continued engagement and relationship-building with the community and industry associations to increase customer engagement and awareness.

What has been lost in this emphasis on external customer service is the consideration of impacts on internal customers, such as other divisions within Planning and Development, as well as obtaining buy-in and support from other departments and Gwinnett County elected leadership. Staff in several divisions become aware of information that may impact their job duties or workload through informal

conversations, or after a change has been implemented in another division, resulting in the need to quickly react and update process and understanding, or missed opportunities for multi-division engagement, discussion, and training on how processes and workflows will change. Also, changes that are designed to assist with one division's workload are not discussed with other divisions who are in the same process and workflow, and may have negative impacts on their own deadlines and workflow.

An outward facing benefit of the emphasis on external customer service is the creation of expedited project reviews for larger development projects. Similar to the Pre-Application Meeting conducted by the Planning Division, this opportunity is led by a non-supervisory technical Plan Review expert to serve as the primary liaison between the development customer and the Plan Review Division for all of the required plan reviews to be conducted by the Division. Feedback from Development customers have proven that the time investment on the front side to understand the details of the project, the required Plan Reviews for a project, and the willingness of staff to facilitate the efficient and timely reviews of the plan will yield a customer that is pleased with the Department's services and willing to invest in future development projects within the County.

### **Leadership and Management**

Employees in the Department acknowledge that leadership has been making changes that leadership believes are the right changes to move the Department forward, improve efficiency and workflow, and to improve customer service delivery. Many employees feel, however, that leadership is not engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions and making decisions in a silo, either hearing the needs of the "most vocal" division, or failing to consider how decisions made to assist one division may impact another division.

Many changes are communicated via email, leaving staff feeling that the Department doesn't care about their input, or fails to understand how the change will impact their division or group. Providing direction via email leaves staff to worry that they may have missed directions provided by leadership that is separate or even in conflict with Department policies. Staff expressed frustration with the inconsistencies created by leadership who manage by email, rather than taking time to update Department policies.

Many employees feel that leadership is distant and not engaged within the Department, and only talking to division leadership about upcoming information in the County. Many front-line staff and non-middle management feel that leadership does not understand or appreciate the work that they do, or how changes will impact their work. Leadership has not cultivated relationships with staff, outside of staff meetings, so many employees do not feel that there are opportunities for interaction or to provide feedback or interact informally with Department leadership.

Several Departmental employees also noted that they feel that the County doesn't care about the staff. Many County-wide communications come out in emails, and staff communicated that they do not see County leadership or elected officials engaged with front-line staff in their Department, unless a subject or specific matter is of interest to that official.

There is also a perception that management, both senior and middle, defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that cases and circumstances receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not County leadership (at either the Section, Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department

leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

## Technology

The Planning and Development Department offers many online services to Gwinnett residences, including searching for permits, requesting inspections, renewing permits, submitting affidavits or registration for professionals, and reporting code violations/complaints through the Gwinnett County Zoning, Inspections, and Permitting (“ZIP”) Portal. The ZIP Portal is an Accela product used by divisions within Planning and Development, other Gwinnett County departments, vendors, and end-users. The Department also operates the County's GIS system for zoning, topography, and public resource mapping for internal and public use. The Department is working with Gwinnett County's Information Technology Services Department's overarching strategy to modernize outdated technologies, increase automation, and enhance security, which is outlined in the Gwinnett County 2040 Unified Plan.

The Department is leveraging two unique positions to manage special projects for individual divisions based on budget and priority. The Fiscal and Special Projects Manager, in collaboration with the Process and Technology Manager, with division management and finance to determine the level of need and cost/benefit analysis to ensure all projects align with the County's strategic vision and business goals. The team, nor the Department, currently have access to any business intelligence software, which could be leveraged for further data analytics, analysis, and customer-facing services.

The Department developed the Accela Product Roadmap for strategic IT modernization and process automation of Accela products from 2021-2025. The Roadmap addresses the following areas of improvement within the Department:

- Baseline for all future development
- Data reporting
- Payments
- System integrations
- Customer and professional contact/license information
- Field service personnel and logistics
- Plan review enhancements
- Fees
- Website services
- Routing, approval, and communication automation.

## Systems Overview

### *Accela*

Accela is a commercial product that offers platform, SaaS, and security services exclusively for governments. It is the primary business system used by the Department for permitting, licensing, code enforcement, and service request management. Specifically, services include workflow management, online citizen portal, electronic document review, reporting, GIS mapping, and code violation/enforcement reporting. Users access the portals through Gwinnett County's main site, log in or register under the Planning and Development Section, and submit requests based on type. Administrators also input requests via phone and email.

### *ePermitHub*

ePermitHub is a commercial software solution that automates the Plan Review process with integrated and collaborative digital plan review workflows improving the communication process between the Planning and Development Department and their customers. The Department launched ePermitHub Portal to improve customer service, process transparency, and reduce the number of requests submitted by phone and email.

### *GIS*

The Planning and Development Department uses Gwinnett County's GIS technology internally and as customer-facing resources. Internally, GIS is used for zoning, permits, utilities, topography, etc. Users can access the Gwinnett GIS system to find public buildings, public service areas, political districts, sewer/water layers, and topography, among other services.

### *Custom CRM System*

The Licensing and Revenue Division uses a CRM designed by IT for processing Occupational Tax Permits and Alcohol Licenses.

### *Website/Online Services*

Planning and Development offers a range of online services through the Gwinnett County website and online Portal in Accela (aka the ZIP Portal). Services include searching for an existing building or development, fire or planning permits or cases; requesting a building, development, or fire inspection; renewing existing building permits; submitting subcontractor affidavits or registering for a licensed professional; or reporting code enforcement, fire marshal, or planning and development code violation.

The website also offers a list of online guides through the Citizens Portal, including online retrieval guides for approved plans and online submittal guides for a certificate of occupancy, residential building permits, and scheduling inspections. A custom web application is used for subcontractor registration and affidavit forms.

In addition, online services offered by the Planning Division include providing information on zoning, the Gwinnett County 2040 Unified Plan, annexation tracking, the Gwinnett County Planning Commission, Livable Centers Initiative Study Areas, and contact information for the office and staff.

## **Customer Service**

The Department has made significant strides in updating systems to provide improved customer service and incorporate more of a self-service component.

Customers can submit complaints online, apply for building permits, request trades and building inspections, pay quarterly occupancy taxes, and apply for initial occupation tax permits.

The Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement Division has also increased customer service through the use of laptops, allowing inspectors to complete inspection results while onsite, sending inspection reports to the customer immediately after the inspection. The Inspections Section also allows for video calls for re-inspection of certain minor issues.

One area where there are additional opportunities is related to accessible language options for customers. The Department has staff who speak several languages, and the County has a list of County employees speaking additional languages, with a County phone number listed for each employee.

Several of these employees are in departments who aren't always available during traditional business hours or have job responsibilities that limit their ability to be quickly and directly reached by phone. Most customers have started bringing in relatives or others who can provide translation services for them, instead of relying on Gwinnett County to provide translation services.

Several of the initiatives and changes that are being made to the Department website and provided documents are based on staff input on what they feel that customers may need, or what staff believe that the most common requests have been historically. These changes are inconsistent in using data, such as web analytics, customer surveys, etc. to take into consideration the needs of customers who may not directly contact staff after being unable to find what was needed.

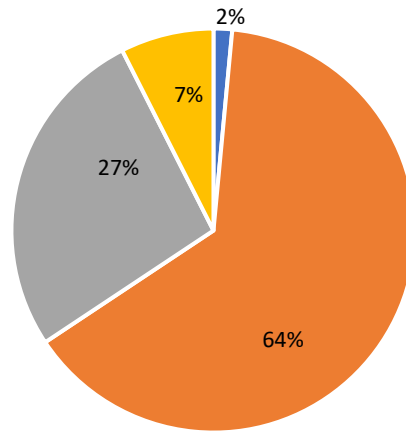
Two years ago, the Department created a Customer Service Team to serve as a front-line, customer liaison for customers to the Department processes and to provide technical support for all services offered by the Department. Staff have developed varying levels of expertise, and hope to attend more technical training opportunities to expand their technical knowledge and increase their comfort level when talking to customers (who may be Professional Engineers or other technical experts) about Department services. The Customer Service Team also staffs the front desk for the Department from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each business day.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Sixty-seven responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 56%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The chart below shows the breakdown of responses by position level:

### Breakdown of responses by position level for Planning and Development



■ No Response   ■ Staff/Non-Supervisory   ■ Management   ■ Executive Management

As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

**1 = strongly disagree**

**2 = disagree**

**3 = neither agree nor disagree**

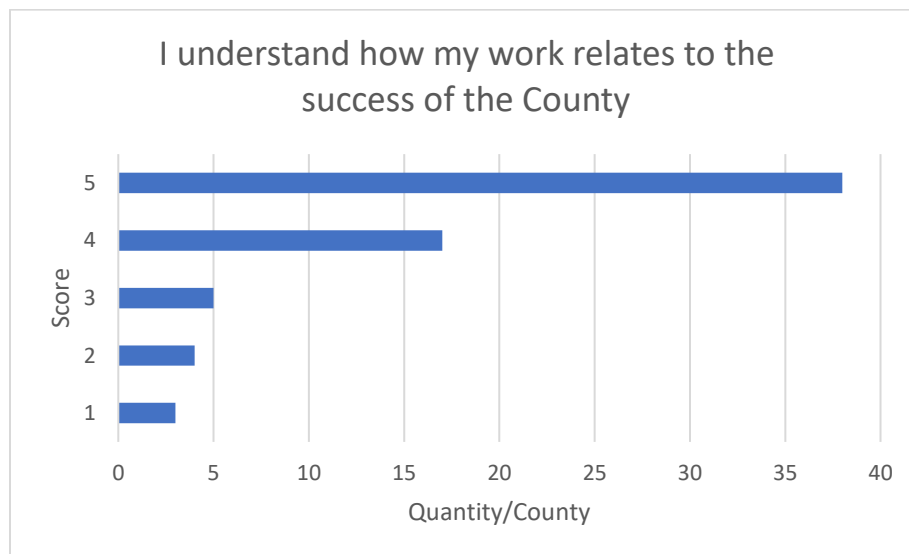
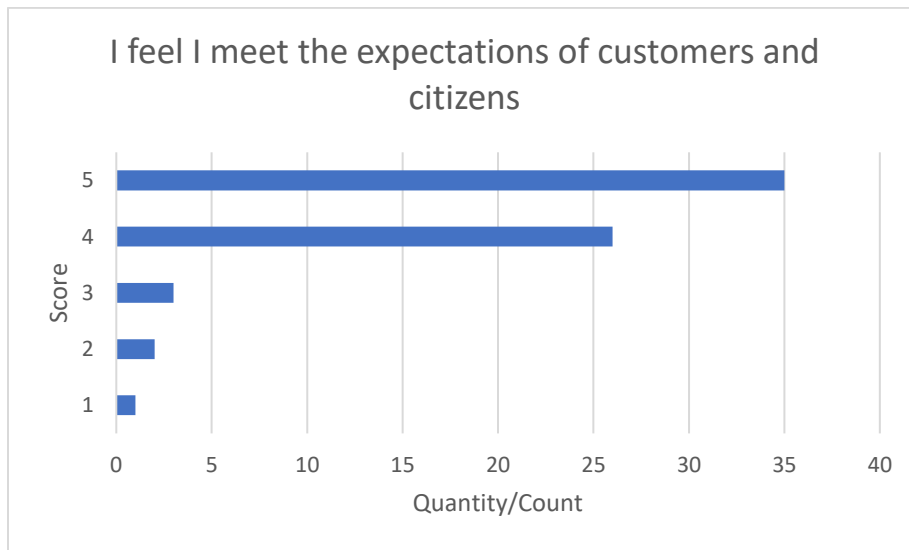
**4 = agree**

**5 = strongly agree**

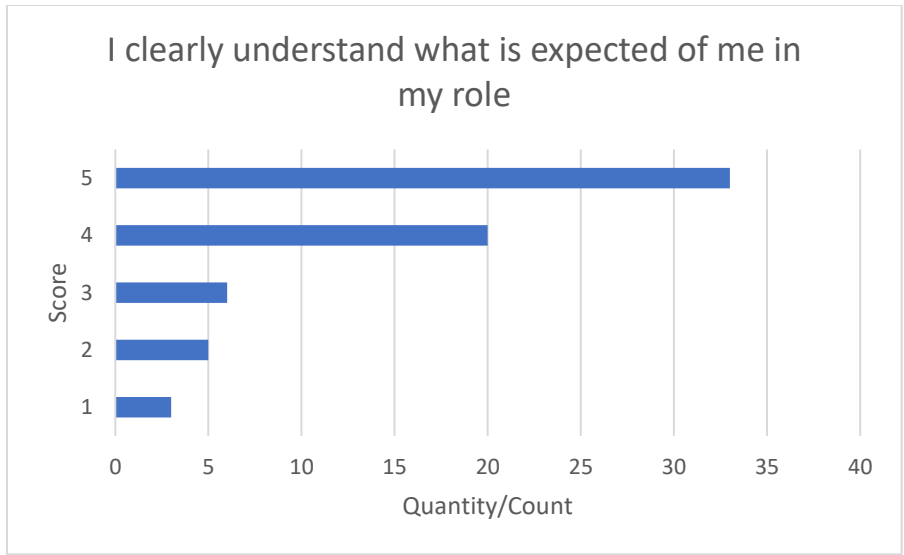
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.5
I understand my mission and vision of my department	3.7
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.2
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.1
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.8
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.7
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.4
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.9
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.7
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.9
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.7
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.6
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.7
	4.1

Survey Statement	Average Score
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.8
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.4
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.1
I am proud to work for the County	4.1
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	3.9

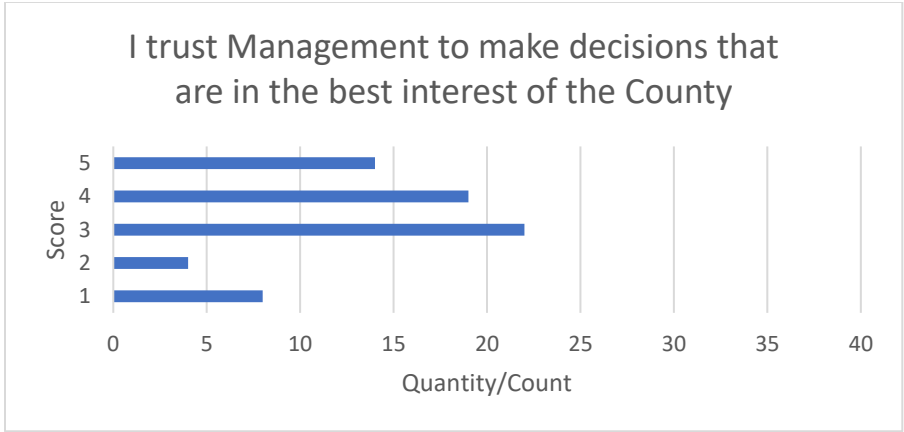
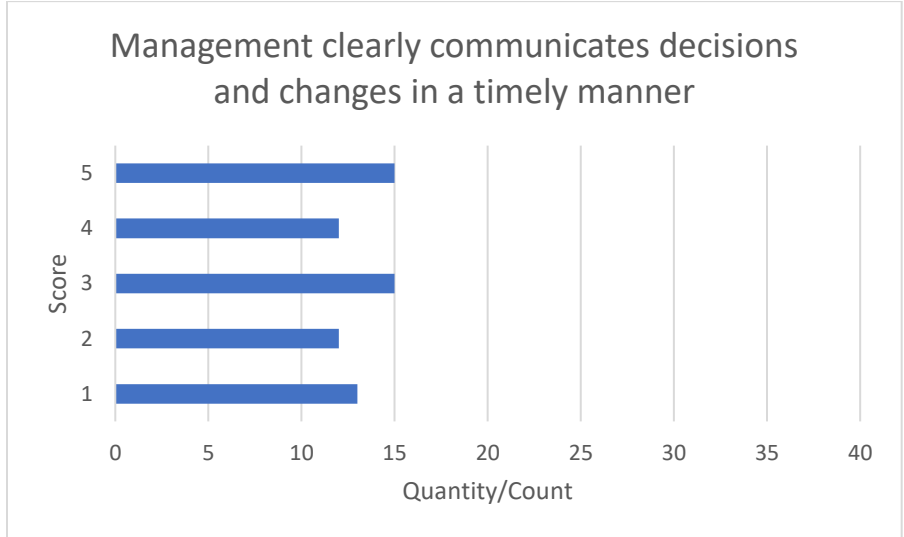
The average score for all the survey statements is 3.7. The lowest score is 2.9 and the highest score is 4.4. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:







The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Planning and Development's people are the Department's greatest strength, with strong emphases on teamwork, customer service, and work ethic.
- Opinions are split on whether the Department is staffed with employees with high experience levels and those with limited to no experience and institutional knowledge, indicating a disparity between divisions and sections.
- Communication is commonly identified as a Departmental weakness, both in terms of top-down communication and communication between divisions and sections.
- Some divisions and sections suggest executive management does an excellent job listening to front-line staff concerns, while others suggest management is disconnected with the work, again suggesting disparity between divisions and sections.
- Staffing is identified as a common obstacle to improvement: respondents indicate staffing levels are low, growth opportunities are limited, and they are not able to participate in necessary training. Respondents state workloads are heavy enough that when one team member is out, the workload is overwhelming for the remainder of the team. Additionally, workloads due to staffing levels limit the time available for employees to take advantage of training opportunities.
- While customer service is identified as a priority, respondents identify a need for greater public education and communication as an opportunity, including increasing online service offerings.
- Several respondents suggest improved technologies and systems are required, and that new technologies are being rolled out before they are ready and staff has been properly trained.
- The Department's emphasis on customer service results in employees feeling as though their needs and work ethic are not valued. When management doesn't understand the work being done by front-line staff, they emphasize the wrong issues, concerns, and cases.

## 3.B.1 Planning and Development Department– Administration Division

The Administration Division is responsible for customer service and administrative activities and tasks in support of the entire Planning and Development Department.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- General Administration Support
- Purchasing and Accounts Payable
- Human Resources Coordination
- Customer Service

#### General Administration Support

The Administration Division provides support to all Department employees by coordinating all Information Technology service desk requests and tickets, Support Services/Facilities work order requests for maintenance and repair of the building and equipment within the offices, and coordinating process improvement activities for the Department.

The Administration Division staff logs all service and maintenance requests in a spreadsheet posted on a shared drive so that regardless of which Administration employees are working in the office or offsite, all Administration staff can assist internal customers with new work requests or updates to existing work requests.

The Administration Division coordinates process improvement activities for the Department in order to provide transparent, real-time access for all Department employees to Administration tasks. The Division created a set of wikis for administrative tasks, templates, and workflows that are regularly used or requested by Department staff. The process improvement activities can be based or supported by new technologies, new service offerings for the Department, new Department forms, requests for Department website revisions, and new or updated customer service processes (including hard copy- and electronic-versions). Administration staff serve as liaisons to the Information Technology Department with requests for modifications to existing systems or software, requests for new functionality and/or systems support, requests for new system purchases, and requests from Department employees for desktop support and repairs.

#### Purchasing and Accounts Payable

Administration Division staff coordinates all purchasing activities and tasks for the Department. This includes the purchasing of supplies and equipment using a County-issued P-card, or through the County Purchasing Division's contract, RFP, and bid processes. The Division also coordinates the submittal of the Department's bills, invoices, and supporting documentation to the Finance Department for payment.

The Administration Division maintains spreadsheets on a shared drive accessible by all Department employees for all requests for purchases and requests for payments submitted to the Administration Division. For requests for purchase, the spreadsheet includes the requestor's name, date of the request, item(s) requested for purchase, status of the order, anticipated delivery date, confirmed delivery date, and comments related to the order and other relevant information. For requests for payment, the spreadsheet includes the employee's name submitting the request, the vendor to whom payment is requested, the amount of payment requested, the date of invoice, the due date of payment, and other pertinent information. These spreadsheets are updated regularly throughout the life cycle of a purchase/payment request by Division staff. Department staff may access these spreadsheets (in read-only access) in real-time updated information on any purchasing or payment request instead of contacting Division staff directly to determine the status. Division management monitors the spreadsheets to ensure timely action and submittal of requests and checks for supporting comment entries when questions arise about submitted requests.

### Human Resources Coordination

Administration staff coordinate all Human Resources-related actions and issues for the Department, including payroll, job changes and promotions, salary administration, protected leave programs (e.g., the Family Medical Leave Act [FMLA] leave program), hiring and recruiting, discipline and separations, benefits administration, wellness programs, etc.

Administration staff serve as liaisons between Human Resources and employees and their supervisors related to timekeeping responsibilities. Administration staff ensure that all employees enter their work time and/or leave usage into the SAP timekeeping system by the required deadlines to ensure the timely processing of paychecks. They also ensure that Department supervisors and/or managers have approved the employees' work time and leave entries in the SAP system. Administration staff have to coordinate with HR staff when time and leave entries in SAP create system-errors and require additional action by Department employees or supervisors.

Administration staff tracks FMLA leave utilization in the WorkBench system, which is used by all County Departments for FMLA utilization tracking. Administration staff utilize the Task function in Microsoft Teams to document and schedule future reminders for FMLA-related document requirements, updates, deadlines for the return of medical certifications, deadlines for submission of additional requested documents, etc. for employees who recently requested or are currently on FMLA.

Administration staff gather and organize the Department's selection and recruitment records, selection and/or promotional justification documentation, and personnel action request forms prior to submitting to Human Resources. Administration staff serve as liaisons between the Human Resources Department and Department managers and supervisors regarding all personnel action requests. When Human Resources staff request additional supporting documentation or justification related to a requested personnel action, Administration staff coordinate the response(s) from Department managers and supervisors to ensure accurate and timely submission. Administration staff expressed a lack of clarity for documentation needed in support of requested HR actions, especially for requests where the requested salary is above the paygrade minimum, or an atypical promotional salary increase. Administration staff contend that supporting documentation is very subjective, and often depends on which HR staff person reviews the documents as to whether additional support will be requested.

Department supervisors and management expressed concern regarding the length of time to recruit and extend job offers to potential employees. The Administration Team documents in spreadsheets accessible by all Department staff the dates the selection records and/or promotional and salary requests are submitted from the hiring manager to the Administration team, as well as when submitted to Human Resources for consideration and approval. Additional entries are entered into the spreadsheet in cases where HR requests additional documentation or support, as well as the duration of the Employment Verification process. Although Human Resources conveys that the length of time to complete the Employment Verification is dependent on when former employers complete and return the verification information, Department management are concerned that they have lost numerous candidates due to the time it takes to hire new staff from the point of application to the point of job offer.

### Customer Service

A primary responsibility of the Administration Division's Customer Service Unit is to provide coverage of the Department's Front Counter. At least one Customer Service Unit staff person is assigned to cover the Front Counter from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., in two shifts per day (8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Staff must acknowledge customers verbally as they arrive in the lobby area by offering to assist them. While staff are assisting customers, they must remain visually alert to new customers entering the lobby area and politely guide them to wait in line for assistance. While assisting customers, the Customer Service staff are expected to convey a working knowledge of all of the Department's services and responsibilities to assist customers as effectively and efficiently as possible. Customer Service Unit staff answer questions from customers regarding Application processing, electronic submittals of information, questions regarding current zoning, and outlines the process for submitting requests to change zoning of properties.

With the County's focus on providing exemplary customer service, the Front Counter coverage is the first tier of customer service support for Department customers. Staff must be knowledgeable about the services offered and application requirements for all areas of the Department. The strategy of this approach to customer service is that by increasing the support and information this Unit can initially provide the customer, the desired downstream effect is to reduce the time and burden required for customers to speak with technical staff within the Department.

Should the customer need to speak or meet with Departmental technical staff, the Customer Service staff adds an entry in the customer service log, which is a spreadsheet stored on a shared drive. The log identifies the customer's name, contact cell number, time of arrival, reason for the visit, and the staff person contacted to speak to customer. Staff use Microsoft Teams messaging to make the technical staff aware of the waiting customer, and the reason for the meeting request.

In situations where customers are loud, upset, or irate, Customer Service staff request that other Customer Service team members or staff from specific divisions escort the customer to a private Customer Service Meeting Room located adjacent to the Front Counter. For security reasons, the Customer Service Meetings Rooms have glass windows in two walls in the room and are physically located next to the Front Counter, so customers remain in the Lobby area.

For the Customer Service staff not assigned to covering the Front Counter, the bulk of their responsibilities center around processing Tenant Name Changes (TNCs) and Electronic Document

Reviews. Customers previously had to go to three or more different sections within the Department to accomplish these tasks before assigning all changes by a tenant to the Customer Service Unit. Customers have provided feedback that it is much easier to do business with Gwinnett County Planning and Development Department since creating the Customer Service Unit.

TNCs are electronic requests from customers to change details of ownership for businesses within Gwinnett County, including changing the address of a property owner or make other types of changes to customer information. When the customer enters the request on the Department's website, the request uploads into the Accela program. The Customer Service Unit reviews each request and supporting documentation in Accela to determine each P&D Division that must participate, review, inspect, and/or approve their portion of the customer request. If the request requires action by multiple P&D Divisions, the Customer Service staff then routes the request to each Division. If the Customer Service staff can resolve the request, they enter the necessary changes into Accela and forward the case to their supervisor for review and approval.

While a number of the customer requests are administrative in nature and can be addressed by the Customer Service Unit, the majority of customer requests are for more complex technical requests which requires the review and approval of other units within the Department. Effective two years ago, the Department requires all customer requests to be submitted electronically using the Department's website, which automatically uploads the request into the Accela system. Customer Service staff review the customer request, the project plans and drawings submitted with the request, and other documentation (which is collectively called Electronic Document Reviews) to ensure the project is assigned to all the appropriate units within the Department for review. In the course of the customer completing the online customer service request, the system automatically assigns the project for review by specific units within the Department. Customer Service staff review the customer request and the supporting documents to ensure that the system determined the appropriate units to review the request, then makes assignments if warranted to other units within P&D for review and approval.

The Tenant Name Changes and the Electronic Data Reviews account for 70% of the time of Customer Service staff when not covering the Front Desk. From the point the request/case is assigned to other Department units to review/approve, the Customer Service staff will only touch the cases again if the customer calls, emails, or makes an in-person request related to their case.

Other administrative activities the Customer Service Unit is responsible includes the deregistration of vacant or accessory structures in preparation for the destruction of the structure and removal from property records, e.g., the destruction and removal of a free-standing garden shed which may appear on property records. The Customer Service Unit also ensures that every parcel of land in Gwinnett County has a street address associated with it by researching property records and assigning street addresses to any remaining parcels they determine does not have an existing street address assigned.

## Communications

The Administration Division Director created an Administration group email box for all Department staff to utilize when requesting activities/tasks by the Administration staff. Utilizing a group email box helped reduce the risks of emailed communications getting lost or remaining unanswered should staff be out of the office. All Administration staff can check the group box to ensure coverage regardless of who is working or from where they are working.

## Strategic Initiatives

### Lobby and Front Counter Re-design

Department customers and staff have provided feedback that the Front Counter/Lobby Area is not designed/laid out very well. The Customer Service staff person assigned to work the Front Counter is in the center of a wide semi-circular shaped desk. On each end of the Front Counter are representatives from other Department units – one is assigned to accept payments for fees, the other to assist customers with Plan Review tasks. There is also a kiosk/table in the center of the Lobby area. When a customer gets off elevator, it can be very confusing to the customer as to where they actually need to go for assistance, even though there are multiple signs. The customer is typically overwhelmed by the size of the Lobby area, number of customers waiting in the area, and a lack of understanding of where to go. Customers were observed asking other customers if they had already been helped, or where they need to go for assistance.

Department staff concur with feedback from customers to redesign the Lobby area and Front Counter, focusing on the Customer's perspective, and possibly have the Customer Service staff person moved to a more visible area closer to the elevator, with upgraded technology or system/software for line queuing and safety/security for social distancing.

### Training for Customer Service Staff

The Customer Service staff and supervisor requested to send Customer Service staff to more useful training, including both technical training and soft skills training. Specifically, they requested to send Customer Service staff to training related to Fire Codes and life/safety codes, Occupancy Loads, types of construction, etc. They also identified training on how to deal with difficult customers and customer sensitivity training.

The Customer Service supervisor and team leaders have experienced difficulties training new Customer Service team staff since the Department's Standard Operating Procedures are not current. Most learning by new employees is by "On-The-Job" training and being paired with more experienced Customer Service staff to job shadow when assisting customers. Phone calls get routed to wrong places due to inadequate training on nuances of questions to ask/understanding of unit responsibilities, e.g., there are multiple Department units to possibly send the customer when they raise questions about Certificates of Occupancy. Staffing shortages throughout the Department have de-emphasized the need to update the Department's Standard Operating Procedures, in part due to heavy workloads and the lack of time to focus on updating the policies.

### Deadlines for Customer Activity

The Customer Service Unit proposed to modify the administrative rules and systems requirements to require the customer complete all required steps/requirements within a specific timeframe. Currently if during the review process staff determines the customer needs to provide additional information/documents/forms/etc., it is a manual process for staff to monitor the inactivity of stale customer requests. Accela allows the case to remain in a "pending" state, requiring staff to manually follow-up on cases where there has been no recent activity. Staff requests that the system be updated so it would send automatic notice(s) to the customer if there has been no activity or follow-up within a specific timeframe. Having the system configured to send notices automatically regarding inactivity would create staff efficiencies and enhanced customer service.

## Systems and Applications

The Customer Service Division is responsible for managing customer service across the Department. The Division operates a walk-in customer service center and manages the Customer Service Survey on Gwinnett County's website's Planning and Development page. This digital form can be completed and submitted directly on the site.

### Manual Processes

Accela is the primary business system used by the Customer Service Division for service request management, including Plan Review routing. Still, it lacks all necessary capabilities to effectively act as a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). The system processes requests but doesn't track or notify users of the request's status, and updates are manually entered. The lack of a comprehensive CRM also limits the Division's ability to collect and analyze workload and performance data.

For customers who choose to physically visit the Department, there is not currently a sign-in or queueing system available to manage customers who are waiting on assistance. The Process and Technology Manager has developed a spreadsheet that staff currently use, but human entry errors may create issues in tracking and contacting customers when staff are available to provide assistance.

## Data and Performance Analysis

While the Division collects responses to the online Customer Survey and consolidates into a single spreadsheet stored on the Division's shared drive, the Division does not collect performance metrics or customer analytics for the Customer Service Unit. Collecting data and metrics provides management information to quantify the number of customers serviced, number of in-person customers seeking Department assistance, types of information or forms requested by customer, and other information.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Administration Division created wikis for a number of administrative activities required within the Department. The wikis are widely used by Department staff and should be simple to modify if replicated to other departments.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should share the wikis they created for administrative activities with other Departments for possible modification and/or replication. Other departments could efficiently create their own wikis based on those provided by the Administration Division.

**Observation 2:** Staff performing Human Resources-liaison activities expressed frustration with inconsistent direction and guidance provided by Human Resources staff, especially when submitting requests for new hires or promotions. The guidance from Human Resources is often inconsistent with prior guidance, thereby leaving Division staff unsure what to include with the requested personnel actions. The inconsistency is extending the time it takes to hire candidates into positions, often losing the candidate to other employers who are able to hire at faster rates.

**Recommendation 2:** The Administration Division and/or Department leadership should collaborate with Human Resources to seek guidance and training on processes, procedures, and considerations for submitting certain personnel actions to Human Resources in order to expedite the processes and create efficient outcomes to the hiring and promotion processes.



**Observation 3:** Customers to the Department's Front Counter and Lobby area are often confused about where to seek assistance and are unsure where they should line up for assistance.

**Recommendation 3:** The Administration Division and Department Leadership should collaborate with Support Services Facility Construction Division for recommendations and/or advice on how to better utilize the Lobby space to provide exemplary customer service and provide direction to customers as they enter the area.

**Observation 4:** Staff in the Administration Division's Customer Service Unit expressed desire for more technical training related to all of the technical areas provided within the Department. Customers are often routed to technical staff and engineers for procedural questions, when the Customer Services Unit could assist the customer if they only know more about their areas. Technical staff are experiencing very high workloads and can use the additional administrative support by the Customer Service Unit.

**Recommendation 4:** The Administration Division should explore technical training options for the Customer Service staff available from external sources or by creating training within the Department. As a minimum, if each section manager within Planning Review and Planning sections would create a half-day training for the Customer Service staff, the result will be better customer service, less dependency on technical staff for process questions, and a boost in morale for the Customer Service staff.

## 3.B.2 Planning and Development Department– Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division

The Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division (“PIED”) is responsible for building permits, code enforcement, and occupational tax permits and alcohol licenses. The Division is divided into two primary sections: Permitting and Inspections, and Code Enforcement.

The Code Enforcement Section was originally established as part of the Planning and Development Department before being relocated to the Gwinnett County Police Department for approximately 12 years. In 2019, the Section rejoined the Planning and Development Department.

The Division uses Accela, a service request management system to track permitting and inspections activity and workflow, as well code enforcement activities.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Issuing Building Permits
- Performing Site Inspections
- Issuing Occupational Tax Permits and Alcohol Licenses
- Performing Code Enforcement Inspections
- Providing Education and Outreach

### Issuing Building Permits

The Permitting and Inspections Section is responsible for coordinating the review, approval, and inspections associated with building permits. The Permits Technicians are responsible for receiving all applications and completing the initial review for completeness and accuracy. Permits Technicians are also responsible for verifying state and business licenses for commercial permits. The Permits Technicians utilize Accela to initiate the workflow for obtaining appropriate review and approvals, with the last reviewer sending back to the Permits Technicians for permit processing. The Division charges numerous fees for permits and certificates of occupancy or completion. Fees are based on the type of permit being sought, with most fees being based on the evaluated cost of the project. For residential building permits, fees are calculated based on a flat rate per heated square foot to determine the evaluated cost of the project. Permits Technicians also process all payments for permits and certificates of occupancy or certificates of completion. The Department has not conducted a fee study for residential building permits in nearly 20 years.

Once all application components have been approved, the Permits Team within the Licensing and Revenue Section of the Permitting and Inspections Section are responsible for processing all payments and issuing the permits once payment is received. Staff note that Accela doesn’t currently offer batch payment options, so builders who may be managing subdivision construction or multi-unit construction will have to submit each permit request individually, and then pay for each permit individually.

## Performing Site Inspections

Once the initial building permit is approved, authorizing the work to proceed, Permitting and Inspections is responsible for inspecting building sites to confirm that all work is being completed in compliance with code. The Division completes approximately 70,000 inspections annually, issuing approximately 11,000 building permits and certificates annually. There are four teams: one for development inspections, such as grading, water and sewer, tree clearance, etc.; one for structural inspections, including final inspections; one for mechanical, electrical and plumbing trades-related inspections, and one for complaint investigations.

All requests for inspections must be scheduled within two business days of the request submission. Contractors can submit inspection requests online; some contractors may also contact inspectors directly via phone or email. For contractors overseeing subdivision or multi-unit housing construction, Accela does not currently allow for bulk or group scheduling, requiring the contractor to submit separate requests for each address. Accela automatically routes inspection requests to the correct inspector based on the assigned inspection zones, but does not create route mapping for efficiency routing through the scheduled inspections. As appropriate, Accela also assigns the appropriate sub-inspections for the different trade areas. Most inspections are completed as field inspections. For minor corrections after a failed inspection, the inspectors may conduct video reviews instead of returning to the site.

All inspectors utilize rugged laptops (Toughbooks) with increased memory capacity for field entry and review of plans and previous case notes. Inspectors are encouraged to complete inspection results while onsite and complete the report before leaving the inspection site. Once the inspection is completed, the contractor associated with the permit is sent an email with the results of the inspection.

The Construction Investigation Unit, or CIU, is responsible for performing site visits related to complaints, such as building without a permit, mud in the street, etc. Complaints may be submitted via phone, online, in-person, or via email. The Construction Investigation Unit uses Accela to track investigation cases, and coordinates with other departments as relevant, such as the Department of Water Resources or the Department of Transportation to provide information and assistance to the owner or builder in becoming compliant with all applicable codes. Accela does not allow for the automated transfer of complaints to other departments, so staff must take screenshots or manually recreate the complaint to email to the relevant department.

## Issuing Occupational Tax Permits and Alcohol Licenses

The Licensing and Revenue Section, in addition to being responsible for initiating building permit application reviews and processing permitting payments, maintains a team that is responsible for issuing occupational taxes and establishment alcohol licensing. This includes what is traditionally known as business licenses, payment of hotel/motel tax collections, and alcohol licenses. Hotel/motel taxes are paid quarterly and business and alcohol licenses are paid annually. The majority of payments are received online.

Applicants may submit for their initial occupation tax permit through an online portal, or bring copies of the application and supporting documents in-person to the Department. The Licensing and Revenue Section must download the files and then review them for completeness and accuracy, and email the applicant for any missing or inaccurate documents.

The Licensing and Revenue Section also confirms other requirements, as applicable, such as state licenses, Board of Health approvals, as well as initiating the classified ad to allow for protest or complaint. Licensing and Revenue Associates use a CRM module associated with the County's ERP to track all applications, but it doesn't have an automated workflow or tracking of all parts of the application review and determination process. All applications and renewals are processed through the CRM. Online payments are processed through the portal and automatically processed. The team uses iNovah, an online cashiering system to process walk-in payments. Once all payments are processed, a digital copy is provided to the applicant. Daily, all processed occupational tax certificates are uploaded as pdfs to a File Transfer Protocol, or FTP website that allows for secure transfer of certificate data. An external vendor accesses the certificate file and prints and mails out all occupational tax certificates.

All establishments must also have a Certificate of Occupancy ("CO") before the business license can be issued. If there are not safety hazards preventing the issuance of a CO, the Section will accept a temporary CO in order for the Licensing and Revenue Associates to issue the business license. The Building Inspector sets a deadline for the location to transition to a permanent CO. Currently, Accela does not have automated tracking and notifications of stale permits or expiring temporary COS to assist the Licensing and Revenue Associates in confirming that the business successfully transitioned to the permanent CO.

For alcohol licenses, the Licensing and Revenue Associates must coordinate with the Fire and Police Departments to complete review and appropriate background checks. The applications are sent to the two departments (Fire and Police) via email, with a physical file maintained by the Licensing and Revenue Section for all applications pending review by Fire and Police.

For alcohol licenses, the team also schedules meetings to review the requirements, and to highlight areas of common issue/violation, such as third-party promoters, not licensing the pourers, etc. The licensee must sign a form acknowledging all of the information that was provided, and that they understand all of the requirements for maintaining an alcohol license.

### Performing Code Enforcement Inspections

The primary function of the Code Enforcement Section is to inspect residential and commercial properties in unincorporated Gwinnett County for violations of eight County ordinances:

- Noise Ordinance,
- Occupational Tax and Business Regulations Ordinance,
- Property Maintenance Ordinance,
- Sign Ordinance,
- Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Service Ordinance,
- Temporary Outdoor Activity Ordinance,
- Vacant/Foreclosed Real Property Registration Ordinance, and
- Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO").

The 16 municipalities in Gwinnett County are responsible for the enforcement of the equivalent ordinances within the jurisdiction of their respective city.

Code Enforcement Officers (“Officers”) are alerted to possible violations through two means: complaints lodged (often anonymously by members of the public), and officer-generated cases. Members of the public are able to report potential violations via an online portal on the County’s website, a Code Enforcement Section email address, a complaint hotline, or in person at the Department’s office. The complaints are reviewed by the Section’s Administrative Support Associate and entered into Accela as a new case. The Division does not have the code enforcement module of Accela, and is currently modifying the use of purchased modules for code enforcement activity tracking. There are also no Section standards for naming conventions, case notes, or case resolution entries within Accela.

Once a case is opened, the Administrative Support Associate routes it in Accela to the correct Code Enforcement Officer based upon type of property (residential or commercial), and zone. The code enforcement zones are subsections of the Gwinnett County Police Department’s districts, and each residential Code Enforcement Officer is assigned to a specific set of adjacent zones. The Commercial Unit was established within the last couple of years. As of our fieldwork period, there were not yet have enough Officers to assign specific zones to individual Officers. The two Officers in the field cover all 40 code enforcement zones. Each day, the Officers review their Accela inbox for newly assigned cases. Complaints submitted by members of the public are not always actual violations; the Officer makes that determination during the initial inspection.

Officer-generated cases are violations identified by Officers while out in the field, either inspecting the property for a separately reported potential violation, or while inspecting other properties. The Officer generates the case in Accela and assigns the case either to their own task list, or to another Officer based upon type of property and zone. Both the Residential and Commercial Officers will perform periodic sweeps of neighboring buildings in order to account for violations not being reported by members of the public. On the residential side, teams of four to five Officers will go through an entire neighborhood approximately once per quarter – the Officers will go from house to house documenting all violations. Because the vast majority of commercial cases are Officer-generated, Commercial Officers do more regular sweeps of malls and plazas – Officers will go from business to business documenting all violations and requesting copies of business licenses to help ensure all businesses are operating as dictated by code.

Once a case has been assigned to an Officer, the Officer sets a date for the initial inspection. During the inspection, the Officer will review the property for any violations of the relevant County ordinances and will document any such violations through photography and written and/or typed notes. Residential Officers are fairly restricted in their ability to inspect properties – upon arrival, they may only inspect any part of the property visible from the street, the driveway, and the path to the front door. The property owner or resident must provide a verbal right of entry to inspect other parts of the property. If the property owner isn’t available or denies right of entry, Officers can request right of entry from neighbors to those neighboring properties from where the reported violation may be visible.

Commercial Officers have more flexibility to perform more complete walkthroughs of properties, as businesses are generally considered more public and may be surrounded by County property. Officers won’t, however, enter any secure properties without receiving right of entry from the property owner. If a property is unoccupied, the Officer is required by UDO Section 120-20 to “make a reasonable effort” to locate or contact the property owner before conducting a thorough inspection of the property. The UDO requires property owners to grant officers access to all parts of a property for an inspection,

however the Code Enforcement Section does not have many tools to enforce this requirement, except through requesting support from the Gwinnett County Police Department or by seeking an inspection warrant.

Any violations discovered during the inspection are documented in a notice of violation (“NOV”), which includes a description of the violation, a description of the actions necessary to address the violation, the deadline for remediation (a list of recommended compliance deadlines is provided in the Section’s Standard Operating Procedure manual), and an explanation of possible penalties for failure to address the violation. Officers attempt to provide the property owner, or other responsible parties, the NOV in person, however if that is not possible, the Officer may either post the NOV at the property in a conspicuous location – oftentimes the front door – or may mail the notice to either the property or the property owner’s primary address. Mailed notices are most common when Officers are concerned about their safety at a particular location. NOVs provided in-person or posted are carbon copy forms completed by hand; mailed NOVs are submitted through Accela, printed in the Department’s office, and mailed by the Section’s Administrative Support Associate. Prior to providing a property owner with an official NOV, an Officer may choose to complete a courtesy NOV, or a warning. During peak season, Officers may also choose to issue a tall grass sticker or first-time complaint notice, both of which function as an informal courtesy notice. After providing the property owner the courtesy or official NOV, the Officer schedules a re-inspection to return to the property and determine if any action has been taken on the identified violations.

Oftentimes, the Code Enforcement Officer will need to perform research to identify the property owner, especially for properties owned by corporations. Officers have limited resources to research property owners, often relying on external resources as their access to other departments’ databases – even databases used by other divisions within the Planning and Development Department – is limited. Anecdotally, Officers estimate they utilize about 10 different external services for research, none of which are paid subscriptions. The Code Enforcement Section previously had a paid subscription to LexisNexis while housed at the Gwinnett County Police Department.

If no violations are identified during an inspection, or all violations are addressed prior to a re-inspection, the case is closed by the assigned Officer in Accela. A closed case that does not require a citation can be closed with the following notations: Duplicate Case, Complied, or No Violation. The Officer may also transfer a case to another department or section, and notates as such in Accela, if the violation is not a code enforcement issue.

If after being issued an NOV and having been provided with the necessary education, the property owner has failed to address the violation, the Code Enforcement Officer will issue a citation. For residential properties, the citation is issued to the property owner; for commercial properties, the citation can be issued either to the business or to a responsible party, depending on the nature of the violation. Citations must be issued in person – if a Code Enforcement Officer cannot issue the citation themselves, they can contact the local sheriff’s office to do so, though may have to pay a fee for service by a sheriff’s office outside Gwinnett County.

The citation functions as a summons to the Magistrate Court of Gwinnett County, at which time the property owner may state their case before a judge. All code enforcement citations are usually presented before the court on the same day each month, as the Officers are required to appear before the court as well. Citations can be rescinded before the court appearance if the violation is addressed,

but unaddressed violations may result in penalties as identified in each of the ordinances – commonly a fine between \$250 and \$1,000, jail time of up to 60 days, or both if the defendant is found guilty. Cases brought before the court will remain open and Officers will continue to reinspect properties until brought into compliance, sometimes requiring multiple rounds of citations.

Code Enforcement Officers are also losing time due to the current court scheduling issues. Each violation is separately assigned, which may result in a single address or case being assigned to multiple courtrooms if there are multiple simultaneous violations. These hearings may also be scheduled concurrently, leaving the Officer unable to attend all the hearings due to scheduling conflicts.

While residential property owners can be compelled to appear before the court, businesses cannot as they are not a person. As such, many citations of violations at commercial properties result in unresolved cases. The Commercial Code Enforcement Team has been considering mitigation tactics, such as issuing citations to a responsible party of the business – such as an owner or manager – if the initial business citation is ignored.

### Providing Education and Outreach

The Permitting and Inspections Division develops and provides contractor and other industry professional education opportunities and engages with builders through the use of local home-builders' associations and other industry groups. This includes information on upcoming Georgia code changes, as well as changes in Gwinnett County ordinance that would impact processes or construction requirements.

Many code violations occur because the public is not familiar with the ordinances governing their properties. As a result, Code Enforcement Officers view education as one of their primary responsibilities. The first service listed after ordinance enforcement in the Section's Standard Operating Procedure manual is to "provide citizens and homeowner's associations with educational information." When providing a property owner with the NOV, the Code Enforcement Officer will explain the violations and methods for remediation. The Officers have developed an explanation sheet with a list of the most common code violations. The Officers will often provide property owners with this document, highlighting the specific violation or violations present on that property, and identify how the property owner can learn more. Because tall grass violations constitute the vast majority of code violations in the summer, the Code Enforcement Officers developed a sticker that can be placed on property owners' doors detailing the grass violation and required remediation.

In the process of educating property owners, Code Enforcement Officers often find themselves learning about individuals' social situations, especially on the residential side. Code Enforcement Officers will sometimes recommend resources to property owners and residents for assisting with addressing violations. For example, an Officer may recommend an owner contact Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful for assistance removing clutter from a property or may refer a resident to Gwinnett County Senior Services for quality-of-life assistance. Officers may also extend a deadline for addressing a violation if the remediation will be expensive – for example, if a renovation required to address a violation will necessitate an owner taking out a second mortgage, the Officer will extend the usual 14-day deadline for addressing the violation, as long as they feel the owner is making progress.

## Communications

Within the Division, email is the typical way of communicating information from leadership or amongst teams.

Most of the sections hold regular meetings to discuss workload, recurring or challenging issues, and any upcoming changes that may impact workload or processes. Others have informal check-ins during busy periods to ensure workload is being managed and staffing is adequate.

Meetings with the entire Code Enforcement Section are held biweekly, with some individual teams meeting each week to discuss cases, sweeps, and other priorities. Trainings, such as document retention for open records requests, will occur every few months as part of the Section-wide meetings.

Code Enforcement Officers communicate with the public via email and County-issued cellphones. Internal communications likewise occur via email and County-issued cellphones, but also via police radio. Each time a Code Enforcement Officer stops for an inspection, regardless of whether they exit their vehicle, the Officer is required to call out to the Gwinnett County Police Department dispatch via their radio, which they share with one police precinct. The Officer reports a signal 99, or code violation, and then identifies the address. Dispatch creates a call in Tiburon MobileCOM, the computer aided dispatch system ("CAD") and the call then shows up on the Officer's computer where they can confirm the details. As an Officer is on site during an inspection, dispatch will periodically check in with the Officer to confirm the Officer's safety. When the Code Enforcement Section was part of the Police Department, Code Enforcement Officers were trained to carry specialized equipment, such as an extendable baton or pepper spray, for their safety. After the Code Enforcement Section was reassigned to the Planning and Development Department, Officers stopped carrying defensive equipment due to liability concerns in accordance with County Administrator Policy CA-ADM-109. As a result, if a Code Enforcement Officer does not check in with dispatch in a reasonable timeframe or requests backup, police officers will be dispatched to the location of the signal 99. Code Enforcement Officers are able to close out calls via the CAD, as well as make specialized requests, such as searching for vehicle owners by tag numbers. Code Enforcement Officers were able to research vehicle owners themselves in the state database while part of the Gwinnett County Police Department, but lost the ability to do when the Section was moved to the Planning and Development Department.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement Division clearly focuses on customer service as a top priority. This is reflected in updated processes and policies and ongoing efforts to update the website to make it more user-friendly and accessible.

The introduction of the CIU provides a direct pathway for citizens to voice concerns about projects in their communities. The CIU's focus on education, and assisting the violator in obtaining the necessary permits or resolution demonstrates the Section's treatment of all parties as customers, rather than focusing on citations as the first action. The Division has also invested in online systems to increase customer access and ease of access, and introduced automated workflows to increase efficiency and reduce processing time. The use of video calls for follow-up inspections also demonstrates a respect for customer's time, while improving the efficiency of team operations.



The Division has also done a good job of identifying and acknowledging areas where additional information and education are beneficial for customers. The Building Inspections Section maintains close relationships with local home-Builders and other industry associations, and provides regular training and information sessions to ensure the industry is aware of code changes and impacts to business operations or inspections requirements. The Licensing and Revenue Section has created a handbook and provides an informational overview when issuing alcohol licenses, to ensure customer understanding of the requirements, some leading practices, and areas of common issue to avoid.

Since rejoining the Planning and Development Department, the Code Enforcement Section has expanded its focus to include commercial properties in order to raise the property maintenance standards of businesses to the same level as residential properties. The Commercial Code Enforcement Team has existed for less than two years, but from January 1 to December 13, 2021, issued 2,514 notices of violation, on par with the Residential Enforcement Team. However, as of our review period, the Commercial Code Enforcement Team only has two Officers in the field covering the entire County – one is primarily performing the initial inspection, while the second is performing re-inspections. As a result, the Department has hired multiple new Code Enforcement Officers across the teams, with two in training for the Commercial Code Enforcement Team. These trainees will provide the Commercial Code Enforcement Team a full complement of Officers, allowing each Officer to focus on specific code enforcement zones, rather than having to traverse the entire County. The current Commercial Code Enforcement Team will be supplemented by a second Commercial Code Enforcement Team comprised of a Supervisor and five Code Enforcement Officers who are classified up to the third tier, as approved in the 2022 budget. Additionally, the supervisor of the current Commercial Code Enforcement Team has been added to the review board for special use permits, allowing the Team to increase their emphasis on proactive compliance reviews, such as for occupational licenses and sign permits.

Customer service is a key strategic priority for the Code Enforcement Section, as with the rest of the Division. Officers stress the importance of their interactions with property owners, business employees, complainants, and other members of the public – especially through education and social services efforts. The members of the Code Enforcement Section pride themselves on their ability to make connections, and suggest their job can often become keeping the peace between neighbors. The necessity to address complaints in a timely manner, while also accounting for the time and resources required for property owners to address code violations, can lead to confusion as to whose interests take priority. The Code Enforcement Section has fluctuated between periods of focusing on education as the primary function of the Code Enforcement Officers and periods of escalating cases to citation issuance on an expedited timeline – currently, the Code Enforcement Section is in the latter period, based on expectations from leadership. When complainants repeatedly contact the Department’s management, or escalate their complaint to the Board of Commissioners, the Officers find themselves encouraged to issue citations sooner than they might in a case not brought to leadership’s attention. In these instances, the complainant becomes the primary customer and their interest becomes the primary focus, even if the property owner is taking steps to address the violation or no violation is present.

Additionally, some of the recommended compliance deadlines found in the Code Enforcement Section’s standard operating procedures reflects a lack of understanding of the actions necessary to resolve certain violations. Certain violations can only be addressed through major renovations, or even demolitions, which can be costly and require more time and resources than addressing minor violations, such as tall grass or having visible junk vehicles. Quickly issuing citations in the situations necessitating

major renovations can place additional financial strain and stress upon property owners who are trying to comply. In these cases, and in cases in which no violations are present, complainants are often assumed to be in the right and are not always provided with the necessary education regarding what constitutes a violation and how the inspection process normally occurs. The Department is not consistently giving Code Enforcement Officers the authority to use discretion in setting an appropriate amount of time to resolve the issue, especially when complainants have escalated the concerns. As such, the Department is working through determining how to ensure consideration of all types of customers and stakeholders, and how to address competing interests and priorities amongst complainants, violators, and other community members.

## Systems and Applications

### Permitting

Accela is the primary business system used by the Division to manage residential/commercial permits, licenses, and complaints/violations and provide development/zoning information to residents and commercial stakeholders.

### Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Division offers services for users to report code violations online or search the status of an existing case through the ZIP Portal (Accela) and provides information to users about common code violations, the complaint, and the inspection process, FAQs, and open records requests. Code violation claims are routed to technicians who inspect the property and reinspect when necessary. Claims are tracked through Accela via the ZIP Portal.

### Licensing and Revenue

The Licensing and Revenue Division issues business/occupation tax certificates (business license) for businesses located in unincorporated Gwinnett County. Online services include new business license applications and instructions, occupation tax certification renewal, and payment of business, alcohol, excise, and establishment fees submittal online.

In order to process Occupational Tax Permits and Alcohol Licenses, the Division is using a CRM designed by IT and iNovah for walk-in cashiering. The Division recently learned that they were not included in the new ERP system procurement and didn't understand why they were excluded.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Permit, Inspection and Enforcement does not have consistent internal performance tracking. The Division is using Accela for select data tracking, but Accela is limited in its ability to maintain service level and workload performance management and tracking. The Department's Process and Technology Manager is aware of some of these challenges, and has identified some potential solutions within the Accela roadmap.

### Permits and Inspections

The Division currently reports in Management Framework on the percentage of building inspections completed on the date scheduled. This metric only considers one piece of the larger permitting and inspections workflow. While this indicator is a helpful assessment of performance, it needs additional information about workload management to be understood in full context. Accela is also able to track several other data points that will provide some context for the percentage completed on the date

scheduled. Additional reports include information on the number of completed inspection activities by month by inspection type. These workload indicators should be leveraged to better understand the number of inspections being completed within an average day or week, and should be used to ensure that staffing allows for adequate time spent on each inspection, rather than just insuring that inspections are completed.

The Division may also wish to consider adding in metrics around average days to issue permit from application, or re-inspections as a percentage of total inspections completed within a timeframe to understand where workflow may be stalled or where additional customer outreach and education may be beneficial. Additional review of this data may provide additional insight about the specific types of permits, such as building or trades, to provide further insight on where additional education may be needed.

The Division should also consider assessing licensing and permit issuance data to ensure there is adequate staffing to support the workload, especially during the annual license renewal period. Reviewing this data in concert with workload data for other sections, such as Customer Service, may provide insight about staff that may be available for cross-training and support, based on availability and workload.

Licensing and Revenue is frequently asked to provide data on the types and counts of businesses issued occupational tax permits and alcohol licenses. Currently, there is no consistent or straight-forward way to access this data. The current CRM tracks fees and business based on the NAICS codes, which group together business types that are frequently requested for more granular reporting or tracking. The Section typically relies on members of the ERP team to run the queries in SAP to prevent time-out issues or system lags while the queries are running. Section staff typically then will manually review and extract relevant data to provide the requested information.

### Code Enforcement

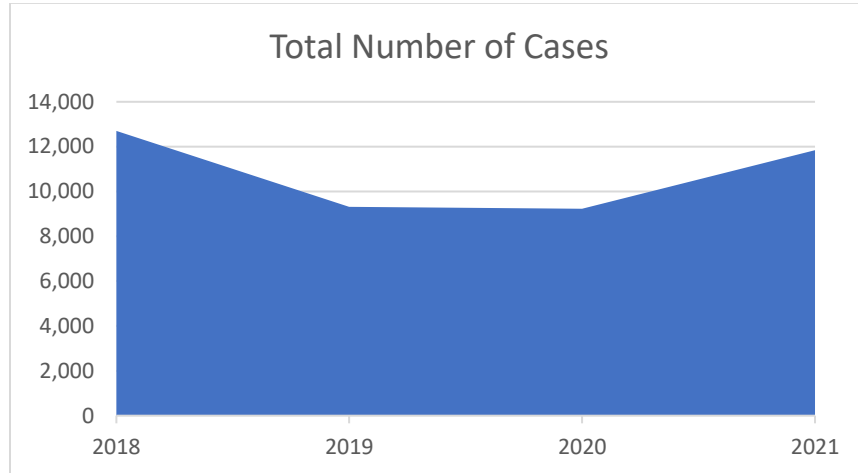
The Code Enforcement Section tracks the status of each case in Accela, with the assigned Officer maintaining notes on the case as well as all performed actions and scheduled actions. A considerable amount of data is available as a result of the required case inputs, however Accela can only export reports with data beginning in 2019, when the Code Enforcement Section rejoined the Planning and Development Department.

The largest concern with the data is inconsistencies in how some data is recorded. For example, there are three different notations for a duplicate case:

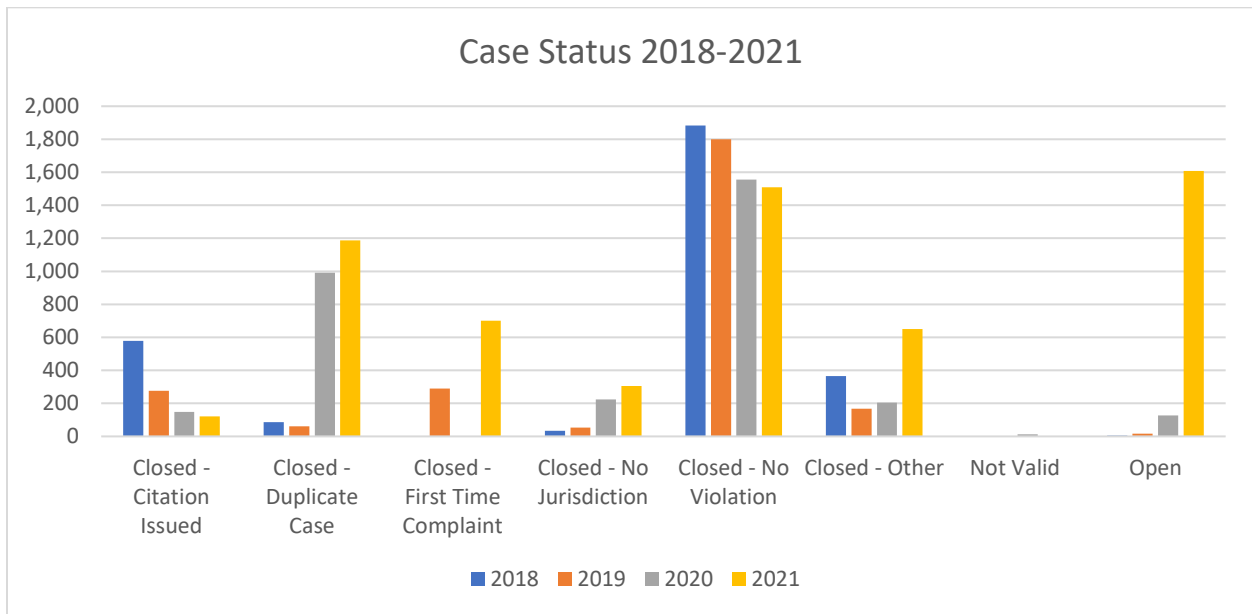
- Case Closed Duplicate
- Case Closed – Duplicate
- Closed – Duplicate Case

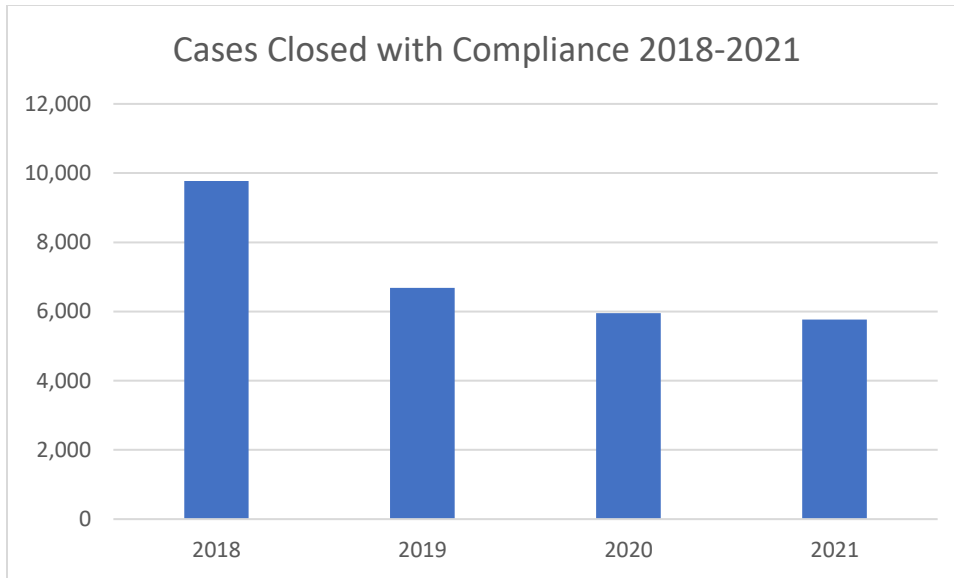
By not utilizing a uniform naming convention for each type of case in the system, the Section risks developing inaccurate reports that don't correctly identify and represent trends. If the Section and the Department intend to make data-driven decisions for staffing levels, zone assignments, or strategic initiatives, the Section should take care to provide more consistencies in how data is recorded.

Additionally, duplicate cases, cases transferred to other agencies, and cases without violations are included in the case data, and will be represented in several of the following graphs alongside those cases with violations within the jurisdiction of the County’s Code Enforcement Section. The first graph shows the total number of cases year over year from January 2018 to December 2021.

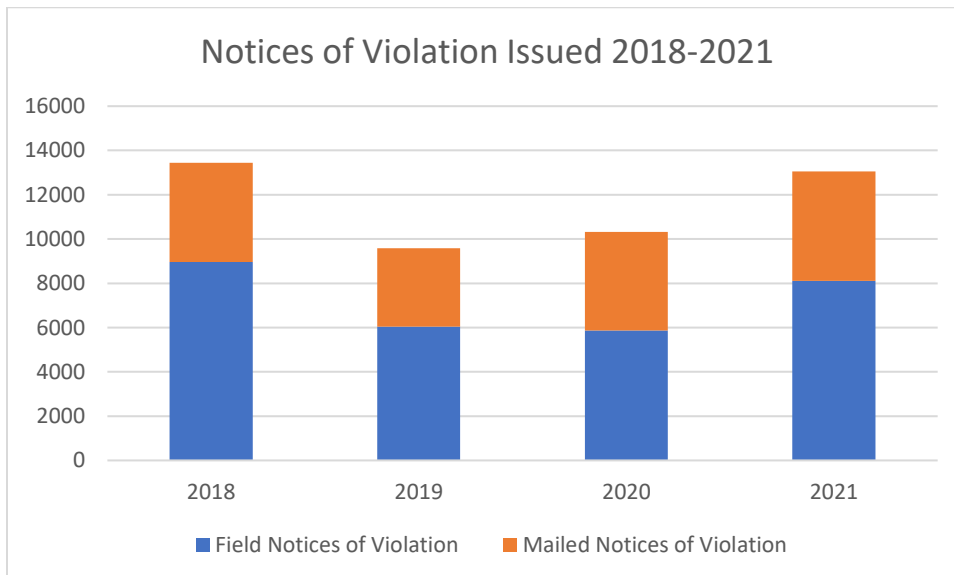


The status of each case can be broken down into a series of categories as shown in the graphs below. The first excludes those cases closed with compliance; those cases are shown in the second graph with a different scale.





After cases closed with compliance, the highest number of cases each year are those initiated by public complaint but with no violation present. Open cases are prevalent in 2021, as a significant number of cases are ongoing or had not yet been assigned to a Code Enforcement Officer as of the data pull. The number of duplicate cases increased significantly between 2019 and 2021, and continued to grow into 2021. The number of cases “closed with compliance” and those “closed with citations issued” have both decreased since 2018. No data was provided on the total number of citations issued each year, so it is unclear whether the number of citations issued decreased year over year as well. The reporting does, however, provide data on “notices of violation.” The following graph shows the number of NOVs issued each year, broken down by those NOVs provided in the field versus those mailed to the violator.



The year over year increase and decrease of NOVs issued directly correlates to the change in number of cases. The majority of NOVs issued were delivered in the field, either in-person or posted on violators’ properties, as preferred.

While all data was provided per Code Enforcement Officers, case data by Officer can be misleading, as a case may be assigned to one Officer, but multiple Officers may work a case. As discussed in the strategic initiatives section, the two Commercial Code Enforcement Team Officers in the field both work most commercial cases, meaning the case data connected to each Officer may be misleading. Furthermore, a significant number of commercial cases are connected to the Commercial Code Enforcement Team Supervisor, rather than one of the Officers, and to an Officer on light duty in the office, further limiting the opportunity to provide analysis by Officer.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Department has not conducted a fee study for building permits and certificates of occupancy in nearly 20 years. While staffing levels have not have significantly changed during this period, the Division’s plans to increase the number of positions, coupled with the increased use of technology in the performance of key Permitting and Inspections Section functions may result in an increased cost of operations in the coming years.

**Recommendation 1:** Once the Permitting and Inspections Section has updated the staffing levels and finalized the technology applications and processes for performance of key processes and functions, the Section should consider conducting a fee study to ensure that fees are commensurate with the new operating costs.

**Observation 2:** Several of the processes associated with occupational tax certificates and alcohol licenses are still manual processes. Coordinating background checks for alcohol licenses, as well as state license confirmation and Board of Health approvals must all be manually researched and confirmed by Licensing and Revenue Associates.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should research process improvements to automate background check request submission to the Police and Fire Departments. These improvements should include a workflow that allows the Licensing and Revenue Associates to see where the background checks are in process, to provide updated information to the customer about timeline for completion. The Division should also consider including automated lookups or site queries for state license confirmation and Board of Health approvals, to improve efficiency and allow Licensing and Revenue Associates to spend more time in value-add tasks.

**Observation 3:** Licensing and Revenue Associates may accept a temporary CO in order to issue a business license, with a deadline set for the location to obtain the permanent CO. There is currently no system tracking the temporary CO expiration in concert with the business license, which may result in businesses failing to obtain the required permanent CO but still operating the business.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should work to ensure that there is communication between Accela and the CRM used by Licensing and Revenue Associates to provide automatic notifications when the temporary CO has expired. It may also be relevant to initiate automated workflow for business follow-up to determine whether the business license should be revoked due to failure to obtain permanent CO.

**Observation 4A:** As of our review period, the Commercial Code Enforcement Team only has two Officers in the field covering the entire County – one is primarily performing the initial inspection, while the second is performing re-inspections. Together, these two Officers are responsible for all 40 code enforcement zones.

**Observation 4B:** The Division has hired multiple trainee Code Enforcement Officers to join the Commercial Code Enforcement Team, as well as stated an intent to create a second Commercial Code Enforcement Team utilizing the 2022 budget.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should ensure all Commercial Code Enforcement Officer positions are filled and the Officers are expeditiously, though thoroughly, trained. Officers in the Commercial Code Enforcement Teams should be assigned specific zones, similar to those in the Residential Code Enforcement Teams, in order to provide the best possible coverage of and service for the entire County.

**Observation 5:** Code Enforcement Officers require access to utility, law enforcement, property, and other records to assist in identifying property ownership and contact information. The Section does not have access to many of the relevant systems that provide this information, resulting in reliance on other County employees with relevant system access or third-party systems with varying degrees of accuracy to access needed information.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should identify the primary types of information needed by Officers and compare this list with County systems or databases that may provide the information. The Division should coordinate with other divisions and departments to determine if access may be made available to Officers. Alternatively, the Division should purchase subscriptions to resources.

**Observation 6:** As public officials, Code Enforcement Officers occasionally encounter citizens who are resistant or even aggressive to government employees. In the transition back to the Planning and Development Department, Officers lost access to certain authority and specialized equipment that was available to them as public safety employees. Officers must coordinate regularly with the Police Department to obtain the support and resources necessary to complete their core job functions, which may delay timely performance of job functions.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should discuss with the Gwinnett County Police Department the assignment of specific police officers to support the Code Enforcement Section when needed. This assignment could be full-time or part-time, depending on the needs and availability identified by the two departments.

**Observation 7:** Code Enforcement Officers are losing time due to current court scheduling issues. Officers may have a single address/case assigned to multiple courtrooms, as each violation within that case is separately assigned. These hearings may be scheduled concurrently, leaving the Officer unable to attend all the hearings due to scheduling conflicts. This may result in the failure to properly address all violations within a single case, as the Officer is unable to provide testimony.

**Recommendation 7:** Department and County leadership should coordinate with the Gwinnett County Magistrate Court to ensure case assignments allow for Code Enforcement Officers to appear for testimony in regards to the entirety of each case, as well as in a timely manner.

**Observation 8:** Code Enforcement complaints that are made through or escalated to Division, Department, or County leadership may be handled differently than complaints submitted through other methods. Leadership may intervene and request specific or expedited actions that are not the normal or standard operating practices of the Division, creating inconsistent treatment of similar complaints or violation types, and the perception of preference provided to complainant-customers over property owner-customers. This individual involvement in cases also creates a perception that staff are not given the authority to perform their jobs without specific approval from leadership.

**Recommendation 8:** Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of Code Enforcement Officers and better respect Officers' discretion in setting timelines for violation remediation and citation issuance. Leadership should balance the needs of both customers – the complainant and the property owner – and should recognize that the needs of one or both might best be addressed through education. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants, especially in cases where Officers determine no violation is present. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with the Code Enforcement Section, so that the Officers who are best equipped to address the specific case can do so.

**Observation 9:** The Division has not introduced the code enforcement-specific module of Accela. As a result, the system is not well adapted for the needs of the Code Enforcement Section. The current system setup requires excessive manual steps to record case information. Additionally, the Division has not created standardization of case entry, case notes, or case closure. This leads to the inability to accurately analyze or review Accela data without manual collation.

**Recommendation 9:** The Division should introduce and enforce standards for Accela entry. The Division should also review the specific needs of the Code Enforcement Section and determine if the current setup of Accela can meet those needs. The Division may need to consider additional workflow modification or process modification, as well as conduct cost-benefit analysis for purchasing the code enforcement module.

**Observation 10:** The Commercial Code Enforcement Team has no ability to hold non-compliant businesses accountable for their code violations, as non-human entities (such as businesses) cannot be compelled to appear in court.

**Recommendation 10:** The Commercial Code Enforcement Team should continue reviewing and begin implementing means to encourage businesses to appear in court for code violations. For example, Code Enforcement Officers could issue citations to individual parties with responsibility over the business, such as an owner or manager, after continued non-compliance by the business entity.



## 3.B.3 Planning and Development Department– Planning Division

The Planning Division provides technical assistance to customers seeking technical assistance with zoning and land-use questions, technical and analytical support for the County Geographic Information System (“GIS”) as it relates to land specifications and land use, and the research and collaboration to synthesize long-range growth and development activities.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Long-Range Planning
- GIS Section
- Current Planning and Zoning Administration

### Long-Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Section is responsible for formulating policy recommendations and programs to guide future growth and development in the County. While most of the technical work needed for long-range planning is contracted to vendors who specialize in community planning development activities, the Long-Range Planning Section assists in the coordination of those activities on behalf of the Department.

On February 19, 2019, the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners approved the final draft of the “2040 Unified Plan” (“Unified Plan”), after a favorable review by the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Atlanta Regional Commission. This comprehensive plan contains analysis, maps, and policies to help guide Countywide development in multiple ways. The Unified Plan, also known as a “blueprint”, will provide direction on growth and development throughout the County over the next two decades.

The “2040 Unified Plan” addresses the five required components of local comprehensive planning documents:

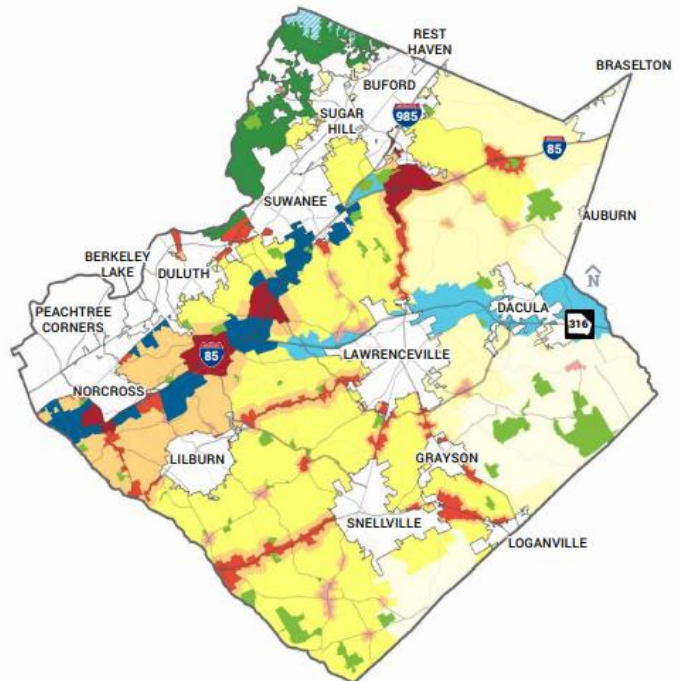
- Economic Development
- Natural and Historic Resources
- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Land Use



The Unified Plan is a single, coordinated vision, that included the County’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan, Countywide Trails Master Plan, and water and sewer infrastructure plans. Development of the County’s “2040 Unified Plan” was a collaboration of public and private partnerships, including:

- Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners
- Gwinnett County Planning Commission
- Gwinnett County Departments: Planning & Development, Transportation, Housing, Community Services, Water Resources, and Communications
- Gwinnett Planning Advisory Committee
- Pond & Company
- Kinley-Horn and Associates
- TSW
- Bleakley Advisory Group
- Vargas and Amigos
- Georgia Institute of Technology

Together with input from numerous stakeholders and the public by way of public input sessions, town hall meetings, demographic trends, inventories of County infrastructure, customer surveys, and other considerations; the workgroup created a document outlining the future of development in the County. They ensured that the Plan established a vision that included the following five themes:



1. Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health
2. Foster Redevelopment
3. Maintain Mobility and Accessibility
4. Provide More Housing Choices
5. Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place

In addition to the County’s “2040 Unified Plan”, the Division’s Long-Range Planning Section is responsible for Master Planning, which includes acting on the spirit of the Unified Plan as it considers housing studies, residential zoning district studies, and partnerships with the Atlanta Regional Commission and local community improvement districts (“CIDs”). By its definition, a CID is an economic development tool which typically includes a group of property and/or business owners within a defined geographic area where a majority of the owners agree to impose additional fees or taxes on themselves to fund public services.

Community Improvement Districts in Georgia may provide the following types of services within their designated geographic areas:

- Street and road construction and maintenance

- Parks and recreational areas and facilities
- Storm water and sewage collection and disposal systems
- Development, storage, treatment, purification, and distribution of water
- Public transportation
- Terminal and dock facilities and parking facilities
- And other services and facilities as may be provided for by general law.

Gwinnett County has five Community Improvement Districts:

1. Evermore Community Improvement District
2. Gateway 85 Community Improvement District
3. Gwinnett Place Mall Community Improvement District
4. Lilburn Community Improvement District
5. Sugarloaf Community Improvement District

Once CIDs are approved, they remain in place for a period not to exceed six years, at which time they must agree to renew or dissolve. Funds collected for the CIDs may be used for any of the activities above, so long as they coordinate with local municipalities for public domain activities including roads, public works infrastructure, sidewalks, transportation, etc.

In addition to the development of the Unified Plan, typical Long-Range Planning activities are coordinated by Division staff, while the technical responsibilities are typically contracted to experienced vendors who specialize in Long-Range Planning activities. These Long-Range Planning projects are typically awarded through a competitive procurement and bid process by County Procurement. Planning staff typically serve as project managers for development projects and support the selected vendor on behalf of the County. Requests for Long-Range Planning activities that are determined to have regional impact must be submitted, reviewed, and approved by the Atlanta Regional Commission Board of Review.

The Long-Range Planning section is also responsible for all annexation activities related to County land. Annexation is a request to transfer land/property to the County from a local municipality, or from the County to a local municipality. Long-Range Planning staff review all proposals for annexation and provide recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for its disposition. The Board of Commissioners approves all requests for annexation.

The Long-Range Planning Section also provides technical and administrative support to the Gwinnett Development Advisory Committee and the Gwinnett Planning Committee. The Gwinnett Development Advisory Committee's goal is to increase community engagement and to foster innovative ideas for revitalization, redevelopment, and sustainable growth. The Gwinnett Planning Committee is comprised of County staff, municipal planners, and other parties interested in promoting open discussion of planning trends, issues, and opportunities.

## GIS

The County's Information Technology Services Department is responsible for operating and maintaining the official Geographic Information Systems ("GIS") for Gwinnett County. The Department uses ArcGIS, a full suite by Esri software, to provide useful maps and information based on aerial photography and other sources for use by County Departments and the general public. The Planning and Development Department is a super-user of GIS data in the County, as it includes over 245,000 tax parcels of land located along 2,300 miles of roads throughout the County.

GIS Section staff review requests for zoning modifications to ensure accurate land designation using official GIS database records. As requests for zoning or permitting modifications are approved by the Board of Commissioners, GIS staff must update their GIS records with the most current, approved zoning information. GIS staff have observed discrepancies when comparing their GIS data to the Tax Assessor's GIS information. The GIS staff developed an inter-departmental notification process to notify the Tax Assessor's Office of the discrepancy. They determined that in most cases, the discrepancy is a result of the Tax Assessor's Office being slower to update their GIS records with approved modifications.

Staffing of the GIS Section is at a critically low level. Recruitment for vacant positions has proven difficult – as there are not many workers with the required technological skills to perform GIS analytics. The starting pay offered by the County for GIS analytic positions have not attracted enough skilled applicants to consider. At a point in the future when the Section is fully staffed, they will be better prepared to catch up with current workload requirements, reporting, and annual tasks, but also expand offerings to include special studies using GIS analytics, e.g., providing data for an affordable housing study.

## Current Planning and Zoning Administration

The bulk of the Section's workload typically relates to current planning and zoning administration activities. A significant amount of staff time is focused on providing customer service by answering questions related to land use and zoning requirements, typically in the form of telephone calls, emails to other internal divisions, or in-person customer assistance at the front counter.

Land Use and zoning applications are typically the beginning of the Development process within the Current Planning Section. All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted electronically through the Department's website. Current Planning staff review applications to determine next steps for consideration and review of the applications.

The Planning Department issued a mandate within the last two years that all applications for land-use and zoning modifications require a "Pre-Application Meeting" with Planning staff before the application can be considered. Even though the Pre-Application Meetings are a required part of the process and not typically considered favorably by customers at the onset of the process, the customers often change their opinion to a more positive position by the end of the process.

Pre-Application Meetings are typically virtual meetings (via Teams) with customers/applicants, their representatives, and at least two Current Planning staff. The applicant's representatives include the applicant's subject matter experts for their project, including designers, contractors, or whoever they want present. At least two Current Planning staff attend these meetings: one to facilitate the meeting,

and the second (typically a newer Planning staff person) takes notes and learns how to conduct the meetings.

There are many proven benefits to having Pre-Application Meetings:

- It allows the customer and their representatives to explain the customer's project to the actual Planners that will be reviewing the application
- It allows Planners to review the customer's plans and give indication if the Department could recommend support based on the current state of the application and plans
- It allows the Planners to make the customer aware of what comprises a complete application that is required to be submitted electronically at one time.

After the conclusion of the Pre-Application Meeting, the current Planning staff share the minutes of the meeting and provide a detailed plan that the customer must follow when submitting the complete application, including all electronic documents and plans.

Applications for zoning modifications must be reviewed by current Planning staff. The Planner creates the advertisement which must be placed in the County's Legal Organ for all proposed zoning modifications and amendments based on details in the application. The Planner also creates a list of all property owners within 1,000 feet of the applicant's property, as it is the applicant's responsibility to notify the neighbors of the proposed zoning changes. Staff may also manually look up the property in Accela to determine if the zoning variance request is the result of a notice of violation issued by the Code Enforcement Section. Staff will try to match the two, so that Code Enforcement is aware of the timeline for review and consideration of the rezoning request, but inconsistent training and capabilities mean that this occurs haphazardly, at best. Planners from the Section create what are termed "staff reports" that accompany zoning applications when submitting to the Gwinnett County Planning Commission for consideration and approval.

Division staff are responsible for tracking all items that should be submitted to the Planning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals. This responsibility includes creation of the agenda and managing the application, supporting documents, and the staff reports for each agenda item. There are no automated tracking processes, so all documentation is managed on a shared network drive, with the Planners leveraging informal templates or previously submitted documents for agendas, cover pages, and staff reports.

The Gwinnett County Planning Commission is a committee of nine residents appointed by the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to review and recommend on zoning matters including, Special Use Permits, buffer reduction requests, site plans, ordinance amendments, and similar projects. The Commission typically hosts public hearings on all proposed zoning changes. If the Gwinnett County Planning Commission approves an application, it is then referred to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners for review and approval.

In addition to zoning modifications, which are considered long-term or permanent modifications of a property zoning, the Current Planning section also reviews Temporary Use Permits. These types of permits are typically short-term, retail utilization for a finite period of time or related to a special event. An example of Temporary Use Permits typically reviewed by the Current Planning Team are for permits for Christmas tree lots, short-term carnivals at a mall or similar location, and fresh markets.

When creating the staff reports, staff follow the Department's Standard Operating Procedures to reference standard policy and County ordinances as justification for the Division's recommendation. Managerial review of the staff reports are typically a manual process, often using pen-and-ink modifications to the draft reports. Staff reported that on occasion, managerial reviews are often in conflict with each layer of managerial review, as well as with the managerial review of prior similar staff reports. Staff expressed a desire for a consistent, standardized structure for review, acknowledging that each report is situation-specific and requires customization based on the details of the application and current land requirements.

## Communications

Managerial review of staff reports causes frustration and confusion when managerial comments on reports often conflict with previous comments and direction. While every application/case is situation specific, Planners rely on managerial comments to change/modify future reports. Inconsistent comments by managers on the staff reports create frustration and inefficiencies for staff. Communication of changes to SOP's is somewhat inconsistent (e.g., may be shared via email, discussion in staff meeting, word of mouth, happenstance, etc.) requiring staff to rely on being present and frequent team/staff conversations to know how to treat individual circumstances.

## Strategic Initiatives

The "2040 Unified Plan" required approval by Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Atlanta Regional Commission. The goal of the Unified Plan is to anticipate future development needs and established short-term and long-term development goals. Unified Plans consolidate other plans into a single, coordinated vision, including Unified Plan, Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan, Countywide Trails Master Plan, and water and sewer infrastructure plans. The 5-Year Update to 2040 Unified Plan is due in 2022.

Staff expressed a desire to create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource for customers to place on the Department website. Staff acknowledge that this effort would require a significant amount of time, which would redeploy staff resources away from current workload production. However, staff contend the effort to create a FAQ for customers would benefit staff longer term in the time saved by customers having their questions answered without having to personally speak with individual staff members.

The individual Pre-Application Meetings with customers basically are held in place of providing similar information online. Staff contend that the meeting increases the overall customer experience and provides a precursor to Planners who will be reviewing applications soon to be submitted. The Pre-Application Meeting allows customers (and their representatives) to ask specific questions related to their project, which will yield to a more complete and accurate application submittal – which usually requires less time for staff to review and approve.

## Systems and Applications

The Planning Division is responsible for long-range planning, data analysis, and zoning administration activities in Gwinnett County and uses Accela, ePermitHub, GIS, and web services. The Division provides citizens with online services through Gwinnett County's website to search for and renew permits, request inspections, register licensed professionals, and report any code violations.

## Manual Processes

While the work of the Division is supported by Accela, many of the Division's processes are manual and not integrated into Accela for workflow or document management. Management has expressed interest in having templates for standard documents, such as cover pages, agendas, and staff reports, and leveraging Accela to "auto-populate" certain data fields, with changes in Accela automatically updating relevant documents.

Additionally, Accela cannot generate data that is frequently requested, such as the number of pools, or commercial buildings in a specified area.

Staff express uncertainty about the full functionality of Accela, noting that some of the desired automations or processes may be available, but that training has been limited to focus on current processes and developed workflows.

Most of the Division's work product is stored on the GDrive, a shared network drive. Staff noted that there isn't a consistent filing convention or system for how or where within the drive documents are maintained, and that there are concerns with the available space being nearly fully utilized.

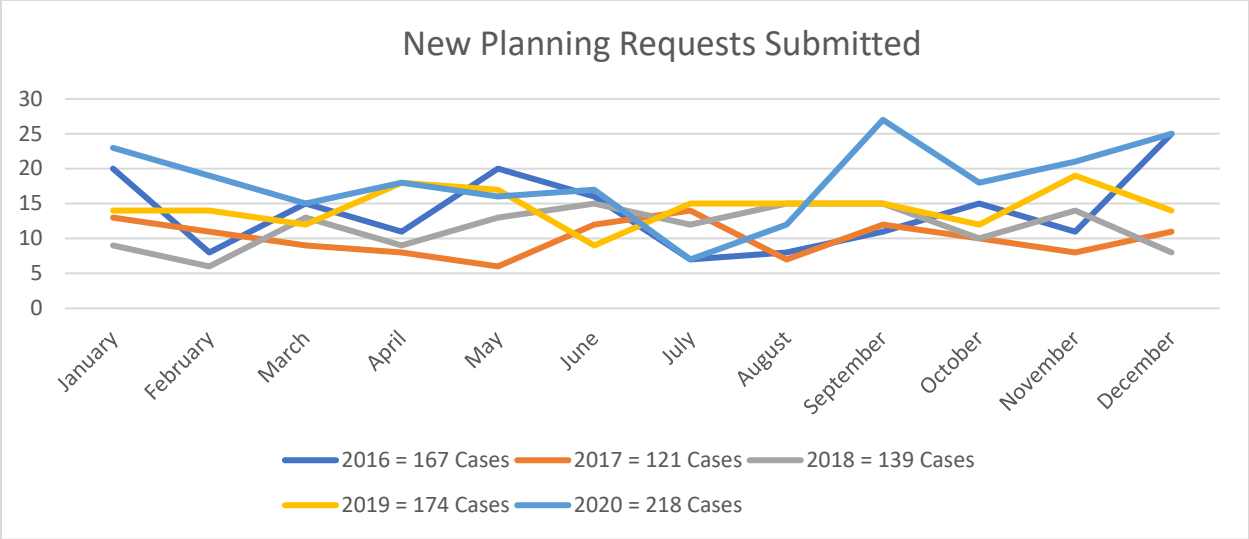
## Lack of Data Integration

There are currently limitations between the Division's GIS application and other County systems or databases. There are delays in information updates from the Tax Assessor's office. Additionally, certain permit data that must be shared between systems isn't automatically updated. Planners currently must export certain data from Accela as a pdf, which must be manually cleaned up and prepared for import into GIS.

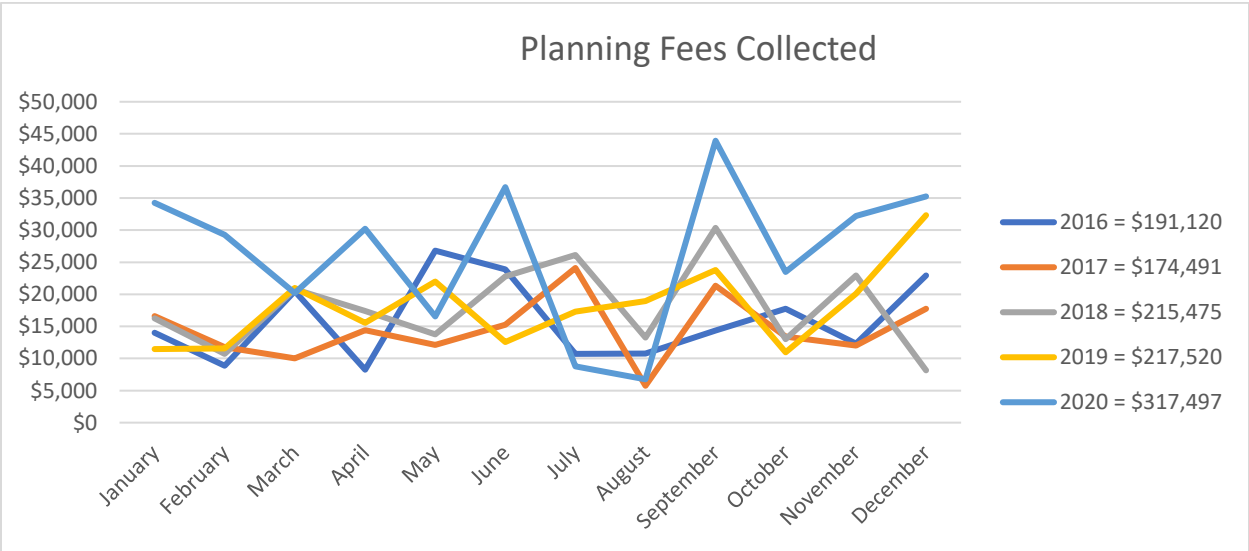
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division should evaluate opportunities to capture the time spent in consultation with customers seeking technical advice in advance of submitting applications for actions, during the application review process, and when assigned to cover answering the phones and assisting walk-in customers, it is difficult to capture productivity. (For example, one interaction may take 60 seconds, others may take 40 minutes.

The following graph represents the number of new Planning requests submitted to the Planning Division. The legend on the graph indicates the total number of requests submitted each calendar year.



Along with each request for Planning services, customers/citizens must submit requisite fees attached to the type of plan submitted. The following graph represents the total amount of fees collected each month from 2016 to 2021. The legend indicates the total amount of fees collected each year. In the years 2016 to 2019, the Planning Fees collected, which directly relates to the number and complexity of the Planning requests submitted, typically start each year rather low, then a slight increase each Spring, slight decrease during the summer months, then sharp increases each September, and remain steady the remainder of each year. The year 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a sharp decline during the early months of the pandemic, the summer of 2020 was when most state and local municipalities were in lockdown periods, with government offices often only working virtually, then Planning fees had a sharp incline throughout the remainder of 2020.





## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The “2040 Unified Plan” is comprehensive plan and “blueprint” that provides direction on growth and development throughout the County over the next two decades. However, staff from other areas of the Department expressed they do not have a complete understanding of how their tasks, responsibilities, and efforts impact and relate to the Unified Plan.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should provide training and discussions with staff from all divisions and sections to openly discuss how their work is aligned to the Department’s mission and the “2040 Unified Plan”. Further discussions can provide how the Division is aligned with the Department, how the Department is aligned with County Administration, and how the County is aligned with the vision of the Commissioners.

**Observation 2:** The Division requires “Pre-Application Meetings” for customers prior to the submission of Planning applications and requests. There are many benefits to both the customer and the Division for requiring the meetings to discuss the planned activities.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider expanding the concept of the “Pre-Application Meeting” to additional Divisions for expanded support to the customer, with the addition benefit of information for the Department.

**Observation 3:** Staff reported that during managerial reviews of staff reports and analysis of customer Planning request, managerial comments are often in conflict with one another, and possibly with policy or emailed directives. In addition, staff expressed positive results from a training provided by the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government that focused on report writing and grammar.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should consider offering similar training opportunities for staff on a periodic and regular basis to increase their skills in report writing and compliance with Division standards.

## 3.B.4 Planning and Development Department– Plan Review Division

State and local laws and ordinances requires the Department’s Plan Review Division to review applications and plans for building, modifications, and/or renovations of new or existing buildings and sties (land development) in incorporated and unincorporated parts of the County.

Management considers the Plan Review Division to be a “One-Stop Shop”, conveying a commitment to customer service throughout the review process, regardless of the type of requested Plan Review. Plan Review Division management imposed a two-week turnaround for the research, review, and final determination of all Plan Review applications. This two-week mandate requires that simultaneous reviews take place in cases where the plan must be reviewed by more than one Plan Review Section, ensuring careful and coordinated efforts by staff to ensure the deadline is met. Since the workloads are at peak levels and the Division has had difficulties filling vacant positions, the Division uses contracted professional services to complete some of the Plan Review research and recommendations in order to expedite the approval process by Division staff.

Customers submit applications for Plan Reviews by completing the Department’s “Modification Application” (May 2018) form. The Plan is assigned to the appropriate sections of the Division based on the type of reviews required. Staff review the Plans based on the appropriate state and local ordinances applicable to the type of review being performed.

After the Plan Review is complete and the project is approved, the project is shifted to the Department’s Permitting and Inspections Section within the Department’s Permit, Inspections, and Enforcement Division. The Permitting and Inspections Section reviews the construction and modification efforts according to the plans that were approved. The Plan Review Division may be requested to review modifications to the plan as the construction project progresses (*i.e.*, during construction) if modifications to plans are necessary due to changes caused by inability to locate specific construction materials or delivery delays. Once revisions are reviewed and approved, the project shifts back to the Inspections Section until construction is complete.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Development Plan Review
- Water Resources Plan Review (Storm Water / Water & Sewer)
- Building Plan Review
- Fire Plan Review

### Development Plan Review

The Development Plan Review Section is responsible for the review, permitting, and approval of all civil site plans, final plats, sign permits, and other land development activities. This Section is responsible for the assignment of or modifications to street names and subdivision development names, issuance or modifications of street addresses, approval of location plans for new houses and additions to existing

houses – which may include plan review and/or permitting of accessory building, deck additions, home additions, finished basements, and swimming pools. The Development Plan Review Section is also responsible for Chattahoochee River Corridor reviews.

The Chattahoochee River Corridor Reviews are required by a 1973 state law originally enacted to protect a 2,000-foot corridor along both banks of the Chattahoochee River and its impoundments for 48 miles between Buford Dam and Peachtree Creek. The law was updated in 1998 to extend the corridor an additional 36 miles to the downstream limits of Fulton and Douglas Counties. The update also requires the Atlanta Regional Commission to adopt a plan to protect the corridor and to review development proposals for consistency with the plan, adding another layer of review and accountability to the Planning Review process.

The Department publishes a schedule of fees associated with the Development Plan Reviews, titled “Land Development Fees”. Customers submit payment for fees associated with the plan review and requested permitting at the time the application is submitted to the Division.

Customers submit requests for reviews of site-type projects using the “Director Review Application\_101217” form for projects which require review of the following:

- Zoning condition requirements
- Landscaping
- Setback conditions
- Signage design
- Variances/modifications to the GC Unified Development Ordinance

Another component of the Development Plan Review is to ensure compliance with the County’s Unified Development Ordinance related to specimen tree identification. Section staff meet with the developer’s professionals (certified arborist, landscape architect, or urban forester) at the proposed site to assess if trees meet the specimen tree identification criteria. If trees on the site meet the identification criteria, a Specimen Tree Concept Plan is required for the project to be approved.

#### [Water Resources \(Stormwater/Water & Sewer\) Plan Review](#)

The Water Resources Plan Review Section reviews site and building projects for state and national life safety codes. The section is responsible for the review, permitting, and approval of all stormwater facilities for developer-installed projects, as well as the review, permitting, and approval of all water and sewer mains and facilities for developer-installed projects throughout incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County. In researching Water Resources applications, Section staff review Hydrology Reports, Stream Buffer variances, residential drainage plans, flood plain management, development permits, subdivision plats, wetland areas, and utility permits in order to recommend approval of the plan as submitted, or if modifications will be required.

The Division is leveraging technology software to increase efficiencies. The Division has the fee schedule for fees associated with the reviews and permitting, titled “Stormwater Management Fees” and “Sewer and Water System Development Fees” posted on its website. It has been two- to three-years since Water Resources last updated its fee schedules. The Division plans to seek approval for new Water

Resources fee structures during this fiscal year. Payment of fees associated with the review and permitting are submitted at the time of application.

### Building Plan Review

The Building Plan Review Section reviews applications for plan review, authorization, and permitting construction of commercial buildings, commercial structures, and commercial interior projects for compliance with state and County construction and fire codes. Commercial structures includes the following:

- Site retaining walls
- Cell tower installations
- Racking systems
- Signage foundation

In the course of the Building Plan Review process, staff review building projects which require reviews for architecture, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (individual trades areas) specifications and structural evaluation to ensure compliance with state and local construction ordinances.

The Department publishes a fee schedule associated with the Building Plan Reviews, titled “Building Permit Fees – Commercial and Multifamily”. Customers submit payment for fees associated with the plan review and requested permitting at the time the application is submitted to the Division.

### Fire Plan Review

The Fire Plan Review Section reviews plans for new building and site plans as well as modifications to existing buildings or sites, with a focus on fire prevention and state and national life safety codes. The Fire Plan Review Section reviews commercial project plans and plans for larger, multi-family residential buildings, e.g., apartment buildings. The Fire Plan Review Section does not review plans related to single-family dwellings. The Section is mandated to review plans for fire prevention and state/national life safety codes for to the following:

- Fire alarms, sprinkler and suppression systems
- Grease hoods
- Rack storage systems
- Hazardous Materials
- Tents
- Motion picture and television production sites
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code compliance

In addition to the above mandated reviews, the Fire Plan Review Section also reviews the following specific types of plans:

- Commercial building plans prior to construction to determine appropriate access to the structure by firefighters

- Subdivision development plans prior to construction of the streets in the development to ensure adequate turning radius for fire trucks

A majority of staff in this Section are trained, certified firefighters, as that expertise provides the necessary training and experience for a straightforward transition to Plan Reviews. However, some staff are hired with experience working in the fire inspections industry.

### Staffing

Numerous managers across the Division expressed concerns about staffing within the Division. They indicated the only reason they are able to meet workload demands is because of the strong technical skills of current staff. However, staff are already experiencing burnout, and turnover is increasing.

Managers also expressed frustration with the HR processes used to support a technical workforce, and the need to create a better career path to attract and retain talented employees with exemplary technical skills. They indicated the labor market is so tight in this highly specialized, technical field that recruitment efforts often do not produce an acceptable pool of applicants to consider. They expressed a need to expand standard recruiting efforts to include other parts of the country, and targeted recruiting efforts to technical and trade organizations. Managers indicated that they are having to fill in the gaps of staff vacancies just to get the work done. Managers do not have the time for supervisory and administrative tasks because they are completing Plan Reviews.

### Communications

In an effort to improve customer services, staff suggested a need to better utilize staff to respond to customer inquiries, e.g., calls, emails, in-person/front desk customer visits. The majority of Plan Review customers are typically one-time users and often do not review the process, requirements, and standards that are posted on the Department's website. Staff suggested providing more direction to customers in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQ") resource. Staff indicated the demands for increased customer service should be balanced with providing simple, complete resources available for customers.

Staff noted there is often confusion internally within the Department as to which section is responsible for parts of processes. Customers often get directed to wrong divisions or sections. Multiple staff suggested that if the Customer Service Team were provided more technical training for each type of Plan Review, they could field more calls about FAQs and process questions, rather than technical staff having to stop working on a project to take those calls. Staff suggested that the investment of time to train Customer Service Team would pay off exponentially by relieving pressure on the technical staff.

### Strategic Initiatives

The Division began offering Pre-Application meetings two years ago as a customer service initiative to create an opportunity for the developer/customer to meet one-on-one with Plan Review staff to discuss details of the project plans, allow staff to review initial plans, and allow the developer's representatives to ask specific questions about applicable County ordinances. The meetings became very popular with developers and other customers during the COVID-19 pandemic due to restricted access to County buildings. The Division had such positive feedback from customers and staff that they now require these meetings for all projects.

Technical Planning staff host meetings with customers (including their design team, contractors, anyone from out of state, etc.) via virtual Teams meetings to explain the application requirements, data needed when submitting requests, timeframes, etc. The meetings may include customers, designers, engineers, banks (anyone the customer would like to attend). The virtual meetings have proven to be an excellent way for staff to better understand the goal of each project before documents are submitted. Staff outline for customers the requirements for a complete application, and the timeline for review. Customers ask any questions they have about the review process and requirements.

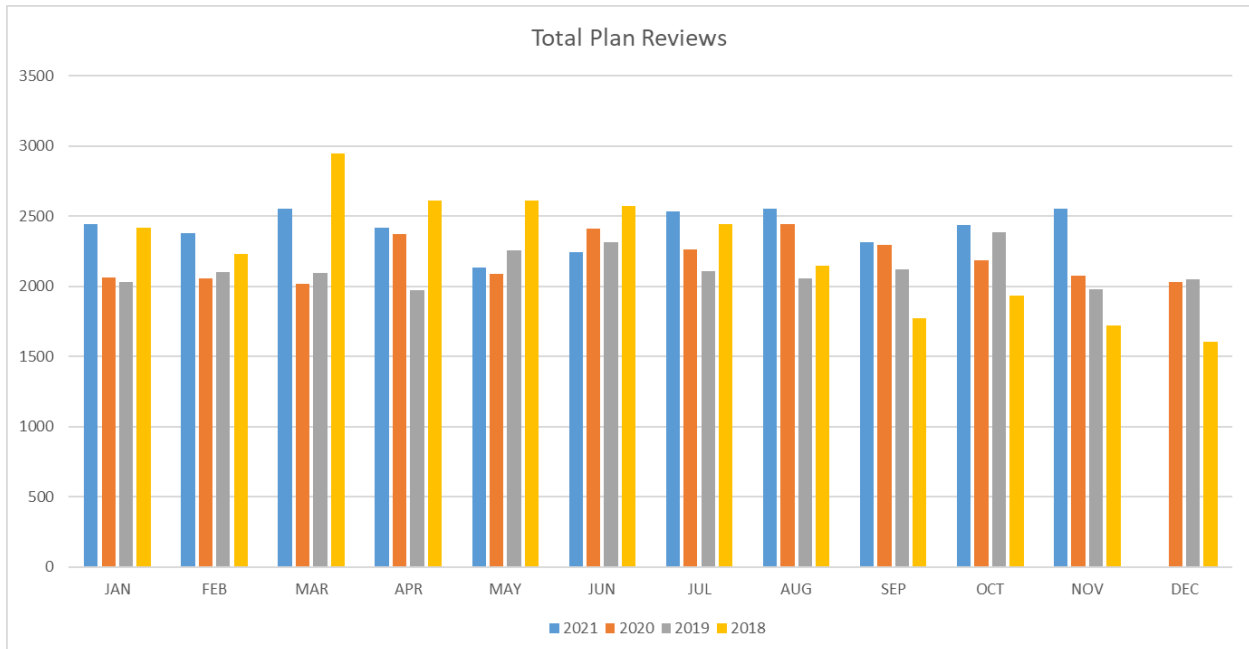
As a follow-up to Pre-Application Meeting, staff send minutes of the meeting, requirements for submission based on the discussion, and timeline for review and approval by the County. The customer is also given a list of staff/units that will be reviewing the project plans, with contact information should they have any questions. These meetings are considered an investment of time up front in order to save the customer time/frustration in the future.

Economic Development and Partnership Gwinnett promote the efficiencies of the Plan Review Division to developers looking for projects in the County. One example staff provided was a project where the Pre-Application Meeting reviewed three different property plans to help the customer determine which property to purchase.

A new initiative started by the Division is to assign Case Managers to high-profile development projects. The new initiative helps to keep the projects moving internally to ensure efficient process for customers. The Case Manager is assigned based on type and scope of the project, staff's desire for technical challenge, and experience of staff. Case Managers don't have to be in a Manager in job title, as they can be a technical expert that wants to expand their skillsets. Management will determine who can help the customer best by serving as a liaison and technical point of contact for all Plan Reviews.

### **Data and Performance Analysis**

A review of the number of Plan Reviews submitted each month for the last four years indicates a fairly consistent and steady submission of applications, and consistent cyclical nature of when applications are submitted to the Division. Staff estimated that the number of applications did not slow down during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the following graph supporting the estimate.



The following table includes the Total Number of Plan Reviews completed for the years 2018 to 2021. The Division may provide additional data analytics to determine the number of Plan Reviews completed by Section, the number completed within the Division-mandated two-week turnaround period, the number completed within the State-mandated 30-day turnaround period, and other considerations which may highlight areas of concern or areas to promote or encourage.

Total Plan Reviews Completed	
2021	26,567
2020	26,306
2019	25,483
2018	27,021

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division website contains an enormous amount of information regarding Plan Review requirements, processes, and statuses. However, there is no concise document available which provides simple, step-by-step direction for requesting a Plan review, and the components which must be submitted with the request, in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions guide for customers.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should collaborate with the Department’s Administration Division to create a Frequently Asked Questions resource that could be posted on the Department’s website or have hard copies available for in-person customers.

**Observation 2:** Plan Review leadership imposed a two-week turnaround for all applications/requests for Plan Reviews. However, staff expressed frustration that even considering the Department's directives to provide exemplary and efficient customer service, current workload, the number of staff vacancies, and the complexity of some of the applications submitted for review impact the ability to meet the two-week standard to complete the research and review, documentation and analytical reporting, and the approval processes.

**Recommendation 2:** Division and Departmental leadership should collaborate with staff to determine additional support needed to meet the two-week mandate for completion of all Plan Review applications or evaluate opportunities to provide expanded time to complete the evaluation and approval processes for the most complex applications and cases.

**Observation 3:** Water Resources (Stormwater/Water & Sewer) Plan Review Section plans to submit new fee structures for consideration and approval this fiscal year through management to the Board of Commissioners. It has been several years since the last modification to the Section's fee structure.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should evaluate the fee structures for each Section at a minimum of every two to three years to ensure fees include updates to staffing, technology, and other considerations.

**Observation 4:** Several staff from the Division provided insight that providing additional technical training to the Customer Service Unit would benefit the Division with increased efficiencies and less interruptions by customers to ask simple or procedural questions.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should collaborate with the Administration Division to create technical training opportunities for the Customer Service staff related to all areas of Plan Review.



## 3.B.5 Planning and Development Department – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division within Support Services to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and additional relevant information, to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Observations

#### Manual Processes

- The absence of a dedicated CRM creates manual processes which increases the risk for human error, and limits the ability to consistently capture and analyze data within and across divisions.
- Many of the divisions manually track workload and performance management data, so management does not have consistent or complete visibility over the current processes, or insight into current live workload or performance. Visibility could be aided by improved automation and workflow management, as well as access to business intelligence tools that would allow for better identification, tracking, and assessment of workload and performance data.
- The CRM currently utilized by the Licensing and Revenue Unit within the Permit and Inspections Section requires staff to manually conduct several steps of the current workflow, including submitting requests for background checks associated with alcohol license applications, looking up current business registration status with the Secretary of State, and other verification steps. Management expressed an interest in determining how more of these steps can be automated.

#### Process and Technology Improvement

- The Planning and Development Department has two dedicated staff for process and technology improvement. Since the Planning and Development Department is one of the first departments to participate in the operations assessment, we are unsure if other departments have dedicated process and technology staff. However, we would like to identify this as a best practice. Having process and technology staff embedded in the Department provides a greater understanding of business requirements and opportunities for improvement.
- Although several technology issues were identified with both systems during the assessment, the process and technology staff within the Department seemed aware of the problems. To address the Accela issues, the Process and Technology Manager in the Planning and Development Division has developed a multi-year Accela Roadmap that identifies 35 projects that, upon implementation, addresses many of the Accela functionality gaps identified in the

interviews. Several of the projects on the roadmap are complete (such as ePermitHub) while IT is reviewing the business cases for the next set of projects.

We recognize the development and value of the Accela Roadmap – the Roadmap provides a valuable guide and planning tool for managing process and system improvement over time. However, it was not clear from other Department staff that they were aware of the full extent of the Roadmap and the priority of the projects on the roadmap.

### Isolated Systems

- There were several opportunities related to the Permits, Inspection, and Enforcement Division uses of a custom CRM system developed by Gwinnett County's IT Department for Occupational Tax Permits and Alcohol Licenses. It was not apparent that the Roadmap addresses the needs of the Permits, Inspection, and Enforcement division or if Accela will meet their business requirements. It is the Division's understanding that they will not be part of the new ERP's CRM structure, so staff aren't sure what applications will be leveraged moving forward and are concerned they won't be consulted as part of the needs assessment and development process.

### Summary Recommendations

Given the foundation provided by the Roadmap, we recommend the Department expand the Accela roadmap to become the Department technology roadmap as follows:

1. Communicate the Accela current Roadmap to the Department Leadership Team to review and prioritize the roadmap to determine if the project priorities are accurate.
2. Conduct fit-gap sessions, or a needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in the Permits, Inspection, and Enforcement Division CRM system and develop the associated projects and business cases.
3. Conduct fit-gap sessions or a needs assessment to define the Department's business intelligence requirements and develop the associated projects and business cases.
4. Conduct fit-gap sessions, or a needs assessment to define the Queue Management system requirements and develop the associated projects and business cases.
5. Expand the Accela Roadmap to become the technology roadmap for the Department by adding the projects resulting from the analysis of Permits, Inspection and Enforcement Division, Customer Services, Business Intelligence, and Queue Management described above.
6. Review the expanded roadmap with Department and IT leadership to prioritize the Roadmap projects and determine if there is a business case for funding to accelerate the implementation of the projects on the roadmap.
7. Conduct monthly or quarterly reviews of the Roadmap with the Department and IT leadership.
8. Escalate/communicate the need for the License and Revenue involvement in the new ERP system project with the appropriate department.
9. Escalate/communicate the need for enterprise credit card processing standards to the Finance Department and include the new ERP system project requirements if applicable.

## 3.B.6 Planning and Development Department – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. This increases the risk of lost documentation, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 2:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department. Additionally, the Department is revising its strategies for data collections and analysis, which may create discrepancies between prior data collection methods and current data collection methods for similar or the same data point.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department’s key mission and priorities. The Department should continue to leverage the Process and Technology Manager and Fiscal and Special Projects Manager positions to ensure consistent collection and entry of data, and include quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Observation 3:** Public complaints, issues, or concerns that are made through or escalated to Section, Division, Department, or County leadership may be handled differently than complaints submitted through other methods. Leadership may intervene and request specific or expedited actions that are not the normal or standard operating practices, creating inconsistent treatment of similar complaints, issues, or concerns, and the perception of preference provided to complainant-customers over other customers, including property owner-customers and internal customers. The individual involvement in cases also creates a perception that staff are not given the authority to perform their jobs without specific approval from leadership.

**Recommendation 3:** As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff's understanding of specific cases and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all customers - the complainant, property owners, internal customers, etc. - and should recognize that the needs of one should not automatically outweigh the needs of the others, and that oftentimes external customers' needs are best addressed through education. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with front-line staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific case can do so.

**Observation 4:** The Department currently relies on internal employees with foreign language proficiency, as well as a list of County employees who speak non-English languages to provide translation services when needed. Employees from other departments may not work traditional schedules or in positions that allow them to be available for translation assistance. Many customers bring their own translators, or may call friends or family to assist with translation when needed.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider subscribing to a language line or other service that provides access to on-demand translation in a variety of languages.

**Observation 5:** The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism. Staff perceive a disparity in the treatment of different divisions and sections. The disparity is felt through inconsistent communications and visibility of leadership. Leadership often appears to be most involved in those functional areas in which they have experience and knowledge, leaving staff in other functional areas to feel leadership is only involved in their work when issues arise, having often decided how to act without consulting the staff involved in the day-to-day activities. This perceived lack of opportunities for engagement also results in the perception that only certain divisions or sections have opportunities to engage with external planning processes, or provide input on broader strategic planning or development initiatives.

This perception of lack of knowledge or specific understanding about how all of the divisions and departmental functions may also result in inconsistent consideration of Departmental staff as customers or stakeholders who may be impacted by decisions designed to improve the workflow or workload of one division or section.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations, and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Some divisions and sections feel that there are informal or organic opportunities to engage with leadership and make recommendations or discuss opportunities for efficiency or improvements. Other divisions feel that there are minimal opportunities, or that all information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information. The divisions that have these opportunities often receive assistance in resolving their problems, without consistent consideration of how these potential resolutions may impact other divisions engaged in the same or similar processes or functions.

**Recommendation 5:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Observation 6:** The Department has recently prioritized a focus on customer service and service delivery strategy. Most of this strategy is internally driven and based on employee-developed perceptions of customers and their needs. There has not been consistent efforts to engage different groups of customers and stakeholders to better understand their interests and needs. This has resulted in the inconsistent definition of customer and has often failed to gain customer insight or perspective on what they desire.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should identify and consistently leverage available customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions. The Department should consider creating more standard templates and forms across divisions for publication of customer-facing materials, to ensure a more consistent customer experience regardless of the division they initially engage.

**Observation 7:** There are a number of staffing issues observed related to competitive salaries, assignment of work, discrete job duties per each job level, and opportunities for advancement based on broad work assignments. In addition, specific to the Planning and Plan Review Divisions, professional/technical staff seek opportunities to expand technical experiences based on the different type of work assignments.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should collaborate with Human Resources to seek guidance and consultation of opportunities to address the compensation, work-assignment, and job-related concerns within the merit system structure and County policies. The Department should allow staff interested in broadening their technical and work experiences to request a broader spectrum of work assignments within their assigned division and/or across divisions.

**Observation 8:** Employees from several divisions expressed concern that when they develop and create Staff Reports or other documents that attach to customer requests / cases, the reports are manually reviewed (i.e., red-line, pen-to-paper, modifications to the hard copies of the reports) by each level of management and Department leadership. Edits may be requested by one level of leadership, but then contradicted by the next reviewer after the initially requested edits were made. There were several instances cited where guidance and/or (grammar) modifications were in contradiction by varying levels of management and leadership or requested modifications were not in compliance with existing policies and procedures. Staff raised concern that they use the feedback to modify future reports and want to be efficient and effective in their report development, and the lack of automated workflow with tracked changes, as well as inconsistent review processes and modification requests make it challenging for staff to feel confident they are treating similar reviews in a consistent manner.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should explore technological opportunities that allow management and leadership to review and provide feedback to Staff Reports electronically. Further, Department leadership should create a work environment where staff are comfortable and encouraged to ask questions about the feedback, raise issues of inconsistencies of feedback, or raise issues of compliance with current policies, procedures, and guidance.

**Observation 9:** The Department does not currently have a formal process for staff to evaluate vendor performance, either during or after completion of the project. This may result in continued award to vendors with problematic prior performance. Additionally, the County tends to value low bids as the primary evaluation metric for competitive proposals. This may result in not obtaining the best value for the funds, or may result in poor service delivery.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluations and identified issues about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

# 3.C Law Department

## At A Glance

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 | Represent the government of Gwinnett County, Board of Commissioners, other elected county officials, employees, authorities, constitutional officers, courts, and other related governmental organizations
- 2 | Draft easements for public facilities, condemn property needed for public works projects, and respond to petitions to quiet title
- 3 | Review contracts for land purchases, oversee zoning and land use policies, and litigate tax appeals
- 4 | Evaluate and defend claims against Gwinnett County involving issues of risk toward Gwinnett County employees and citizens

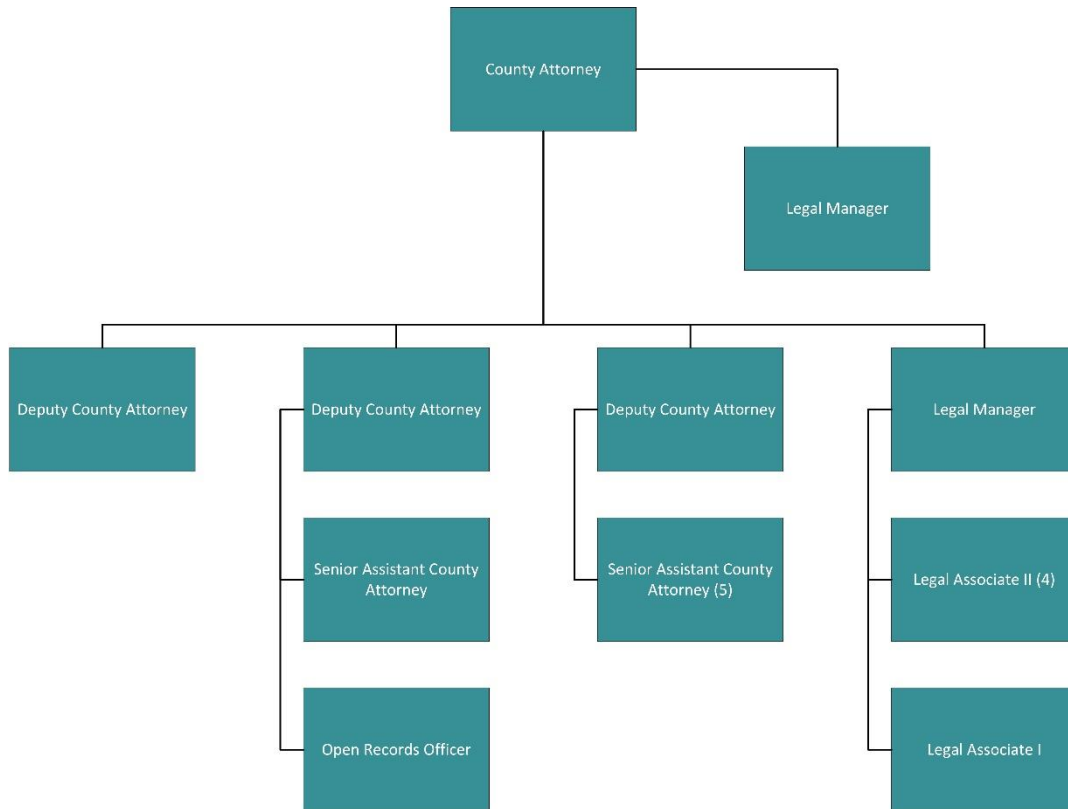
### RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):

<b>\$2,788,416</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

FTE	*through December 2021	Law Department
	Filled	18
Allocated	18	

## Organization



## Commendations



### Open Records Officer



The Department houses the County's Open Records Officer position to ensure consistent and compliant responses to all Open Records Requests.

### Expertise



The Department has created a team of experienced, dedicated attorneys and staff who have experience in a variety of local government legal fields, creating a diverse, experienced team who have the skills and expertise to represent the County in a variety of legal matters.

### Transparent Process



The Department uses GovQA, an online public records workflow and response management system, to track and manage Open Records Requests. GovQA allows customers a one-stop opportunity to submit requests, see the progress of their request, receive the requested information, and pay for any associated fees in a single system.

## Introduction

The Department of Law is responsible for providing legal services and legal advice to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, government, and governmental organizations including their employees, authorities, elected officials, and constitutional officers.

The Department of Law also houses the County Open Records Officer, responsible for ensuring all County departments are responding to open records requests in a consistent and compliant manner.

## Organization

The Department is led by the County Attorney, who is supported by a Legal Manager who supports the County Attorney and helps to manage confidential matters.

There are three Deputy County Attorneys, with Senior Assistant County Attorneys who report to two of the three Deputy County Attorneys. The Senior Assistant County Attorney who supports the HR and IT Departments reports to the Deputy County Attorney who directly supports the Board of Commissioners. The remaining Senior Assistant County Attorneys report to another Deputy County Attorney. This imbalanced organizational structure also results in an imbalanced workload, with the Deputy County Attorney responsible for overseeing the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys spending a significant portion of their time managing the attorneys, assigning workload, and serving as a resource and mentor to the assigned attorneys. Additionally, the Deputy County Attorney who oversees the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys is also responsible for serving as backup for their workloads.



The Department's attorneys are supported by a team of Legal Associate IIs, who report to a Legal Manager. The Legal Associates are overseen by a Legal Manager, who also serves as the Office Manager, responsible for the Department's financial functions and budget management, Aderant management, and new hire onboarding. There is also a Legal Associate I who serves as the front desk reception and provides general office support.

The Attorney structure is relatively flat, with only three titles currently used for attorneys. All attorneys have recently been hired as Senior Assistant County Attorneys, with the only advancement opportunities to Deputy County Attorney and County Attorney. The Department recently received approval for two new attorneys, who will be hired as Associate Attorneys. The Associate Attorney positions will be used to hire attorneys recently licensed by the State Bar, or with less experience.

Each Senior Assistant County Attorney is assigned responsibility for several County departments. All Senior Assistant County Attorneys may also be assigned tax appeals. The current number of attorneys prevents the ability to assign multiple attorneys to collaborate on assisting a department, or in litigation preparation. The number of departments assigned may vary based on the number and complexity of matters that require legal assistance. Some departments may be split amongst several attorneys, with Deputy County Attorneys handling specific subject matters or higher visibility matters for larger departments, or those with more complex legal needs. The Senior Assistant County Attorney that shares responsibilities does not report to the Deputy County Attorney with whom they may share a department.

There may also be some variance from these assignments as some departments who have interacted with the Deputy County Attorneys on matters may reach back out to the Deputy County Attorneys, rather than the assigned Senior Assistant County Attorney.

The current organizational structure and assignment of workload is based heavily on the subject matter expertise and experience of the current attorneys. Since two of the Deputy County Attorneys do not supervise attorneys, there is also no formal cross-training or succession planning for their roles. Since the current organizational structure is heavily reliant on current staff knowledge and experience, it may also limit the County in filling these positions, should the current employees leave the County.

This imbalanced alignment of attorneys can also create challenges when the other two Deputy County Attorneys need additional resources for projects. Currently, the other two Deputy County Attorneys must receive approval from the County Attorney and the Deputy County Attorney who oversees the Senior Assistant County Attorneys to determine if the requested Senior Assistant County Attorney has the capacity to provide support. There are also no formal processes surrounding supervision during the period that the Senior Assistant County Attorney is reporting to a different Deputy County Attorney for certain aspects of their workload, while still reporting to their official supervising Deputy County Attorney.

The Department may also utilize outside counsel for specialized types of litigation or legal matters. The County Attorney retains decision-making authority for determining when to utilize outside counsel.

All attorneys are supported by Legal Associate IIs. When fully staffed, each Legal Associate II is assigned to two attorneys. As each attorney has a different workload and a different style and expectation for the assigned Legal Associate II, the consistent assignment to support two attorneys may not reflect an

equitable workload. The Legal Manager overseeing the Legal Associates also supports an attorney, which creates split prioritization between the attorney support role and Legal Manager responsibilities.

Legal Associates have similar issues with lack of opportunity for advancement. The Legal Associate II role requires four years of legal support experience, which may be challenging for the Legal Associate I to gain the way the role is currently structured. There are also only two Legal Managers, so there are minimal opportunities for advancement for individuals hired in as Legal Associate II.

Since the Department has predominantly hired staff with significant law experience, and typically experience within local government, there is not a detailed formal onboarding process that considers what information may be needed for hires with less legal experience, or less local government legal experience. Current onboarding processes focus on a general introduction to the Department and the systems used by the Department, rather than covering expectations for practicing within local government. One example is the lack of formalized, detailed records retention training for newly hired attorneys who have not worked for a government entity and may not be familiar with the open records requirements.

All matters are tracked in Aderant, a legal document and case management system. The Department considers Aderant the official document repository for all legal matters. The Legal Associate I is responsible for entering all new matters into Aderant. There are some procedural steps for new matter creation, but there are not naming conventions or standards, such as the use of “Dept” versus “Department” as well as the order of the information in the title. This has resulted in some matters using acronyms or abbreviations, while others may use fully spelled out names, and other slight differences. The lack of consistency, combined with Aderant’s inability to search anything other than document title, makes searching the records for similar cases, or case history, a challenge.

The Department also created an Open Records Officer position in August of 2020. Previously, the County’s open records response management had been fully decentralized, with each department responsible for coordinating their own tracking and responses to open records requests and the Law Department only responsible for providing training. The current Open Records Officer is responsible for administrating the County’s open records policy, and providing support around legal requirements and processes. The County uses GovQA, an online public records workflow and response management system that allows for records requests submission, request workflow, and request tracking and fulfillment as well as invoicing and payment processing. The Open Records Officer also serves as the system administrator for GovQA, providing training to all County staff involved in responding to open records requests, and processing all payments received for open records request processing. The move to a centralized oversight and support function has resulted in better data about each department’s response rate, and more transparency about how consistently open records request responses are processed.

Currently, the Legal Managers are familiar with the general roles and responsibilities of the Open Records Officer but are not cross-trained on many of the specifics of the role.

### **Strategic Priorities**

The Department prioritizes customer service and satisfaction, as well as ensuring responsive, professional relationships with the courts. The Deputy County Attorney that oversees the Senior Assistant County Attorneys who are assigned department clients regularly checks in with the client

departments about the performance and responsiveness of the assigned attorney. The responses received from client departments are generally good; client departments who are not satisfied with the services received may speak with the supervising Deputy County Attorney to address any issues.

The current number of attorneys may cause issues in the future, as currently there is no cross-training, and workload does not support allowing two attorneys to staff critical or high-profile matters. This may also impact the Department and County's relationship with the court system, if the Department has to request extensions due to lack of knowledgeable staff about a matter before the court. It may also have ramifications on results if extensions are unable to be granted and the Department has to utilize a less knowledgeable staff in litigation.

### **Leadership and Management**

The County Attorney supports attorneys, provides opportunity for growth, and exposure to new areas to some extent. There is not always an overlap in workload between the County Attorney and other attorneys, so there are not always interactions outside of staff meetings. The County Attorney's interactions with each of the three Deputy County Attorneys varies based on the assigned matters and projects. The differences in interactions and relationships creates the perception amongst other staff that there is inconsistent treatment or even "favoritism" in how certain Deputy County Attorneys are treated.

The current number of attorneys doesn't allow for backups or adequate cross-training. This may create issues where managers have to support their own workload plus the workload of the attorneys they supervise in periods of absence. This most directly impacts the Deputy County Attorney who supports five Senior Assistant County Attorneys.

The Legal Associates perceive the Legal Manager's management style as "hands-off". There are minimal proactive communications or touchpoints about workload. Currently, the Legal Associates are expected to come to the Legal Manager with workload issues or the need for additional resources. Additionally, none of the Legal Associates have been cross-trained in the Legal Manager's role; only the Legal Manager serving as the County Attorney's assistant has that training. Most of the Legal Associate IIs are hired with experience, so there is minimal training other than to provide general expectations for Gwinnett County, and an overview of County-specific applications or software that may be utilized. Some of the Legal Associate IIs' predecessors had notes or binders with their processes, but none have been formalized across the division.

Staff noted feeling generally supported by Management in terms of workload, but felt that there was a culture of mistrust around everyone having the trust and independence to manage their own workload and complete their assignments. An area cited as a frequent example is the Department's telework policy. Currently, staff and Senior Assistant County Attorneys may only telework one day every two weeks, with supervisors being prohibited to telework. Each morning, employees who telework must develop a daily list of planned work for the day, and then must write up a summary of what was accomplished at the end of each day. Staff feel that this policy implies a mistrust of the staff's ability to manage workload and perform while teleworking.

Some staff noted that a lack of proactive communications also impacted trust of management. This coupled with a failure of discussed initiatives or efforts to come to fruition has led to a hesitancy to trust in the ability of management to follow through.

## Technology

The Law Department utilizes technology to manage legal cases for the County and process Open Records Requests. The Department uses Aderant to manage legal cases and risks through case management and document storage. For Open Records Requests, the Department uses GovQA for records management and request processing to ensure all requests are met within the legal timeframe of three days.

## Customer Service

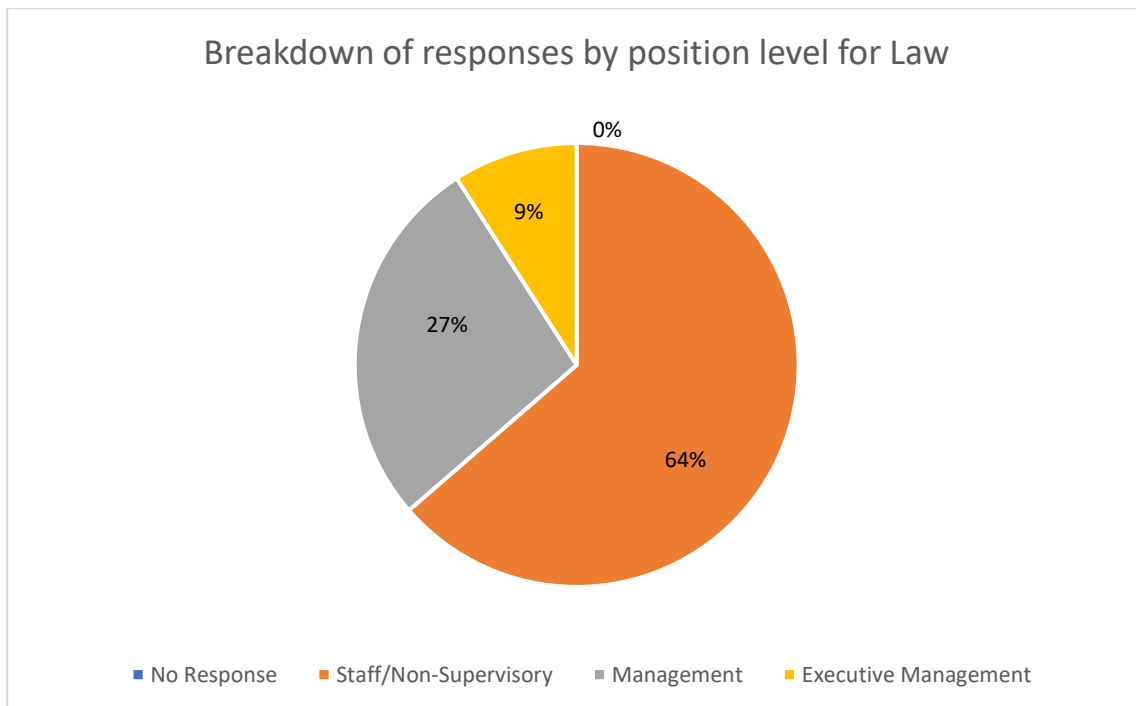
The Deputy County Attorney who supervises most of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys holds annual meetings with each Department Director that under supervision to ensure communication and responsiveness are appropriate, work product is appropriate, etc.

The Department also uses contract review timelines as a metric to ensure timely response to client requests.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Eleven responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 61%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The chart below shows the breakdown of responses by position level:

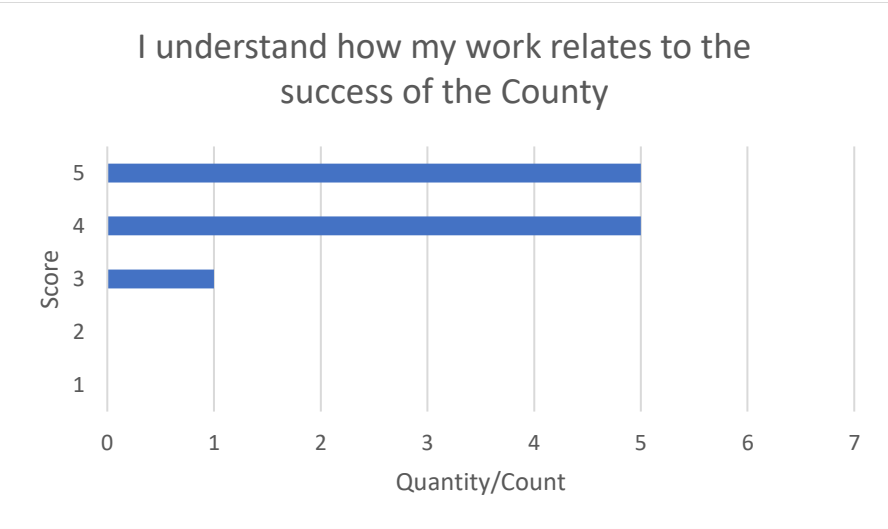
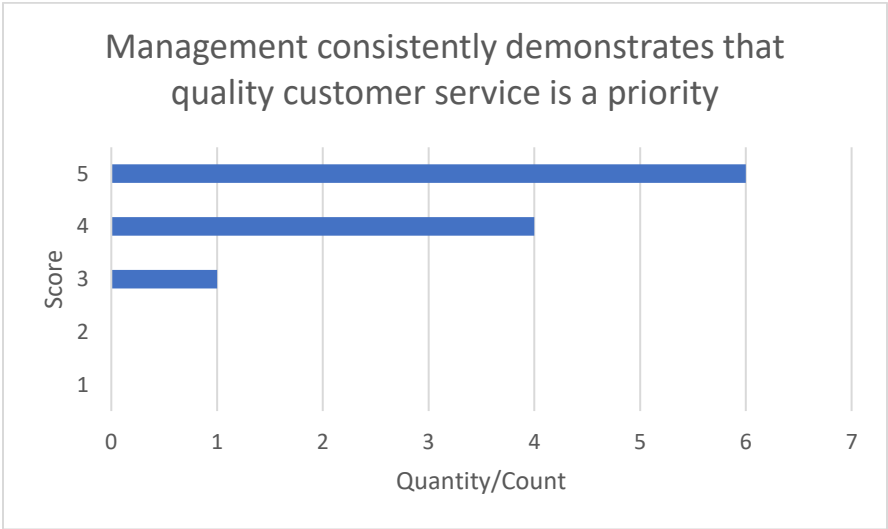
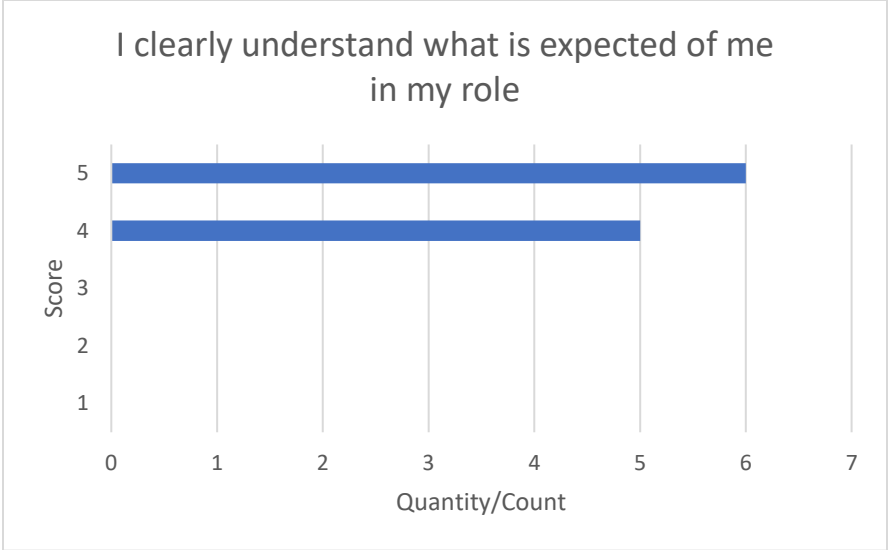


As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff. The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

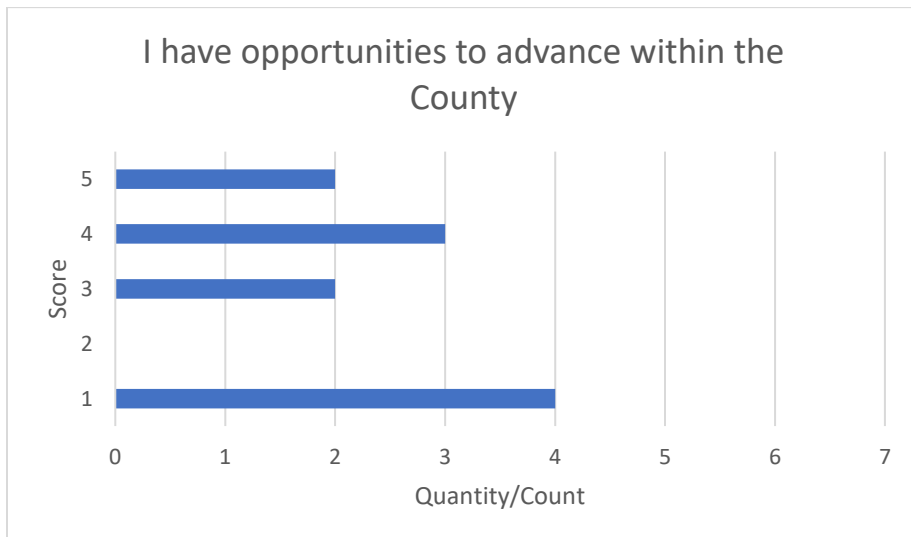
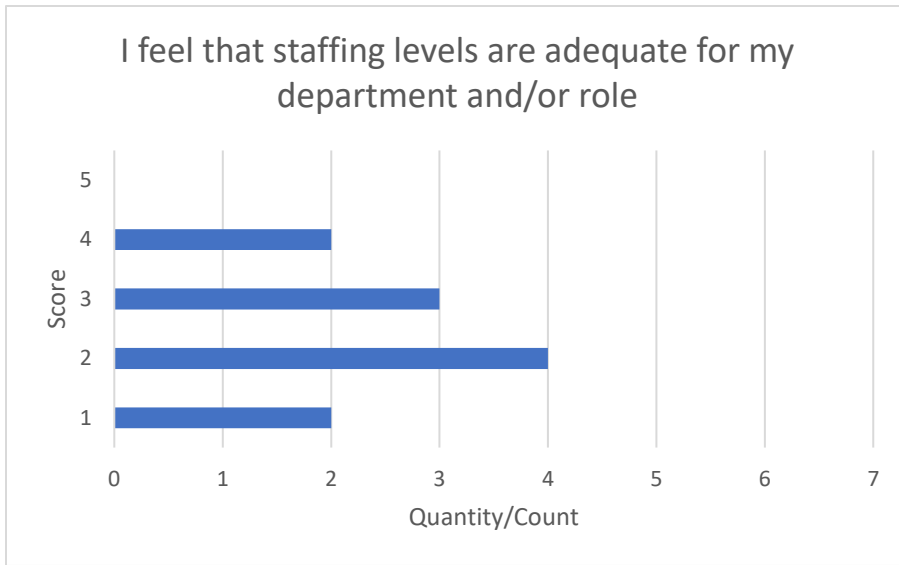
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

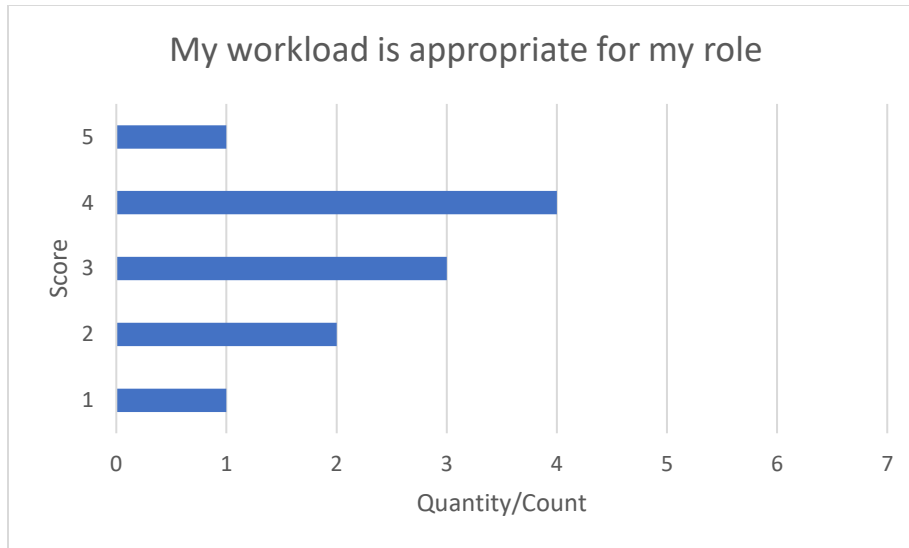
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.9
I understand my mission and vision of my department	3.9
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.4
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.5
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.7
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.2
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.1
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.5
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.9
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	4.0
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.7
I have opportunities to advance within the County	2.9
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.9
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.5
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.9
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.5
I am proud to work for the County	4.3
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.1

The average score for all the survey statements is 3.8. The lowest score is 2.5 and the highest score is 4.5. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- The experience and specialized expertise of the Law Department staff is consistently identified as the Department's greatest strength, followed by the Department's commitment to responsive client relations. The staff is identified as professional and as having a strong work ethic.
- Respondents identify a need for more consistent and comprehensive onboarding, as well as ongoing professional development and cross-training opportunities. Similarly, promotional opportunities within the Department are limited.
- Respondents state limited staffing, as well as uneven responsibilities across staff at the same or similar levels, results in heavy workloads across the Department.
- Technology is a major concern within the Department. Some feel the longer-serving members of the Department are resistant to change and the utilization of newer, better systems. Some believe the current system is inefficient and is adding processes with limited benefit, recommending a better technology strategy be considered. Some suggest the need for a case tracking system, in addition to a better document management system.
- The organizational structure leads to staff working in silos, with limited opportunities for team building and collaboration.
- The Department's teleworking policy is a common concern of the respondents. Staff feel the lack of regular teleworking opportunities, and constant check-ins while teleworking, suggests a lack of trust between management and staff.
- Several respondents identify the supervisory structure as an impediment to the operations of the Department. Staff feel the current structure leads to a lack of inclusivity and has resulted in unequal treatment of different members of the Department staff.
- Concerns with management include limited top-down communication and an absence of long-term goals and long-term planning within the Department.



## Key Functions

Key Departmental functions include the following:

- Litigation
- Contract Review
- Tax Appeals
- Real Property Matters
- Legal Assistance, Research, Opinions, etc.
- Open Records Oversight and Management

The Department maintains a Policy Manual and Employee Handbook. This manual focuses primarily on general office environment practices, such as office hours, dress, and use of leave. The manual also includes high-level summaries of staff and attorney responsibilities but does not have substantive guidance for key business functions, nor other guidance documents or job aides developed at the Department level. Neither the written guidance, nor the organizational model aligned with the practices communicated during our meetings with staff and attorneys. While there will always be differences in how specific requests, cases, claims, or legal interpretations may be handled, the lack of framing and guidance may impact how key business functions are handled among attorneys, such as contract review. There are also few County standards for certain processes, resulting in client departments processing certain requests using their own internally developed processes. The inconsistent treatment of client departments may impact processes for responding to open records requests, or litigation holds for documentation once an ante litem notice has been served.

The lack of a consistent new hire process and policy has transferred a lot of the expectations around support and management to the support staff. This has resulted in Legal Associates providing much of the operational training and process understanding to other Legal Associates and to newly hired attorneys, as formal written guidance is not provided. Legal Associates IIs are also having to monitor their assigned attorneys to ensure that process and workflows are followed, and all internal checkpoints and documentation steps have been completed.

Because there aren't consistent standards or checklists, employees have been given the discretion to develop their own processes and preferences. Newer employees may also be given conflicting information on how to perform certain tasks, or departmental expectations. Some of the staff may also be providing guidance based on prior assigned attorney practice or preference. This lack of standardization may result in conflating personal preference with Departmental or County policy.

The Department maintains templates and/or sample documents for a variety of legal documents. There is no SOP that ensures that attorneys use the templates, which may result in inconsistent documentation between attorneys. Many attorneys referenced using either internally developed templates, or searching the GDrive (a network shared drive for the Department) for samples of the document type they need to produce.

### Litigation

Litigation includes lawsuits, claims, or other legal action where the County or a County department, employee(s), or an elected official(s) is named, or it is necessary to protect the rights and interests of

Gwinnett County. Litigation also includes lawsuits, claims, or other legal action that the County has initiated to protect its rights and interests. Matters may be filed in a variety of courts, including state and federal court offices. Typically, litigation and related claims require the attorneys to respond to the initial claim by researching the facts and documentation of the claim and writing pleadings, motions, and briefs as appropriate, and ensuring that all documents and requests for extension, dismissal, or other actions are filed with the appropriate court. Attorneys may also propose settlements, with certain types and values of settlements requiring approval by the County Attorney and/or the Board of Commissioners.

Attorneys and Legal Associate IIs must be knowledgeable about the filing processes and standardization requirements for each type of court where a matter may be presented. Litigation-related responsibilities include reviewing and responding to new claims, drafting and filing responses to claims, performing discovery and coordination with client departments on documentation production, interrogatory or deposition interviews, filing motions, and appearing in court.

Legal Associate IIs may support by drafting pleadings, reviewing documents for formatting and grammar, filing with the courts, assistance in discovery and research, and in collecting and organizing documentation.

### Contract Review

Attorneys may also be tasked with reviewing contracts and other agreements that client departments intend to sign. Each department provides contracts to their assigned attorney on varying timetables, which may mean that attorneys are asked to review contracts after they have been through contract negotiation and the vendor has already signed the agreement. Other departments may request attorney review for RFPs, or contract templates to be used for contract negotiation.

The Legal Associate I is responsible for receiving many of the contracts that are sent to the Department, entering the matter into Aderant, and then routing the contract to the appropriate attorney for review.

There is some variance in how each attorney completes contract review. The review process primarily involves reviewing the terms and conditions of the agreement for unallowable terms, such as inappropriate indemnification language, but may also include reviewing the agreement for basic information such as contract price and expiration date. The review may also include confirming that the contract details match the minutes documenting the Commissioners' approval. Attorneys may also review the agreement for scope, and to ensure that the agreement is not increasing or changing liability to the County or creating potential impacts for the current or future Boards of Commissioners.

Some of the review being performed by the attorneys is not inherently legal in nature, such as inclusion of specific terms and conditions, and ensuring contract price and expiration date match procurement documents or commissioner meeting minute approval. This work could potentially be performed by other staff to free up attorney work for higher-level value-add work.

Most contracts are still in paper format, so attorneys must physically be in the office to review most of the contracts.

Attorneys may also be responsible for grant review for grant agreements pending award by the County, as relevant to their client departments. This includes reviewing for terms and conditions, correct award

amount and awardee, and ensuring that any addendums or modifications are also appropriate and contain all the necessary language.

The Attorney assigned to the Finance Department is also responsible for reviewing grant applications prior to submission to the potential awarding agency.

### Tax Appeals

All Senior Assistant County Attorneys may also be assigned tax appeals and are responsible for responding on behalf of the County should the appeal go to court. Because the County has deadlines for tax appeal filing, cases may be assigned to the Senior Assistant County Attorneys before the property owner has exhausted other options for appeal, so the attorneys must track the appeal through the process to determine if a court hearing is necessary.

### Real Property Matters

Real property matters may include negotiation of easements, acquisitions, condemnation, right-of-way acquisition, appraisal coordination, and revising any documents to reflect the final negotiated terms, as well as attending real estate closings and hearings or other court appearances. There may be court-related appearances and/or litigation associated with real property matters.

Significant real property matters and large projects that may include multiple departments are typically assigned to one of the Deputy County Attorneys, regardless of which attorney is regularly assigned the client department.

### Legal Assistance, Research, Opinions, etc.

Department requests to their assigned attorney may include questions about a vendor, an ordinance interpretation, or other general queries about the legality of an action, communication, or service. This may include informal advice or recommendations as well as formal legal opinions or memoranda. Attorneys may also be asked to research and make recommendations for ordinance updates or revisions.

General requests may also include legislation review. Attorneys may hear from client departments or the County's legislative liaison about potential state legislation that may impact the County or an attorney's client department. The attorney will coordinate with the client department or governing authority as appropriate to determine the potential impact of the proposed legislation, and will typically summarize of the proposed legislation, potential client department impact, and the client's position on the proposed legislation.

Attorneys are also responsible for reviewing all items that their client departments have submitted for inclusion on the County Commission agenda. The Commission meets twice a month, and the attorneys are required to review the proposed agenda item in FileNet to confirm that the proposed agenda item conforms with the submission template, and that the proposed agenda item matches the provided supporting documentation and that all appropriate supporting documentation has been included.

Legal Associate IIs assist through preparing the agenda item packets and reviewing contents for spelling, grammar, and other minor revisions

## Open Records Oversight and Management

The Open Records Officer serves as the system administrator for the GovQA application and ensures consistent application of the Georgia Open Records Law. Requesters may create user accounts to submit requests, track the status of their requests, pay invoices for records production, and access the requested documents.

End-user departments also have two levels of user access available. End-user departments submit emails to the Open Records Officer requesting user creation, deletion, or modification of user level. There are currently three back-end user levels in the system:

- System Administration, which only the Open Records Officer holds
- Power User, a user level typically held by the departmental coordinators who are authorized to release documents to the requestors and communicate with the requesters
- End User, a level assigned to departmental staff who are responsible for collecting and uploading documents, but do not have the authority to release documents or respond directly to requestors

Currently there are no lists or logs of all trained end users and power users.

There are currently some challenges with end-user departments appointing staff as Power Users who do not have the time available to be responsive to requests within required response time.

There is a general informational training provided to all employees during the initial onboarding and orientation. Any additional training on responsibilities and records retention are the responsibility of the department that houses the employee. The Open Records Officer has developed additional processes on how to receive, record, and initiate a response to an open records request. The Open Records Officer provides training to all GovQA internal system users. This includes both pre-recorded trainings as well as live trainings, currently via video call, with the Open Records Officer.

Requesters may submit records requests directly through the GovQA system, as well as submit requests directly to end-user departments. This may include physical in-person requests, faxes, phone calls, emails, etc. Most departments are responsible for entering their own open records requests if the requester does not submit it through the portal. If a request is complicated, or requires the coordination of multiple departments to produce the requested documentation, the Open Records Officer may coordinate the request response.

If requested documents are exempt from public release, the end-user department provides information on why the requested document is exempt and cites the statute that exempts the documents from production.

The Open Records Officer may become involved if the end-user department needs assistance in responding to a request or may be contacted directly by the requester if they feel the end-user department is not responding in a timely and correct manner. The Open Records Officer can review due dates, and receives notifications when requests are on the third day of processing and may be in danger of exceeding Georgia Open Records Law requirements.

Records requests can be released either through the portal, or through physical dissemination of records. Requesters can see history of open records requests within the portal, track the status of their current requests, and access any released documents.

Some fees, such as recordings from body-worn cameras or accident reports, are pre-established fees. Other fees are based on time and administrative costs of processing the request.

The Open Records Officer is also responsible for processing all payments for records that are received through GovQA, as well as recording and processing check payments into GovQA. Weekly, check payments are reconciled and deposited. Credit card payments are processed automatically without any additional steps. Some end-user departments, such as Police, may record and accept cash payments, deposit the cash, then send the Open Records Officer a cash receipt for all cash they have processed. All check payments are recorded into GovQA, deposited into the County bank, and then recorded as a cash journal in SAP. In 2021, the Open Records Officer recorded more than \$84,000 in fees for Open Records requests.

Currently, the Legal Managers are generally trained to support the GovQA software administration, but there is no one trained in the payment processing function.

## Communications

There are weekly meetings between the County Attorneys and the Deputy County Attorneys who are staffing Board of Commissioners, County Administrator, and highly-visible projects.

There are monthly all-staff meetings for the Department to discuss recent wins and losses in legal matters, as well as to discuss information about Departmental or County upcoming news or initiatives.

The Deputy County Attorney that oversees the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys also holds regular meetings for the Senior Assistant County Attorneys to check in and discuss current workload.

Many of the attorneys have regular touchpoints with their client departments, either through in-person or Microsoft Teams (“Teams”) meetings. Several attorneys are also using Teams for projects, to ensure visibility between the Department and the client.

There are not proactive meetings for the Legal Associates, unless they initiate a meeting themselves. Most information is shared more informally through office conversations, or reaching out to other Legal Associates who may have more experience or expertise in a specific type of legal matter.

The Department’s current organizational structure has also created some communications silos. Since the majority of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys report to a single Deputy County Attorney, they do not often get the opportunity to engage with the other two Deputy County Attorneys, nor do they receive exposure to the departments or legal areas that the other two Deputy County Attorneys represent.

## Strategic Initiatives

Customer service and ensuring good legal service are the primary objectives of the Department as much of the Department’s workload is dependent on the needs of client departments, or on claims filed against the County. The Department emphasizes client communications and relationship management;

the Department provides each attorney the opportunity to build relationships with their assigned client departments.

The current workload and number of available staff and attorneys has resulted in missed opportunities for more strategic thinking about Departmental operations. As the Department looks to hire more attorneys, there is an opportunity to think more strategically about Department operations, onboarding and training processes, and cross-training and growth opportunities for staff.

The Open Records Officer strives for customer service excellence, but is often limited since the role does not have direct authority over end-user department staff that are responsible for responding to open records requests. Different departments have differing interpretations of customer assistance, so some departments may assist requestors who have submitted their request to the wrong department, while others will respond that there is nothing to provide, without additional assistance to the customer.

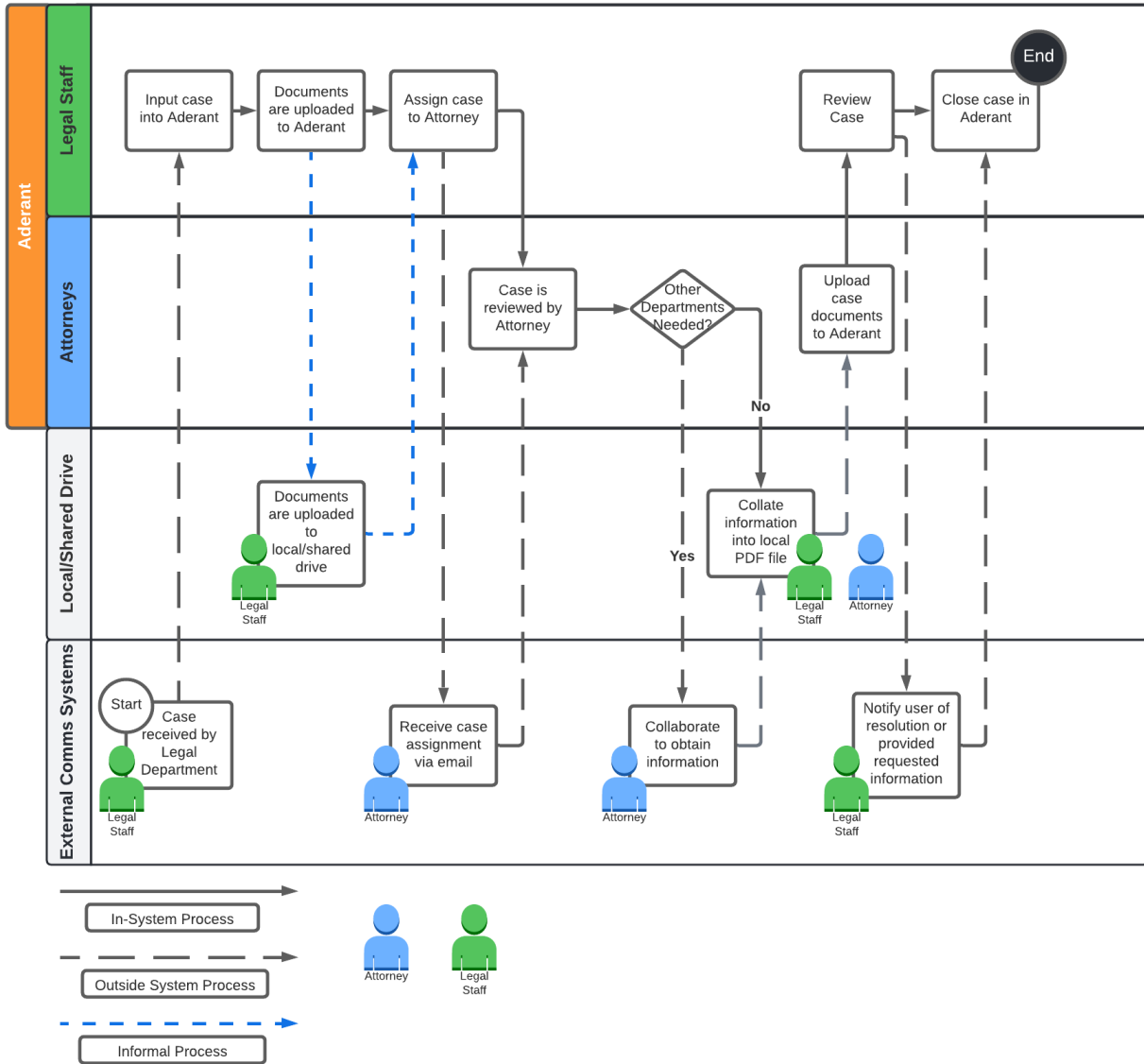
## **Systems and Applications**

### **Case Management: Aderant**

Aderant is a commercial software suite of legal business modules to manage operations, store data in the cloud, and provides e-billing, document collaboration, and time management functionality. The Law Department utilizes Aderant primarily for case management and document storage for legal matters throughout the divisions. End-users contact the Law Department via email, phone, fax, or mail for various requests and the case request is submitted into the system and assigned to the correct Department by a staff member, as there is no end-user portal. Aderant is integrated with Microsoft Outlook to automate the process of saving emails to case folders.

### **Case Management Current State Overview**

The current Case Management system process flow is depicted as follows:



The Case Management system process flow is described as follows:

<b>Name of Process:</b>	Case Management
<b>System Process Purpose</b>	Aderant is a commercial software suite of legal business solutions that are currently used by the Law Department for case management and document storage.
<b>System Process Function</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation Repository</li> <li>• Records Management</li> <li>• Request Management</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Process:</b>	Case Management
<b>System Process Scope</b>	Aderant is used throughout the Law Department who supports the Gwinnett County government and its elected officials, employees, managers, staff, authorities, constitutional officers, courts, and other related governmental organizations.
<b>System Process Input</b>	The System Process Input is a legal case or risk involving the Gwinnett County government. The process is started when an end-user submits a legal case or matter to the Law Department. The front office staff enters the matter is into Aderant.
<b>System Process Boundaries</b>	The system process boundaries for Aderant begin when a use case is inputted into the system and end when the case is closed out in the system.
<p><b>System Process Flow</b></p> <p><i>Items in blue text are conducted outside the system.</i></p> <p><i>Items with an asterisk (*) indicate Informal Process.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Case is inputted into the system by front office staff. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Documents are uploaded to Aderant.</li> <li>b. Documents are uploaded to G/Local Drive.*</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Cases are assigned to Attorneys based on their Division by Legal staff in Aderant. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Legal Staff notify Attorneys of the new case assignment through email.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Attorneys review cases <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collaborate with other Departments to obtain information via email or hard copies, if necessary.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Attorneys collate documents and information into one PDF file locally. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PDF file is uploaded to Aderant.</li> <li>b. PDF file is saved on G/Local Drive.*</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Request is closed in Aderant by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Selecting "Approved" from the drop-down.</li> <li>b. Adding the date in the proper field.</li> <li>c. Selecting the "Close" button.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>System Process Output/End-Result</b>	The output of the process is a closed case, which is closed when the legal case or risk is settled and closed out in the system.
<b>Cycle Time</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cycle time varies depending on the size and complexity of the case or risk. Larger and more complex cases require more time and effort to adjudicate.</li> </ol>

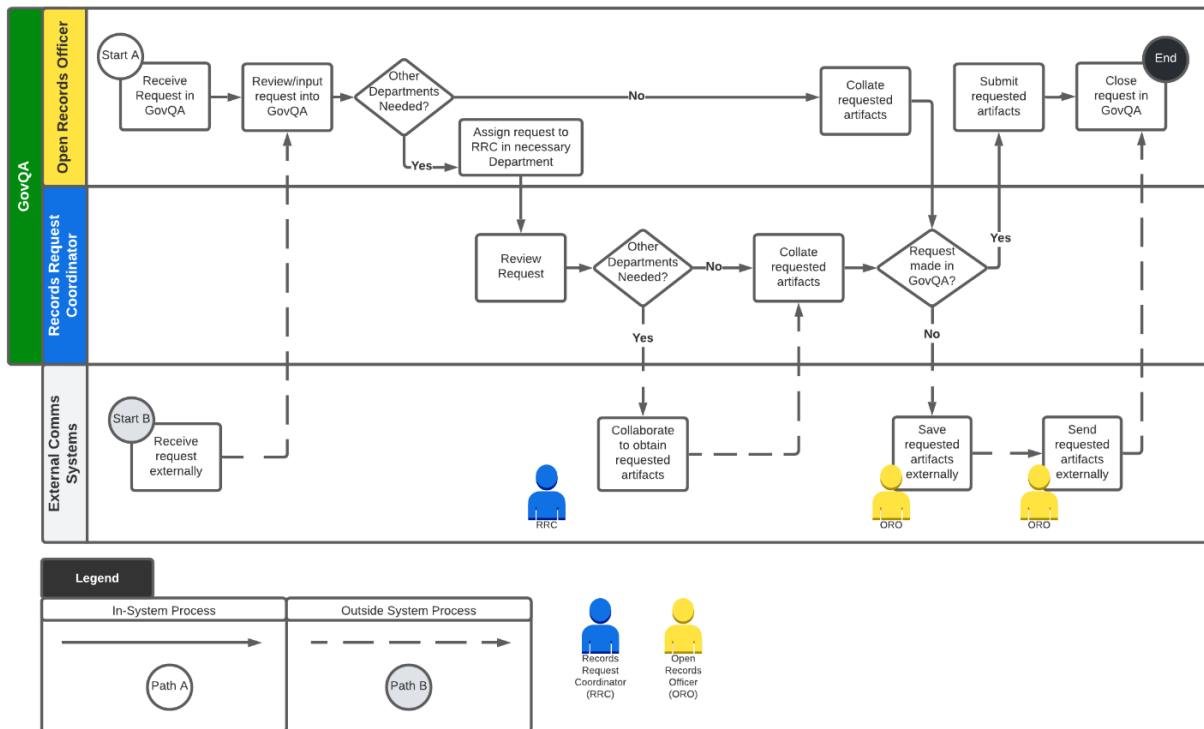


## Records Requests: GovQA

GovQA is a commercial public records and enterprise workflow management system designed to manage public records requests across state and local governments. The Law Department’s Open Records Officer and Legal Coordinators use the system to process record requests from the public, such as citizens, attorney’s clients, and the media – totaling over sixty thousand requests per year. End-users contact the Law Department via the GovQA portal, email, fax, phone, mail, or in-person, and the request is submitted into the system and assigned to the correct Department. Requests must legally be processed in 3 days, so the Open Records Officer coordinates with Legal Coordinators and other departments to ensure all requests are processed within that time.

### GovQA Current State Overview

The current Open Records system process flow is depicted as follows:



The Open Records Request system process flow is described as follows:

<b>Name of Process:</b>	Open Records Request
<b>System Process Purpose</b>	GovQA is a commercial public records and enterprise workflow management system designed to manage public records requests across state and local governments.
<b>System Process Function</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation Repository</li> <li>• Records Management</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Process:</b>	Open Records Request
<b>System Process Scope</b>	GovQA is used within the Law Department to process all open records requests from the public.
<b>System Process Input</b>	The System Process Input is a user's records request. The process is initiated when an end-user submits a request to the Law Department for FOIA requests, case documentation, records, reports, or other information they are entitled to access from the County.
<b>System Process Boundaries</b>	The system process boundaries for GovQA begin when a user request is inputted and ends when all requested information is provided to the user and closed out in the system.
<b>System Process Flow</b> <i>Items in blue text are conducted outside the system.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Receive request in GovQA or externally.</li> <li>2. Open Records Officer reviews and submits request in GovQA.</li> <li>3. Open Records Officer determines if other departments are needed? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If yes, assign request to Records Request Coordinator in necessary Department in GovQA. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Open Records Officer and Records Request Coordinator collaborate to obtain requested artifacts.</li> <li>ii. If additional departments are needed, Open Records Officer and Records Request Coordinator collaborate with external departments to obtain requested artifacts.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. If no, Open Records Officer collates requested artifacts.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Open Records Officer submits requested artifacts <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If request is received in GovQA, submit requested artifacts in system.</li> <li>b. If request is received externally, submit requested artifacts externally.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Close request in GovQA. The process ends.</li> </ol>
<b>System Process Output/End-Result</b>	The output of the process is a closed request, which is closed when a requester receives all necessary information requested from the County. Specifically, open records requests are processed in GovQA and all information has been provided to the requester to formally close the process in the system.
<b>Exceptions to Normal System Process Flow</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complex requests may be made that require more time to adjudicate, resulting in extended deadlines.</li> </ol>
<b>Cycle Time</b>	It takes 3 days to process a request, typically. If longer, an extension will be filed within 3 days.

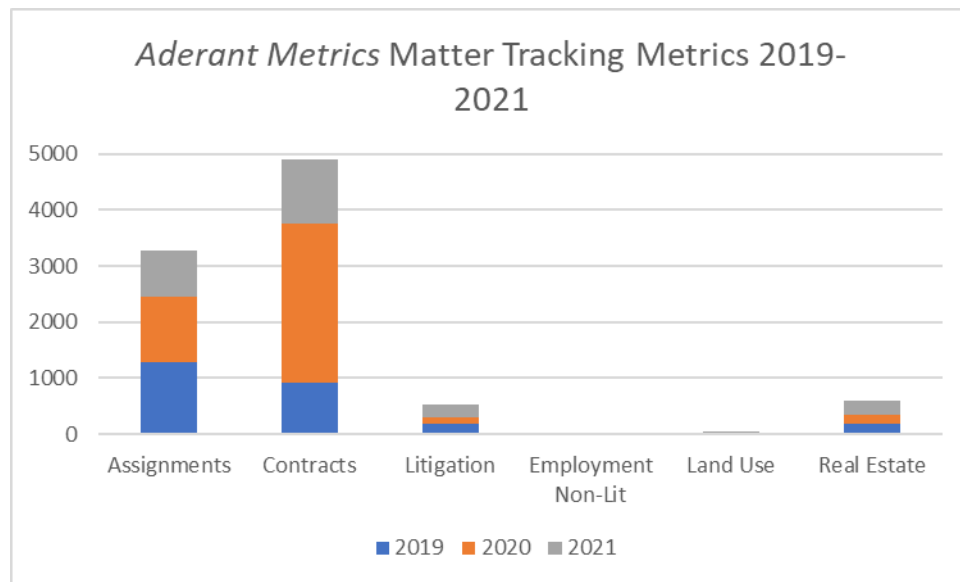
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Department currently only has one metric in Management Framework – percentage of contracts reviewed within 10 business days. As contract review is only a portion of each attorney’s responsibility, this metric is neither a strong workload indicator nor broad performance indicator for the Department or any individual attorney.

Department staff recently learned that attorneys had been provided inconsistent or inadequate training on how to document contract review within Aderant, which threatens the accuracy of the data that has been reported.

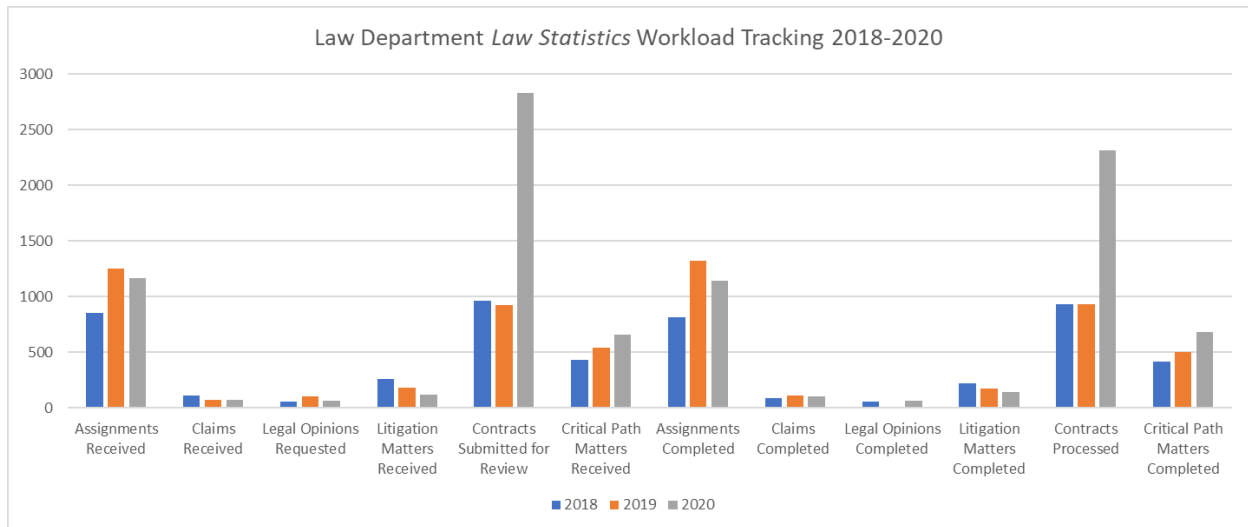
Aderant tracks a variety of additional data points around the “matters” that are entered and assigned to each attorney, beyond the contract performance metric currently in place. Aderant tracks the total number of matters and categorizes them into six functional categories:

- Assignments
- Contracts
- Litigation
- Employment non-litigation
- Land Use
- Real Estate



The Department also tracks the number of Aderant matters assigned to each attorney and tracks the closing of matters as part of workload review. These metrics may not be representative of workload, as each matter represents a very different level of response and time commitment.

The Department also has several other statistics that it has collected to help capture workload and production. The following chart demonstrates some of the data points provided by the Department to document workload.



As noted in the chart, there have been increases in certain types of matters over the past few years. This data, combined with attorney-level workload review may be beneficial for use in prioritizing client departments that may need additional attorneys to support the workload, and to ensure appropriate backup for high-priority matters.

We noted some discrepancies between the two provided data sets documenting Aderant tracking of workload. Several examples are noted in the table below. While there were no significant variances, there may be an inconsistency in how reports are being run, or consistencies based on the date the information was pulled. The Department should ensure that it is using a consistent data set in reviewing workload and making staffing decisions.

	2019		2020	
	Aderant Metrics	Law Statistics	Aderant Metrics	Law Statistics
Assignments	1286	1251	1166	1164
Contracts	921	934	2830	2314
Litigation	177	177	121	144

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The current Departmental organizational structure is imbalanced, with all but one of the Senior Assistant County Attorneys reporting to a single Deputy County Attorney. This minimizes the ability for the Senior Assistant County Attorneys to cross-train under the other two Deputy County Attorneys, and reduces the supervising Deputy County Attorney’s time to staff management and workload backup and support.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider realigning the organizational chart using client departments with similar matters. The Department should also ensure a more equitable allocation amongst the three Deputy County Attorneys to allow for succession planning and attorney support for more complex or time-consuming matters assigned to all of the Deputy County Attorneys.

**Observation 2:** The Department currently has enough attorneys to assign a single attorney to each client department, with some cross-support for complex matters or high-profile projects. There are not enough attorneys to allow for consistent assigning of two attorneys for complex or detailed matters. This results in decreased exposure to different types of matters and client departments, and may cause issues when attorneys are absent unexpectedly or for extended periods, since no other attorneys are familiar with that attorney's assigned departments or matters.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should continue to add Assistant Attorney positions and assign at least one Assistant Attorney to support each client department. This will also support succession planning and provide additional opportunities exposure to new or different client departments or matters, such as real estate or litigation.

**Observation 3:** The Department does not have formal, detailed onboarding and training processes for newly hired attorneys or staff. The Department's historical hiring of attorneys and staff with local government experience has created a shortened onboarding process that focuses superficially on the use of Aderant and general Gwinnett County processes.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should create a more detailed, robust onboarding and training process for newly hired attorneys and staff. The onboarding and training process should include more training on Gwinnett County requirements, such as the process for records retention, as well as include more training on using Aderant. This may also require the creation of more user guides or job aids for standard processes.

**Observation 4:** Currently, each Legal Associate II is assigned to staff two attorneys. As each attorney's workload, needs, and use of their assigned Legal Associate II varies, this may not represent equitable workloads, leading to some Legal Associate IIs being significantly busier than others.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should review the staffing of attorneys relative to workload. Additionally, the Legal Manager should hold regular Legal Associate II meetings to review workload and consider temporary reassignment or support of specific attorneys based on workload.

**Observation 5:** All assignments attorneys manage are tracked as "matters" in Aderant. While there are some procedural steps documented for new matter creation and file creating, there are not consistently defined naming conventions. The inconsistency results in challenges when attorneys or staff are trying to search for matters or files in Aderant.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department needs to create unique naming standards for use in Aderant, including identification of order of title as well as which acronyms or abbreviations are to be used.

**Observation 6:** The Open Records Officer is currently a unit of one, with only general cross-training by the Legal Managers.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should consider hiring an Open Records Specialist, to provide additional support and training to end-user departments as well as to serve as a back-up to the tasks performed by the Open Records Officer. In the interim, the Department should ensure another Departmental staff member is fully cross-trained in the responsibilities of the Open Records Officer, especially those around ensuring compliance with the timelines for responding to record requests.

**Observation 7:** Legal Associates perceive the supervising Legal Manager’s management style as “hands-off,” with no regular meetings or checkpoints around workload for the Legal Associates.

**Recommendation 7:** The Legal Manager should institute regular meetings with the Legal Associates to review workload, help address issues or concerns, and ensure consistent communication about office operations or other changes.

**Observation 8:** The Department’s current Policy Manual and Employee Handbook primarily includes general office environment practices and high-level summaries of expectations around key business functions. The lack of additional guidance may result in personal preference become informal policy or practice. This may also result in inconsistent communications and expectations with client departments for certain types of matters.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should review and revise the current Policy Manual and Employee Handbook to reflect current practices. The Policy Manual and Employee Handbook should be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with current practice.

The Department should also identify opportunities for the creation of job aids or user guides that provide clear foundational parameters for matters such as contract review. Where relevant, the Department may also need to consider crafting County policies to ensure consistent end-user department processes for matters such as anti litem hold notification or open record request processing.

**Observation 9:** The Department currently uses the attorneys for all levels of contract review. Some of the contract review work currently being performed by the attorneys is fairly rote work that could be performed by lower-level staff.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should consider revising the contract review process to allow for staff to review contracts and other agreements for basic terms and conditions and data point verification, reserving attorney time for more complex analysis and review.

**Observation 10:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval across all required County departments. There is also not a defined point in the process where legal review must be completed, so different client departments, or different contract types are being submitted at varying points in the process – from initial contract draft review, up through after the vendor has executed the contract and is prepared to being providing the goods or services as defined in the current contract draft. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The wet signature requirement increases the risk of a lost document and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents. The County should also establish a standard timeline and process for contract review, to ensure that all contracts are reviewed at the same or similar points in the overall contract review and acceptance process and to reduce risk for the County.

**Observation 11:** The Open Records Officer does not currently maintain any lists or logs of all trained end users and power users for GovQA.

**Recommendation 11:** The Open Records Officer should maintain current lists of all trained end users and power users for GovQA. The Open Records Officer should routinely review these lists with end-user departmental leadership and ensure that separated or reassigned employees' access is revoked or revised in a timely manner.

## 3.C.1 Law Department - Technology Observations and Recommendations

### Aderant

#### Aderant Observations

Overall, the Aderant system is outdated and does not meet the needs of the Law Department. The main productivity driver for legal processes is the ability to reference and leverage past cases and matters. The inability to quickly find historical documents results in frustration and lack of productivity for attorneys and legal managers. From the focus group sessions, the following issues were identified related to query/search functionality:

- Aderant cannot search document contents and is limited to searching by user-populated fields.
- There are no standard naming conventions or standard document tags further limiting the search functionality.
- The query /search functionality in Aderant takes a long time to load, which negatively impacts work time.
- The search bar is small and does not allow for users to read the full file name. As a result, the team searches and retrieves files in both Aderant and the Shared Drive (G Drive) or their local drive within the Department's intranet.
- Due to its difficulty to use, the staff store documentation in Aderant and a local/G Drive, which results in duplicate efforts to manage documents and requires the user to search for information in both places.

In addition to the query/search findings, the focus groups identified the following issues and gaps with the current system.

- There is no mobile functionality present, which restricts when and where staff can manage documents after hours.
- Out of the box reporting functionality is outdated and version control is difficult to manage.
- Aderant does not work well with VPN functionality and is slow when staff telework.
- The Aderant implementation lacks the ability for users to collaborate on documents and manage version history.

Although not specifically identified as an Aderant functionality, the focus group identified the following gaps in the current systems and processes.

- eDiscovery: The Department does not have a satisfactory solution for gathering and analysis emails and other electronically stored information.
- Privileged Logs: The current privileged log process is time-consuming.
- Litigation Holds: The current litigation process requires paper and wet signatures.



### Aderant Recommendations

It was noted in the focus groups that IT is working with the Legal Managers on evaluating Case Management systems to replace Aderant. However, some of the Attorneys were unaware of the evaluation and none of the Attorneys were involved in the process. We recommend that the County continue the process to evaluate alternatives to replace Aderant and expand the working group to include a group of Attorneys to further define and validate the system requirements. In addition, we recommend that the County expand the system requirements to include the requirements for eDiscovery, Litigation Holds and Privileged Log to determine if the Case Management system vendor have solutions for these processes.

## GovQA

### GovQA Observations

The County must accept Open Records requests via multiple channels online using GovQA, phone, email, letter, or in-person. Open Records Requests that are via phone, email, letter, or in-person are uploaded into GovQA, For requests that are made through GovQA, the process is efficient because the whole process including document delivery and payment is within the system. For requests made outside of GovQA, the process is manual, time-consuming as events such as document delivery and payment are handled outside of the system by each Department.

Overall, the GovQA implementation appears to be successful, and the users are happy with the system which was implemented within the last 18 months. Some minor observations for GovQA include:

- GovQA's dashboard is not user-friendly. It displays records in a list view rather than display multifunctionality like traditional dashboards.
- Other departments involved do not engage with the system and are sometimes difficult to communicate with.
- The system automatically closes out "child" requests when a "parent" request is made.
- Documentation that is uploaded is not easily opened in GovQA.
- Invoices must be reconciled with the Department's SAP system and cash payments require a receipt to be uploaded.

### GOVQA Recommendations

When possible, encourage the submission of Open Records Requests through GovQA. Continue to tweak the system as needed to address the observations noted above.

# 3.D Department of Transportation

## Transportation At A Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 Maintain the roadways and road infrastructure, sidewalks, bridges, signs, traffic signals, cameras, fiber optic cable, transit buses, and the airport which comprise the County's transport infrastructure
- 2 Provide traffic engineering services to provide County residents with efficient transportation
- 3 Address critical capital-related public transit needs through construction, asset management, and technology upgrades

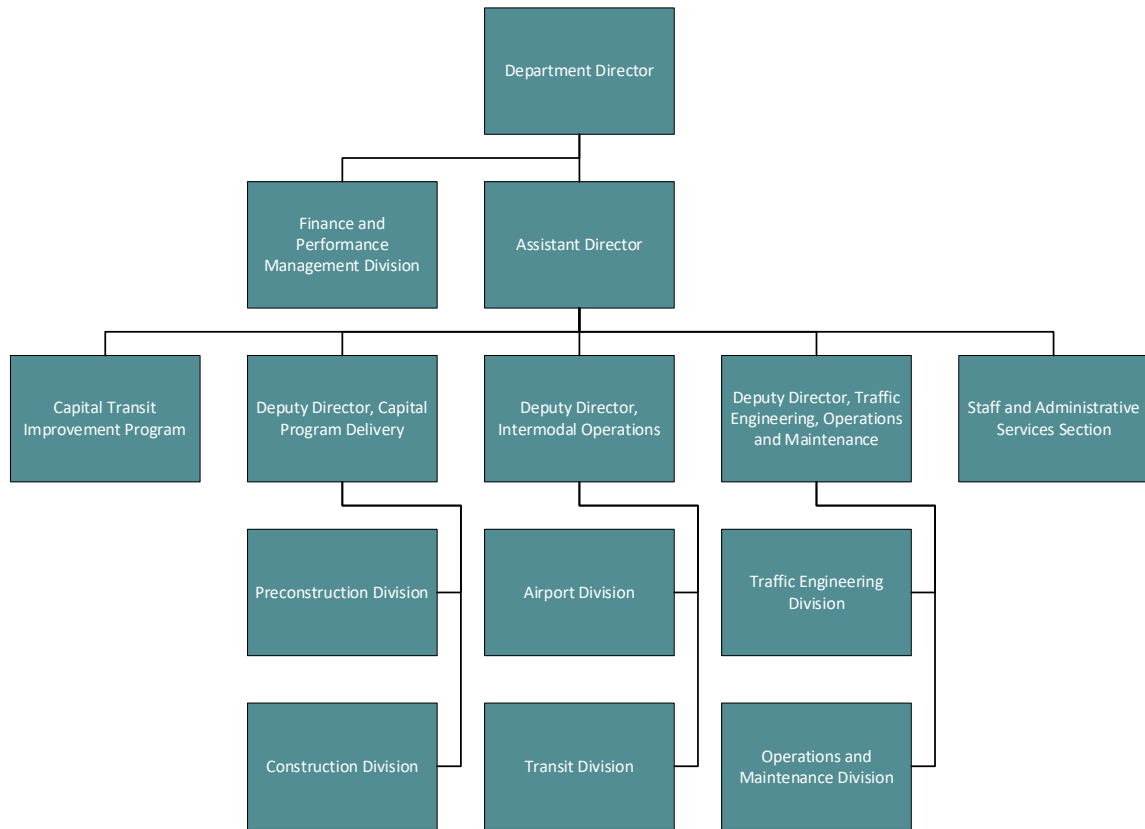
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2020):**

<b>\$42,267,638</b>	<b>\$130,033,707</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through December 2021	Department of Transportation
FTE	Filled	152
	Allocated	175

## Organization



## Commendations

### Traffic Control Center Collaborations



The Department's Traffic Control Center (TCC) collaborates with the Gwinnett County Police Department in sharing access to the County's live traffic camera feed, as well as additional equipment, for law enforcement purposes at no additional cost to the County. The Department is currently exploring additional opportunities for similar collaborations.

### Locally Controlled Transportation Infrastructure



The Department controls eight percent of all traffic signals in the state, the largest number of locally controlled traffic signals in Georgia. This means the Department is maintaining and managing traffic signals at nearly 750 intersections across the County.

### Service Request Center



The Department created one unit assigned to respond to all citizen-initiated concerns, complaints, and issues. The unit is connected to the Department's work order system so the Center can enter the details of the concern directly into the work order and route appropriately, creating more efficient response times and better customer service.

### Collaborative Relationships with Transportation Partners



The Department has cultivated strong, strategic partnerships with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL). On such program is Safe Trips in a Connected Transportation Network (ST-CTN) with ARC, providing County residents with safe and efficient trip routing, increasing the accessibility of the County's transportation infrastructure.

### Citizen Project Selection Committee



The Department has established a Citizen Project Selection Committee to help select and recommend SPLOST projects for funding. This body provides public input representing 11 communities within the County: homeowners from each commission district, senior citizens, industry, schools, environmental groups, civic clubs, young professionals, and freight.

## Introduction

The Department of Transportation ("Transportation," "DOT," or "Department") is responsible for providing efficient and accessible transportation to the residents of Gwinnett County. The Department maintains roads, intersections, and rights-of-way, as well as the striping, signage, and traffic signals throughout the County's infrastructure system. Additionally, the Department is responsible for Gwinnett County Transit and Gwinnett County Airport – Biscoe Field.

## Organization

The Department of Transportation is led by a Department Director and Assistant Director. The Department is organized into the following divisions/sections:

- Finance and Performance Management
- Capital Transit Improvement Program
- Capital Program Delivery
- Intermodal Operations

- Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance
- Staff and Administrative Support Section

### Finance and Performance Management Division

The Finance and Performance Management Division has 10 approved positions as of the dates of our fieldwork. The FY22 budget approved one additional position, as discussed below.

The Division is organized into two sections: Financial Section and Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section.

The Financial Section is responsible for paying all invoices on behalf of the Department, as well as other financial entries such as cash journals, JVs, etc. This section is also responsible for creating and sending invoices on behalf of the Department, such as invoices to Gwinnett County municipalities for Community Improvement Districts (“CIDs”).

The Financial Services Section is overseen by a Business Manager. The Business Manager is responsible for certain accounting functions, such as journal entries, JVs, adjustments and corrections. The Business Manager supervises the Financial Supervisor, who manages the procurement process as well as oversees three Business Services Associates II who are responsible for obtaining all required approvals and processing all invoices for payment. Currently, there are no opportunities for advancement within the Business Services Associate title using tiers or steps. The Financial Supervisor manages workload for the Business Services Associates and provides secondary review when needed, as well as analyzing payments for trends or issues.

The Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section is responsible for budget management for the entire Department. There are currently three Program Analyst II positions, with no opportunities for growth within title or position. The Division recently reorganized this team, assigning each Program Analyst II individual Divisions or Sections within the Department to support. A new position has been approved to serve as Asset Management for the entire Department.

The Program Analysts are currently responsible for managing their assigned division/section budgets. This includes budget review and analysis, processing budget transfers, and Board of Commissioners agenda item management.

The newly approved position will be responsible for asset management. This includes serving as the fleet liaison, coordinating preventative maintenance, VERP form completion, and any net new vehicle and equipment ordering. This position will also be responsible for ensuring that all fixed assets created through DOT projects are appropriately recorded through the County’s Fixed Asset Reporting process.

### Capital Transit Improvement

Capital Transit Improvement is a fairly new function led by a Capital Projects Director who serves as a member of the Department’s Executive Team and reports to the Department’s Assistant Director.

Capital Transit Improvement is currently an organization of one professional. Capital Transit Improvement’s mission is to address critical capital-related public transit needs throughout the County.

### Capital Program Delivery

Capital Program Delivery is led by a Deputy Director and consists of the following two divisions:

- Preconstruction Division
- Construction Division

The Preconstruction Division is responsible for preliminaries, concept, design, final design, concept, right-of-way acquisition, preparing for bid for the 2017 and 2014 SPLOST programs, and other road improvement programs. Additional responsibilities include transportation planning, project scoping, concept development, design management, cost estimation, plan review, and development coordination. The Preconstruction Division consists of the following three sections:

- Project Managers – coordinates the engineering of capital projects
- Transportation Planning – studies, analyzes, and plans transportation projects
- Utility Permitting – reviews and issues utility permits for the County’s ROW

The Construction Division is responsible for projects related to bridges, culverts, transportation drainage, roads, intersections, roads, sidewalk construction, the speed control bid for the 2017 and 2014 SPLOST programs, and other road improvement programs. Additional responsibilities include bid package review, construction management, traffic and erosion control oversight, final acceptance, and project closeout. The Construction Division consists of multiple construction managers, project coordinators, and a GIS technician.

### Intermodal Operations

The Intermodal Operations Division is led by a Deputy Director is divided into distinct transportation services:

- Airport Operations
- Transit Operations

The Airport Division is staffed with an Airport Director, Airport Assistant Director, two Administrative Support Associates, one Trades Technician III and two Maintenance Technicians.

The Transit Division is staffed with a Transit Director, Transit Section Manager, two Program Analyst II, one Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, and one Administrative Support Associate.

### Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance

Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance is led by a Deputy Director and is comprised of distinct transportation services for the following areas:

- Traffic Engineering Division
- Operations and Maintenance Division

The Traffic Engineering Division is responsible for maintaining the countywide traffic signal system, monitoring travel conditions, maintaining traffic volume and data, and providing reports, analysis, and recommendations for corrective measures. Sections within the Traffic Engineering Division include:

- Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) / Traffic Control Center (TCC)
- Traffic Signal Section
- Traffic Studies and Support

The ATMS/TCC is led by a Section Manager (Engineer V) and includes one Engineer, two Traffic Analysts, two Trades Technicians, and one Project Coordinator.

The Traffic Signal Section is led by a Section Manager (Engineer V) and includes an Engineer, and the Traffic Signal Construction and Maintenance Team. This Team is comprised of three Traffic Signal Teams, each led by a Trades Technician IV and includes Trades Technicians I, II, and/or III positions.

The Traffic Studies and Support Section is led by a Section Manager and includes an Engineer II, two Traffic Analysts, and a Warehouse Coordinator.

The Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for maintaining County roads, sidewalks, bridges, rights-of-way, and promoting safe traffic conditions by providing traffic studies and maintaining traffic control signaling, pavement markings, and signage.

Sections within the Operations and Maintenance Division include:

- Road Maintenance
- Contracted Services
- Traffic Operations, which includes the following specialty crews:
  - Traffic Analysis
  - Residential Sign Crew
  - Traffic Operations and Sign Crews
  - Paint Team
  - Thermo Team

The Road Maintenance Section is led by two Superintendents who each are responsible for supervising four teams. Each team is assigned a geographic area of the County or a specialty area, and typically includes one Maintenance Foreman and Maintenance Technician I, II, and/or III positions.

The Contracted Services Section is led by a Section Manager (Construction Manager II) and includes two Engineers, two Construction Managers, and one Quality Control Inspector.

The Traffic Operations Section is led by a Maintenance Superintendent. Included in this section are two Traffic Analysts and four specialty crews, with each crew including a Maintenance Foreman and Maintenance Technician I, II, and/or III positions.

#### Staff and Administrative Support Section

The Staff and Administrative Services Section is staffed with one Section Manager, one Office Manager, and three Administrative Support Associates.

### Strategic Priorities

#### Increased Access for the Traffic Control Center

The Traffic Control Center has expanded its role and access to traffic cameras and signals to exponentially more access throughout the County. Other jurisdictions are observing the TCC operations and how the County utilizes the TCC in order to possibly replicate the program within their own County.

### Collaboration Between the Traffic Control Center with the Gwinnett Police Department (GCPD)

The Traffic Control Center entered into a data sharing agreement with the Gwinnett County Police Department (“GCPD”) to share real-time access to the 350+ cameras located at traffic devices throughout the County. The GCPD will utilize the real-time camera access from the TCC and data from other County entities, data from license plate readers, and data from additional law enforcement agencies to consolidate into a master, synthesized aggregate system of transportation and law enforcement data. Law enforcement agencies from around the country are contacting GCPD for more information on how they synthesized the data, with minimal to no additional costs.

### 2022 Contracts for On-Call Transportation-related Professional Services

The Department maintains a list of prequalified transportation professional services firms that support the County in providing various technical services. The last time the County released an RFP for Transportation-related professional services was in the 2017 Transportation Demand Consultant Professional Services list. The County released an RFP on 11/24/2021, to allow vendors interested in being considered for the contract to submit bids for the 2022, which just closed 2/17/2022. Based on previous experience, the Department anticipates that it will take until mid- to late-2022 before the finalized list of vendors will be approved by the Board of Commissioners and the contracts will be executed.

### Leadership and Management

At the County level, Department staff noted that communications feel more reactive than intentional. Information is being shared with different Departments on different timelines, so staff often hear from employees in other departments before hearing the information from an official Gwinnett County leadership source. Staff also perceive a lack of visibility into County leadership and Commissioners, unless working in a highly-visible/high-priority area of the County.

There is a perception that the County does not trust its employees. The lack of County guidance on telework policies and the ability of each division within a department to craft individual policies feels like the County has passed along the responsibility to take ownership and set County-wide messaging.

Within the Department, staff perceive that management is available, supportive and approachable. A common perception by staff is that some managers think they are communicating better with staff than they actually are. However, staff perceive that Departmental leadership has a limited understanding of what all divisions do, and that management does not understand the impacts of making unilateral changes and/or directives.

Communications and engagement feel inconsistent. While some of the Finance and Performance Division staff participated in the Plant Moran needs analysis for a new ERP, those employees never heard the results of the process, nor where the County currently is in the process of procuring a new ERP.

There is a perception that more Department leadership are “out of the loop” since relocating to One Justice as there are fewer organic opportunities for face to face communication.

DOT has intentionally tried to build a sense of community and relationships among the staff – there have been potlucks, informal meetings, and “community” building events. This does not fully translate

to understanding duties, responsibilities, workload, etc., but has shown a positive effect on morale and sense of belonging within the Department.

DOT created a new Department policy “Department Telework Plan”, effective 12/31/2021, which provides details of the program, conditions in which teleworking is permitted, responsibilities of the supervisor and employee who is teleworking, and an allocation of the maximum number of days each week teleworking is permitted by job title. Employees requesting to telework must submit a teleworking agreement to Division leadership for consideration and approval prior to scheduling telework days.

Department leadership requires Section Managers to work from One Justice Square for one- to two-days each week so supervisors will be available to Department leadership and other Section Managers for communication regarding project discussions. However, with no coordination across Section Managers, the result is often an unrelated assortment of One Justice Square each day.

## Technology

The Department of Transportation (DOT) utilizes technology in line with Gwinnett County's 2040 Unified Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plan, focusing on updating processes and systems for better customer service, data and process management, and visibility. DOT also utilizes cell phones, laptops, and tablets for technicians who work in the field for managing work orders and timekeeping.

The following describes DOT’s current technology:

### *SAP*

SAP is the primary system used by DOT for core business streams, including work order management, performance tracking, timekeeping, and documentation storage. The Department uses the entire SAP solution with multiple modules used between divisions.

### *GIS*

DOT uses Gwinnett County's GIS technology internally and as customer-facing resources. Internally, GIS is used for zoning, permits, utilities, topography, etc. Users can access the Gwinnett GIS system to find public buildings, public service areas, political districts, sewer/water layers, and topography, among other services.

### *Vendor-Provided Systems*

Capital Program Delivery Division, through the project management contractor Atlas Inc., utilizes their proprietary project management software for dashboard and access to project details. Atlas’ project management software is also used by other County Departments who use Atlas Inc., for project management services.

Gwinnett Transit, through its vendor for transit services with TransDev, Inc., utilizes the “Avail System”, which is an Enterprise Transit Management Software (ETMS) used to track service delivery, fleet management, and rider utilization, and includes vendor management dashboards and reporting features. This system includes the utilization of the "MyAvail" mobile smartphone application, which provides real-time communications to customers of service delays and route changes.



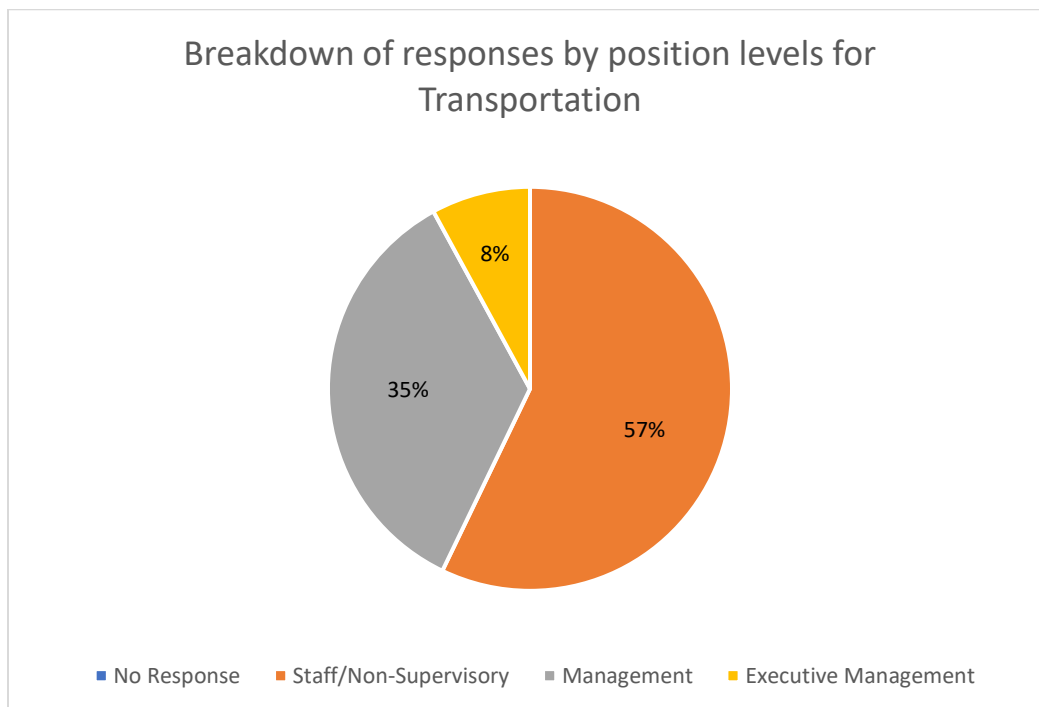
## Customer Service

The Department created a single point of entry for all customer service requests and inquiries. The “Service Request Center” is accessible via the Department’s website or by calling the Department’s main telephone number. The “Citizen Self Service Request Center” is the online portal for entering new service requests or for checking the status of a service request previously submitted. Whether submitting a request by telephone or via the website portal, each service request is assigned a Reference Number (which is linked to the street address for the request) and shared with the customer at the time the request is submitted. The Reference Number allows the customer to check the status of the request directly from the website or by calling the Service Request Center.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Sixty-three responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 41%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



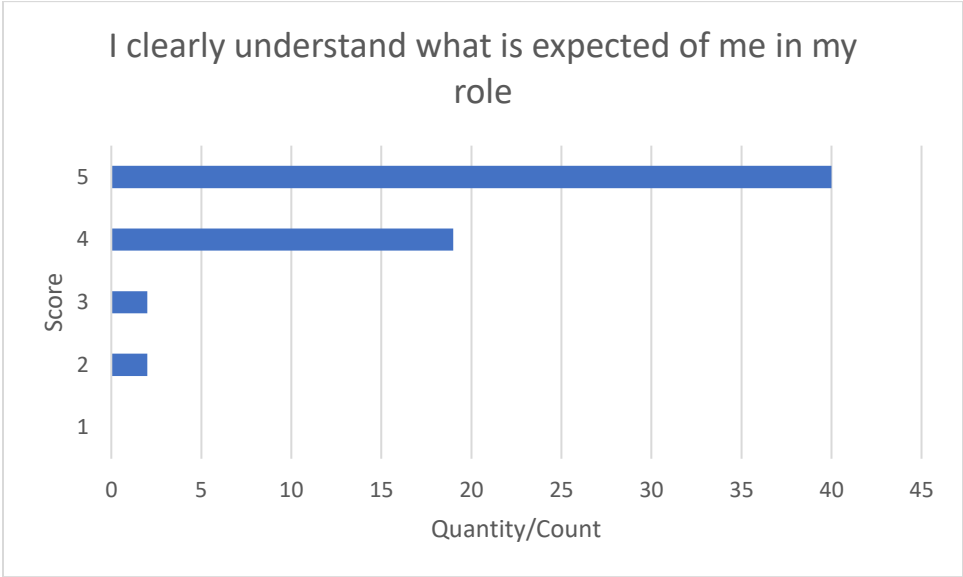
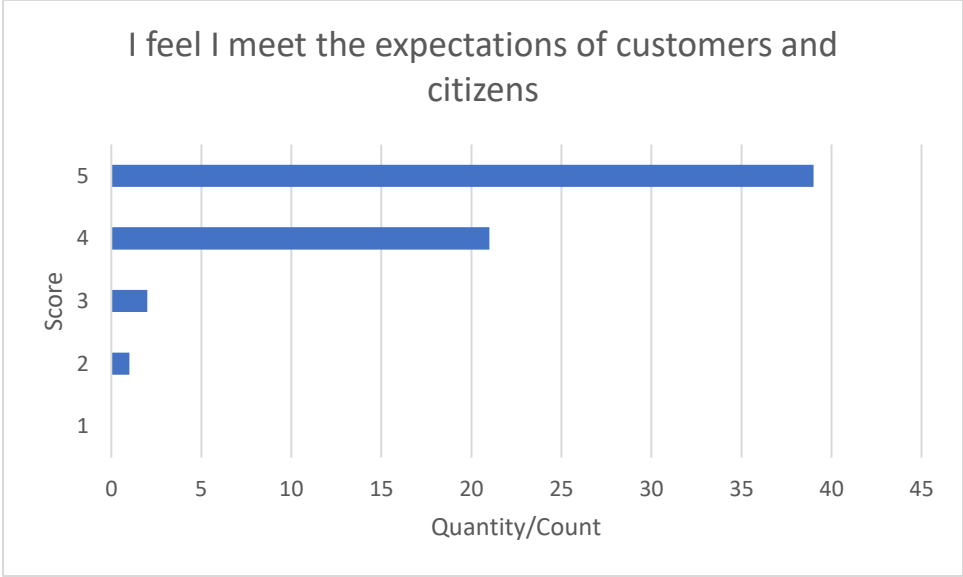
As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

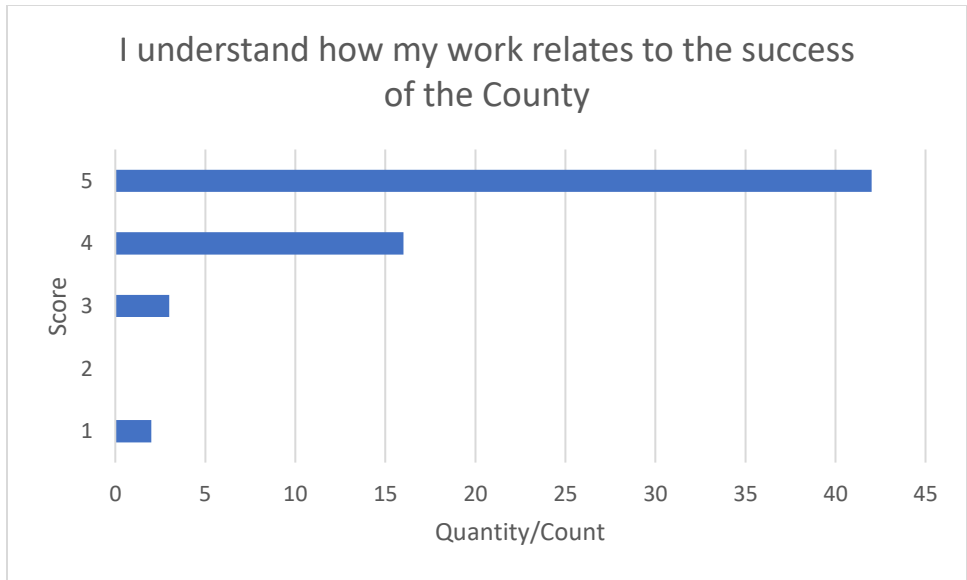
The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

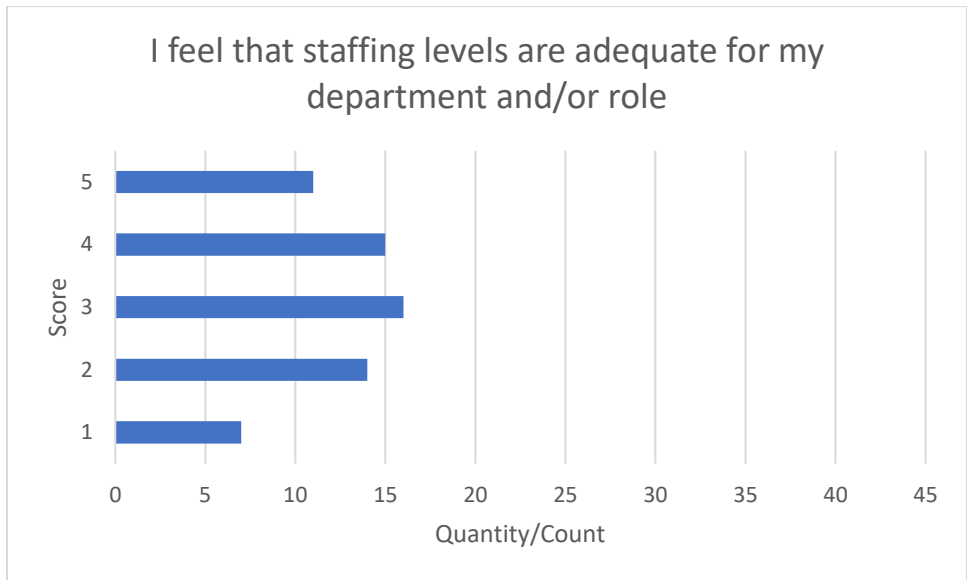
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.9
I understand my mission and vision of my department	4.1
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.5
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.5
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.9
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.8
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.6
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	3.1
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	4.2
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	4.1
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	4.0
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.9
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.7
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.3
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.9
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.7
I am proud to work for the County	4.3
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.3

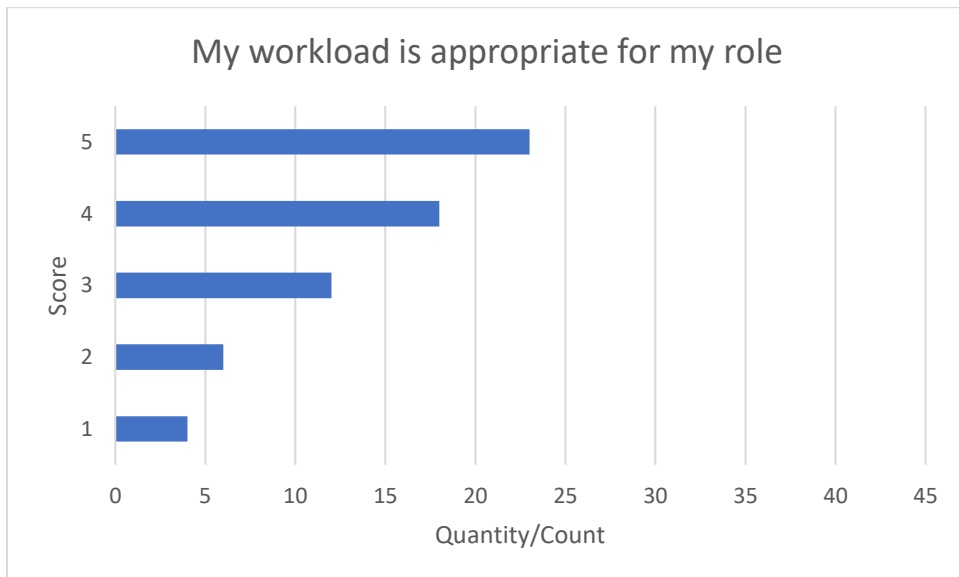
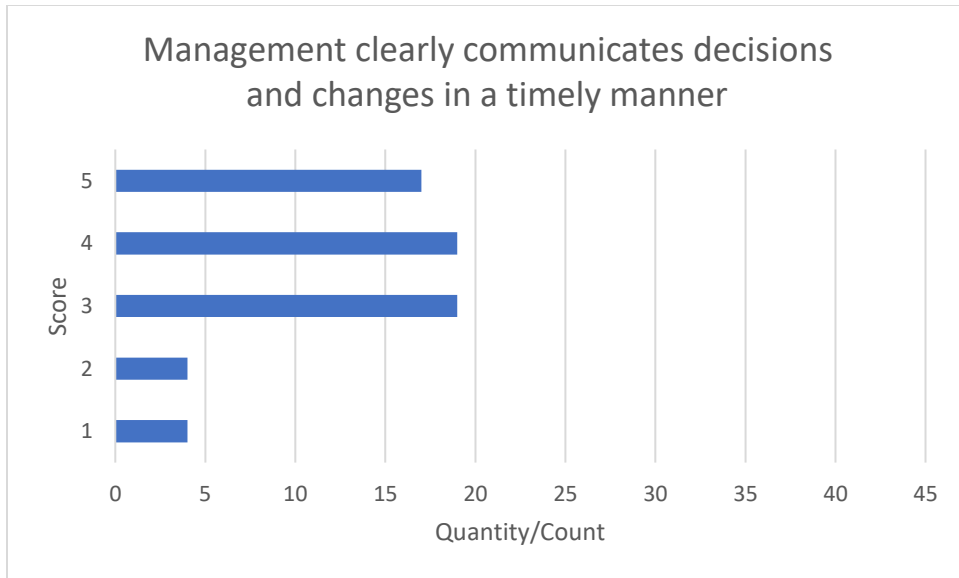
The average score for all the survey statements is 4.1. The lowest score is 3.1 and the highest score is 4.6. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- The Department staff is hardworking and each individual team exhibits strong teamwork. The staff take pride in their work and in Gwinnett County, resulting in a drive to serve the community and be responsive to citizens.
- The diversity of the staff within the Department has grown. While respondents suggest additional diversity is necessary, the growth in diversity over the last few years has been noted.
- Communication is divisive between respondents: some include communication in their list of Departmental strengths, while others identify a need for greater top-down and inter-divisional communication. This suggests inconsistent communication between divisions, sections, and teams in the Department.

- Respondents acknowledge staff levels can be considered low, partially because the Department has difficulty retaining talented staff. Respondents identify non-competitive pay, limited training opportunities, and too many internal candidates for too few internal promotions as reasons the Department struggles with staff retention.
- According to Department staff, the supervisors and upper management who are strong in their jobs and their leadership skills are excellent to work for, however that is not universally the case for all managers. While the strong managers listen to their staff, other managers struggle with top-down communication, treat various teams or staff members differently, and do not hold their staff or their contractors properly accountable.
- Technology is identified as a common issue within the Department. Outdated technology and lack of computer access for all employees results in quality issues, while limited automation of processes and issues logging results in redundancies in project tracking. Better systems and more access could allow for better asset management, as well as general quality control.
- Some respondents feel the Department has set an expectation that staff will work overtime, especially for salaried workers who do not receive overtime pay. Respondents acknowledge some staff arrive nearly two hours prior to the start of their shift and stay two or more hours after, while also being prepared to come into the office at night or on the weekends, even when not on call. Additionally, staff are expected to work full 40 to 50-hour work weeks on top of County-sponsored training programs.
- While respondents suggest most staff are proud to work for Gwinnett and be responsive to the citizens, there exists a concern the Department is not successfully telling its story to the Board of Commissioners or to the public. Respondents identify limited branding to showcase the work the Department is doing or has done, and recommend the Department take advantage of more opportunities to communicate the benefits and necessities of projects to the Commissioners and the citizens they represent.

## 3.D.1 Department of Transportation – Finance and Performance Management Division

The Finance and Performance Management Division is responsible for all financial functions for the Department, including processing all payments, supporting procurement and contract execution, and supporting budget management and revisions. The Division is also responsible for asset management and serving as a liaison with the Fleet Division of the Support Services Department.

There is currently minimal formalized cross-training between financial positions, which may result in the Division having limited to no support for certain functions if certain employees are absent.

The Division is organized into two sections: the Financial Section, responsible for traditional accounting and procurement functions, and the Planning, Budgeting and Metrics Section, responsible for budgeting and performance metrics for the Department's other divisions. The Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section is also responsible for coordination with the Fleet Management Division of the Support Services Department and for Asset Under Construction reporting.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Payment Processing
- Purchasing
- Budget and Project Management
- Asset Management

### Payment Processing

Invoices come into the Financial Section from Finance or Law through an email alias account, or physical mail on occasion. All invoices are date stamped for the receipt date, and then entered into a spreadsheet maintained by the Business Services Associate IIs (BSA IIs). The spreadsheet organizes the invoices by construction projects, engineering, or general operating invoices. Once the invoice is logged onto the spreadsheet, the BSA II confirms available purchase order balance. If there are issues, the BSA IIs reach out to the Financial Supervisor who coordinates with the responsible DOT division. If there are adequate funds, then the invoice is sent to the end-user division director through SharePoint for review and approval. The change in status is logged into the spreadsheet. Once all approvals have been received, SharePoint sends the entering BSA II an email confirming that all approvals have been received. The BSA II then enters the invoice into FileNet for payment processing by the County Finance Department.

### Purchasing

The Financial Supervisor also acts at the Department's liaison with Purchasing, playing a role in contract renewals and agenda item creation for procured service contract award. Once a contract has been approved, the Financial Supervisor coordinates with the vendor to obtain the E-Verify affidavit and appropriate insurance forms, and establishes the new vendor in SAP as necessary.

## Budget and Project Management

Program Analysts within the Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section are responsible for all budget transfers for their assigned divisions and/or sections. This includes a mix of proactive requests, such as when a project is nearing completion and didn't spend all budgeted funds, as well as moving funds within categories. Some budget transfers within the same project and category can be processed by the Program Analysts in collaboration with the responsible division or section; others may require Departmental leadership or County leadership approval.

Program Analysts are also responsible for reviewing all Pay Applications submitted by contractors to confirm that the actual invoices match the approved project plan. Program Analysts also compare construction plans to the materials list on the Pay Application to confirm that the proposed and approved materials match. If there is not a match, the Program Analyst coordinates with the responsible division or section to determine if project plan or materials list modifications are necessary.

Program Analysts are also responsible for creating agenda items for all Department requests that must go before the Board of Commissioners. This includes creating the agenda item in FileNet, uploading the supporting documentation, and ensuring that the agenda items move through the approval process in a timely manner to be submitted to the Board of Commissioners.

Program Analysts are also responsible for coordinating contract routing and ensuring that all appropriate reviews and approvals have been obtained prior to execution. The County currently requires physical signatures on all contracts, so physical copies of the contracts are routed to the appropriate departments for review and approval for signature and execution. There is currently no system for tracking contracts through their review and approval process.

## Asset Management

For fixed asset management, the Division uses an "Assets Under Construction" spreadsheet created by the County Finance Department to track the progress of projects. Once a project reaches 85% completion, the Program Analyst creates a materials list and determines if the project will generate a County fixed asset. If so, then the Program Analyst creates the fixed asset and notes information about whether it is a new or modified asset, the asset's location, and other identifying information.

The Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section is also responsible for coordinating with the Fleet Division of the Support Services Department for scheduling preventative maintenance for DOT assets, purchasing new vehicles, and completing the Vehicle or Equipment Replacement Plan ("VERP") for replacement vehicles.

## Communications

The Division holds weekly team meetings to communicate on workload, issues or concerns, and to communicate any County updates or information.

There are also Departmental leadership meetings to review agenda items that are attended by both the Program Analyst III and the Division Director.

The Division is also utilizing Teams to coordinate with other divisions within the Department. The use of Teams has increased the ability for collaboration through real-time chats, real-time document editing, and communications.



## Strategic Initiatives

The Division is focused on customer service, ensuring that they are supporting all other divisions within the Department, as well as ensuring timely and consistent communications with other departments.

The Division is hoping to leverage the new Analyst position that will be responsible for asset management to shift to a more strategic and proactive asset management approach, including better asset life cycle development and management, and better scheduling of preventative maintenance. These efforts will require coordination with other Departmental divisions to ensure timely implementation of schedules.

## Systems and Applications

Finance and Performance Management Division oversees the Department's financial operations utilizing the enterprise SAP system and SharePoint Excel program files to track performance metrics and payment requests submitted to the Division.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Financial Section strives to ensure that all payments are made within thirty days of invoice receipt. They have established several internal benchmarks to ensure they are meeting this metric. Currently, the BSAs enter all invoices received into a spreadsheet to track receipt date and progress of invoice approval and payment workflow. The current goal is to have all invoices be entered into SharePoint for internal approval workflow within 24 hours of receipt. The invoices should be approved and entered into FileNet within three days of receipt. FileNet entry initiates the Finance Department's review and payment process.

The Division also has the titling of "Performance Management", but no formal expectations have been set at the County or Department level around what that responsibility entails. Currently, the Program Analysts work with each of their assigned divisions in ensuring that information is being submitted into Management Framework as appropriate, but there has been minimal effort to shift ownership of identifying relevant datapoints and performing more detailed and timely analysis of data to the Planning, Budgeting, and Metrics Section.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division staff responsible for financial functions have created minimal cross-training processes between the different positions. This increases the Department's risk for having certain functions unsupported, or having staff unaware of how to perform these functions in the absence of the responsible position.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should better formalize cross-training of key financial functions, and ensure that there is appropriate delegation of more rote or routine tasks as possible.

**Observation 2:** The Division is currently creating a spreadsheet for each BSA to track all invoices received and the processing workflow. This spreadsheet is separate from the SharePoint workflow used to obtain invoice approvals. The process of manually entering all invoices into a spreadsheet and then entering them into a SharePoint is manual and duplicative.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should assess whether the current SharePoint process can be modified to replace the manual entry of invoices on a spreadsheet and reduce the duplication of entry.

**Observation 3:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. This increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 4:** The Division is currently assigned performance management for the Department. This predominantly consists of ensuring that other divisions are uploading assigned metrics and data into Management Framework in a timely manner. The Department is missing an opportunity to better leverage the Divisional who have insight across divisions for developing more strategic and informative performance metrics for the Department.

**Recommendation 4:** The County and then the Department need to determine the intent of the performance management and data collection process, to ensure that the use of staff time results in appropriate performance measures or workload indicators that add value and insight into each Department's core mission and functions. Additionally, the Department should leverage the knowledge of the Program Analysts to perform more review and analysis of available data. This additional responsibility should be balanced with the core requirements of the job and the Department, to ensure that this work is value-add and provides insight that meaningfully impacts Departmental operations.

## 3.D.2 Department of Transportation – Capital Transit Improvement Program

Capital Transit Improvement is a fairly new function led by a Capital Projects Director who serves as a member of the Department’s Executive Team and reports to the Department’s Assistant Director. Capital Transit Improvement is currently an organization of one professional.

The Capital Transit Improvement Program (“C-TIP”) is a competitive funding program designed to address critical capital-related public transit needs throughout Gwinnett County. The C-TIP program is designed to deliver managed projects with speed and efficiency while demonstrating fiscal responsibility to improve safety and service quality. In addition, enhancing customer experience, maintaining assets, expanding infrastructure, and upgrading technologies are essential within the Capital Transit Improvement Program.

As this function and position are fairly new, there is little to evaluate. However, the County and the Department should be commended for creating this function and position showing its appreciation and need for more transit options within the County.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Capital Transit Improvement Program function is fairly new and is designed to address critical capital-related public transit needs throughout the County.

**Recommendation 1:** As transit funding, demand, and capital projects increase in the future, the Department should consider creating a dedicated transit sub-organization within the Department’s organization that encompasses the Capital Transit Improvement Program, the Transit Division, and other potential transit-related delivery functions.

## 3.D.3 Department of Transportation – Capital Program Delivery

Capital Program Delivery currently oversees the 2017 and 2014 SPLOST road building programs and all other road building programs. Capital Program Delivery receives assistance from private sector contractors and consultants as needed to expedite the design, land acquisition, and construction of road and bridge improvement projects.

Capital Program Delivery is responsible for delivering transportation capital projects before turning over to the Department’s Operations and Maintenance Division for ongoing maintenance. The capital projects are delivered based on the County’s “Universe of Projects” which is a detailed listing of proposed and approved capital projects. The capital projects are primarily funded through SPLOST.

### Key Functions

Key Capital Program Delivery functions include the following:

- Preconstruction Project Management
- Transportation Planning
- Utility Permitting
- Construction Management

### Preconstruction Project Management

Preconstruction project management is performed by the Preconstruction Division and consists of identifying potential transportation capital projects and managing the project engineering process from concept through detailed design.

Potential capital projects are generally identified through two means:

- Citizen Input – Citizens will submit identified transportation project needs or recommendations for improvement to the Department
- Department Initiative – The Department proactively assesses and identifies potential transportation projects throughout the County through physical inspection or data analysis

As capital projects are identified, they are included in the “Universe of Projects”. The “Universe of Projects” is a living document that details all potential transportation capital projects identified from citizen input, staff analysis, initiatives within the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and previously identified projects.

Transportation capital projects are primarily funded through SPLOST. Gwinnett voters have approved a series of SPLOST referendums, since the mid-1980s. On November 8, 2016 (the most recent referendum), Gwinnett County voters approved the renewal of the one-cent SPLOST sales tax. Collections for the six-year program started April 1, 2017, and will raise an estimated \$950 million for capital projects Countywide.

A Citizen Review Committee (consisting of citizens appointed by the County and municipalities within the County) provides input on project priority for the Board of Commissioners approval. More than \$450M of the 2017 SPLOST program was allocated to transportation capital projects in the following areas:

- Bridges, Culverts and Transportation Drainage
- Capital Projects Rehabilitation and Resurfacing
- Intersections
- Major Roads
- Residential Speed Control
- Road Safety and Alignment
- School Safety
- Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety
- Transportation Planning
- Unpaved Roads

SPLOST project information is posted on the County's website.

The Preconstruction Division also coordinates and manages the engineering process from concept to final design. The Department maintains a list of prequalified engineering firms that were selected to be "on call" engineers through a competitive procurement process. The engineering firms provide varying quality of work and there is not a formal mechanism for Preconstruction Division staff to provide formal feedback and evaluation that results in impacting the project assignment process. As projects come in, Preconstruction Division staff assign the new work/project to one of the "on call" engineering firms based on current workload of other assignments and relevant experience/qualifications.

The Preconstruction Division works closely with the engineering firms to explain project concepts and requirements. Preconstruction Division staff conduct "Opening Meetings" with the assigned engineering firm to discuss the project's concept and make any alterations as necessary. Preconstruction Division staff work with the assigned engineering firm throughout the design process until a final design is produced – a final design is detailed documentation with all requirements and specifications needed for construction vendors to construct the project. As part of the design phase, Field Plan Reviews are conducted that consider traffic, utilities, and water considerations and impacts.

### Transportation Planning

The Transportation Planning Section is responsible for studying, analyzing, and planning various transportation projects. Additional responsibilities include designing research methods and survey techniques for proposed transportation projects, assessing the impact of recent building developments, and recommending transportation systems improvements or projects based on economic, population, land-use, or traffic projections. The County's population has increased significantly over the past 30 years making transportation planning a critical function and part of every citizen's daily life:

- 1990 Population – approximately 350,000
- 2010 Population – approximately 800,000

- Current Population – approaching 1,000,000

Transportation Planning maintains a Long-Range Plan for transportation that plans transportation needs 20 to 30 years out into the future. Long-range planning is a collaborative process that involves public outreach, input from a formal Citizens Committee, and coordination with County municipalities local transportation organizations such as the Georgia Department of Transportation, Atlanta Regional Commission, State Road Tollway Authority, and MARTA.

Transportation Planning takes projects from concept to zoning. The Section coordinates with the County's Planning and Zoning Department to design and obtain approval for zoning requirements.

Transportation Planning is also responsible for the County's participation in the "Livable Cities Initiative" which is a grant program from the Atlanta Regional Commission that incentivizes local jurisdictions to re-envision communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles and provide improved access to jobs and services. To date, there have been 16 "Study Areas" for the Livable Cities Initiative in Gwinnett County.

#### Utility Permitting

The Utility Permitting Section is responsible for reviewing applications/plans and issuing permits for utilities to be installed in the County's rights-of-way. In 2017, the Board of Commissioners amended the County Code of Ordinances to require all utilities desiring to locate their facilities in Gwinnett County rights-of-way to obtain a permit from the Transportation Department.

Utilities (power, cable, etc.) are installed and maintained by private utility organizations. When utility organizations want to install cables or cellular towers, they complete a utility permit application that is reviewed and approved by the Utility Permitting Section. Utilities can be installed above or below the ground in the County's rights-of-way. The Utility Permitting Section reviews between five and 10 plan reviews/applications each week. The Utility Permitting Section also reviews and approves permit renewals upon permit expiration.

#### Construction Management

Construction management is performed by the Construction Division and is responsible for projects related to bridges, culverts, transportation drainage, roads, intersections, roads, sidewalk construction, the speed control bid for the 2017 and 2014 SPLOST programs, and other road improvement programs. The Construction Division manages the property acquisition and construction of approved projects from the Preconstruction Division that have been engineered from concept to final design. Additional responsibilities include bid package review, construction management, traffic and erosion control oversight, final acceptance, and project closeout.

The Construction Division receives approved and engineered projects from the Preconstruction Division and solicits Requests for Proposals ("RFPs") from contractors to construct the project. The Construction Division manages the capital construction projects from RFP solicitation through project close out where the project has been completed and then the infrastructure becomes the responsibility of the Operations and Maintenance Division to maintain the asset(s).

### *RFP Process*

The County Purchasing Department leads the procurement process for soliciting bids and selecting vendors to construct the approved capital projects for which the Construction Division is responsible. The County maintains a list of prequalified construction vendors that were approved through an open procurement. The bid solicitation packages detail the requirements of the construction project and contain all necessary engineering documents needed to provide a bid. The bid solicitation packages are only provided to the previously prequalified construction vendors.

County policy currently dictates that the selected vendor is based on responding to the County's requested items/requirements in the RFP, and lowest bid (price).

### *Land/ROW Acquisition*

The Construction Division is responsible for acquiring non-County land for construction projects if needed. The Construction Division utilizes Atlas (a professional services firm) to manage the land/right-of-way ("ROW") acquisition process and serves as a technical extension of the Department. The Construction Division provides contract monitoring over Atlas and the Law Department and Board of Commissioners become involved in the land acquisition process as needed. Atlas maintains a great deal of information related to land/ROW acquisitions through its system – Teams (not affiliated with Microsoft Teams) for which the County does not have readily available access.

### *Construction Management*

The Construction Division also leverages Atlas to provide daily project management oversight over the construction projects and the construction vendors. The Construction Division maintains two floating managers (managers that are responsible for multiple simultaneous projects that "float" among projects providing periodic oversight) that also oversee Atlas's project management responsibilities and the construction projects. The Construction Division leverages drone technology to support project management tasks such as assisting to track and communicate progress, track and manage materials and assets, reduce theft, improve visibility, increase safety, and provide information for potential design changes. The Construction Division manages projects through detailed excel spreadsheets which contain project-specific detailed information and notes. The spreadsheets are posted to Sharepoint.

The Construction Division has noted that, at times, there have been issues with the performance of the construction vendors and Atlas. Often the issues are resolved informally through communications, but there are not formal evaluations of the firms to receive the benefit of "lessons learned" and to consider past issues when a firm may be the lowest bidder on a new construction project.

The Construction Division recently created and filled a position to assist with enhanced marketing and promotion of capital construction projects and the related benefits to County residents and stakeholders.

## **Communications**

Capital Program Delivery actively communicates with the public through community events, information/input sessions, its website, and the creation of the "Citizens Review Committee". The Construction Division recently created and filled a position to assist with enhanced marketing and promotion of capital construction projects and the related benefits to County residents and stakeholders.

## Strategic Initiatives

- Capital Program Delivery maintains a “Universe of Projects” that detail all potential capital transportation projects that is available to the public and consists of direct suggestions from the public.
- The creation of the “Citizens Review Committee” is a great method to seek citizen input and representation when prioritizing capital projects.
- Capital Program Delivery works closely with the engineering firms and has created multiple formal touchpoints for collaboration which result in a more efficient and effective design process.
- Capital Program Delivery leverages prequalified vendors for engineering and construction services which helps to speed up the design and construction lifecycle.
- Capital Program Delivery began requiring permits for utilities to be installed in the County’s ROW. The permit fees help to offset related County costs and is something that other governments have implemented.

## Systems and Applications

Capital Program Delivery tracks projects and develops monthly reports containing active construction and pre-construction projects updates in SharePoint. The platform promotes collaboration between teams, acts as a document repository for invoices and other project information, and tracks projects using GDOT line items.

Atlas is the project management contractor that provides project management software used for environmental permitting, property acquisition, and other departmental functions. The software is called Teams and is not associated with Microsoft Teams. Atlas owns Teams.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Below are a few metrics Capital Program Delivery should consider tracking in order to best represent the divisions’ performance:

- Service Provider Oversight – Capital Program Delivery should develop an evaluation for vendors, both engineering and construction firms, in order to track on-time delivery, on-budget delivery, change orders, quality of work, etc. By tracking service level agreements, the County guarantees work is being done efficiently and effectively, and under-performing vendors aren’t repeatedly winning contracts.
- Permit and Plan Response Times – The Utility Permitting Section should develop standards on the timeline to review applications/plans for utilities and should be able to report upon the Section’s ability to meet those goals by identifying the number of reviews performed within the set timeline and those that took longer.
- Public Perception of Projects – As Capital Program Delivery engages in enhanced marketing and promotion of capital construction projects and the related benefits to County residents, the Department should consider issuing periodic perception surveys to Gwinnett County residents. Perception surveys would allow for Capital Program Delivery to gauge the effectiveness of the public education and promotion efforts, and identify shifts in strategy (*e.g.*, focusing on different parts of the County, different project types, etc.).



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Capital Program Delivery leverages an open procurement that prequalifies engineering firms to support capital design projects. Having a list of “on call” prequalified vendors is a leading practice. However, the engineering firms provide varying quality of work and there is not a formal mechanism for staff to provide formal feedback and evaluation that results in impacting the project assignment process.

**Recommendation 1:** Preconstruction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify engineering firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly impacts the assignment of work provided to each engineering firm.

**Observation 2:** Capital Program Delivery leverages an open procurement that prequalifies construction firms to support capital project construction. Having a list of “on call” prequalified vendors is a leading practice. However, the construction firms provide varying quality of work and County policy dictates that the selected construction vendor is based on responding to the County’s requested items/requirements in the RFP, and lowest bid (price).

**Recommendation 2:** Construction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify construction firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly considers and impacts future awards. The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project”.

**Observation 3:** The County does not have readily available access to the ROW acquisition information maintained by Atlas.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider procuring its own ROW management software or when the current Atlas contract expires, add a requirement in the future RFP for ROW acquisition services that the vendor maintain ROW management software that can be accessed in real time by Capital Program Delivery staff.

**Observation 4:** The Construction Division manages projects through detailed excel spreadsheets which contain project-specific detailed information and notes.

**Recommendation 4:** Capital Program Delivery should consider purchasing formal construction project management software that can be used by multiple divisions to better, and more formally, manage capital projects throughout the entire lifecycle.

**Observation 5:** The Construction Division recently created and filled a position to assist with enhanced marketing and promotion of capital construction projects and the related benefits to County residents and stakeholders.

**Recommendation 5:** The Construction Division and Department as a whole should continue to market and educate the public on all completed and planned transportation projects, and the numerous benefits realized.

## 3.D.4 Department of Transportation – Intermodal Operations Division

Intermodal Operations is a new division created in the Department of Transportation which coordinates operations of the Gwinnett County Transit System and operations and maintenance of the Gwinnett County Airport (Briscoe Field).

### Key Functions

Key Division functions include the following:

- Airport Operations
- Transit Operations

### Airport Operations

The Airport Division is responsible for operating the Gwinnett County Airport (also known as “Briscoe Field”), which operates seven days per week, 365 days per year. The Division operates the airport, which is located on approximately 500 acres of County land, in a safe and efficient manner within the requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) and the State of Georgia safety and operational standards.

The Gwinnett County Airport Authority (“Authority”) provides governing oversight for the Airport through a management agreement with the County Board of Commissioners. The Authority consists of five members, with four members appointed from each of the four commission districts, and one position appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners.

The Airport’s Air Traffic Control Tower (“Tower”) operates 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., seven days per week, 365 days per year. As the Airport is operated under the authority of the FAA, aircraft are only allowed to land at the airport during the operating hours of the Tower. The Tower is owned and maintained by the County, while the FAA staffs the Tower with Air Traffic Control personnel.

The FAA typically reviews and approves the Airport’s Master Plan every three years. An updated Master Plan is due later this year. The County typically contracts with an aviation-related contractor to assist with the development and updates to the Master Plan.

Pilots and passengers typically interact only with staff from the businesses who lease the airport hangers and buildings onsite of the airport. Guests often mistakenly believe those companies “run the airport”. Two Fixed Base Operators, one on the North side of the Airport and a second on the South side of the Airport, handle private aviation (non-commercial), aircraft passengers, and services for arriving and departing planes which include providing the following services:

- Fuel for aircraft
- Catering for pilots and passengers
- Car rentals
- Lounge access for pilots

Airport operations is coordinated and executed by the seven employees of the Airport Division. Operations include keeping the airfield safe from debris and animals, ensuring the airfield lighting is functioning correctly, ensuring the areas near the airfield are mowed, and ensuring trees and underbrush are kept within safety standards so as not to impact lighting or the line of site between pilots and the Air Traffic Control Tower. Airport Maintenance Technicians recently completed a project to replace the 35-year-old 10,000-volt runway lighting system with more emergency efficient and cost saving LED fixtures.

In addition to performing their own housekeeping and custodial services for the Airport Administration building and the Air Traffic Control Tower, Airport Maintenance staff conduct daily inspections of all runway asphalt, taxi ways, tenant building areas and circumference fencing, and airport perimeter fencing to ensure there are no safety or security violations. FAA has granted local airports authority to trap and/or kill certain kinds of birds, vultures, deer, and coyotes that create safety hazards to moving aircraft. Airport staff must remove and properly dispose of animals that are trapped, killed, or found dead on Airport grounds according to FAA regulations. The killing of fowl and animals is an option of last resort, as they often use Screamer shells and/or Bird Bangers to scare bird and wildlife pests (blank cartridges shot from pyrotechnic pistols which travel 125- to 150-feet before releasing a 100-160dB screeching noise), or try to scare them with pick-up trucks.

Airport Division staff manage 23 master ground leases for the lease of a specific area of the airport for private businesses to build or modify structures for the duration of the lease period. When the lease expires, the improvements made on the land revert back to the County. Within the next two- to three-years, a significant portion of the buildings on the North side of the airport will revert back to the County. The area on the North side is just over 43 acres and includes 15 hanger buildings and over 100 "T-Hangers".

The County issued a Request for Proposal ("RFP") within the last 12 months for the development of the entire North side. The received responses did not meet the County's needs, so the Board of Commissioners cancelled the RFP. The County will soon be issuing a Request for Information ("RFI") for the development of the North side in order to see what ideas and suggestions interested businesses express on the development. In an attempt to reduce the size and scope of the project on interested bidders, the RFI will divide the Northside into three sections based on logical dividing points of the area – allowing bidders to bid on one, two, or all three sections. A vendor will be selected for each section, acknowledging that one vendor may be approved for more than one section. FAA rules require businesses that lease airport space must be aviation-related. There are FAA provisions for cases, when the Airport cannot find businesses willing to lease Airport property, that the FAA permits non-aviation related business to lease and sublease for space at the Airport. However, if an aviation-related business expresses interest in leasing space, the County has to cancel the lease of the non-aviation related business. There are no non-aviation related businesses leasing hangers at the airport.

The creation of the RFI was a collaborative process that included not only DOT and Airport staff, but also Economic Development, Finance, the County Administrator's Office, Law Department, before being submitted to the Board of Commissioners for review and approval. A desired outcome of the proposals is to create economic development opportunities on the North side so that more corporate jets will be based at the airport (rather than just flying into the airport). This will yield significant increases to

collected ad valorem taxes for the County – which is a tax based on the assessed value of real estate or major personal property (e.g., car, boat, plane, etc.) located within the County.

Use of contractors to augment the work of Airport staff is somewhat limited, in part due to the fact that FAA regulations require that all personnel in vehicles or equipment near the taxiways and runway are required to operate two-way radios with the Tower at all times, or be under the authority of someone who has the two-way radio communication with the Tower. FAA regulations require that all two-way radio communications on Airport property is spoken in English. Contractors who could provide services needed at the Airport often do not have personnel that can speak and understand English enough to communicate with the Tower on the two-way radios. Although FAA regulations provide the opportunity to use a “Radio Escorter” to contractors, which requires Airport staff remain within a distance to “hear commands” or following in a vehicle within a certain distance, the liability imposed on the Airport staff for overseeing the contractors under those conditions is overly burdensome and unrealistic when mowing on a bat-wing bush hog (a bush hog with three attached mowers, two of which lift vertically), cutting down trees using a chain saw, and other tasks where hearing voice commands is unrealistic.

### Transit Operations

The Transit Division is responsible for providing Transit Services throughout the County in one of the following three ways:

- Local Service
- Commuter Service
- Paratransit Service

Local Service provides buses along seven service areas/routes in the County. Passengers may utilize the Gwinnett County Transit mobile application called “MyStop” or check the [gctransit.com](http://gctransit.com) website for real time tracking of routes and posts regarding any delays. Social media posts on Twitter for @GCTRANSIT also provides real-time route updates.

Commuter Service provides Express buses along five service areas/routes between the County and downtown Atlanta, in coordination with the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (“ATL”) – formerly the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (“GRTA”). There are three park-and-ride lots located in the County.

Paratransit Service is a shared-ride program which provide origin-to-destination (curb-to-curb) transit services to eligible persons with disabilities. Paratransit Service operates within a 3/4-mile area surrounding the existing local bus routes. To be eligible for Paratransit Service, interested riders must submit the Transit Division’s “ADA Paratransit Application” form for consideration and approval.

Additional Transit Division funding is expected to be able to provide three additional Local Service routes (including one to Snellville and possibly one to Athens) and two additional commuter routes (with at least one new commuter route linking to a Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority [“MARTA”] rail line). If the 2024 Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax referendum is approved, additional funds is anticipated for Transit Services.

A standard funding formula for typical Transit services requires 1/3 of program funding from fare boxes, 1/3 of program funding from County funds, and 1/3 of program funding from federal funds (typically

from the Federal Transit Administration). However, in recent years and with decreased ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fare boxes have only provided an estimated 15-20% of funds, which requires the County and federal funding sources to make up the difference. During the peak impact of COVID-19 on Gwinnett Transit, Transit staff made a determination to reduce or remove Commuter service in order to continue the Local Service. A majority of Local Service passengers depend on Gwinnett Transit for their transportation needs, so the County realized that priority and reduced some Commuter routes.

FTA funding for capital purchases typically requires a 20% local match to the 80% provided by the FTA. In recent years, the County used SPLOST funds for the 20% match requirements. If the 2024 SPLOST referendum is approved, the local match requirements will be provided at least for the next decade.

Gwinnett Transit, in collaboration with the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (“ATL”), entered into a three-party contract with TransDev mobility company, based in Lombard, IL, to provide Transit services for the County. Gwinnett Transit and ATL provides their own buses (Gwinnett Transit provides approximately 80 buses), while TransDev provides the bus drivers and mechanics for regular maintenance on the buses. Major milestone (midlife) overhauls of the buses and vans are the responsibility of Gwinnett Transit and ATL, each for their own vehicles. Gwinnett Transit, ATL, and the FTA executed a new contract effective July 1, 2021, for a period of three years. There is an opportunity for two, one-year contract extensions.

Current communication protocols with TransDev requires a minimum of three emails each day regarding route coverage for upcoming peak periods. These email communications provide a precursor of route coverage for the day. During the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during periods of high absence rates of bus drives, these communications allowed Gwinnett Transit and ATL to prioritize routes and shift drivers to cover higher-priority routes and remove lower priority routes from service. The three required emails are:

1. 5:00 a.m. email with a snapshot of the morning service
2. 12:00 p.m. email with a snapshot of the afternoon service
3. 5:00 p.m. email with an assessment of the afternoon service, including any changes for the remainder of the service period, as well an outlook of coverage for the following morning. Since TransDev completes their staffing assignments at 3:00 p.m. each day for the following day, that anticipated coverage is included in the daily 5:00 p.m. email.

The Transit Division Director was hired five months ago from TransDev, where they served for 2.5 years at the General Manager of TransDev’s contract with Gwinnett Transit. This new hire provide Gwinnett Transit with a unique opportunity to manage contractor performance and increase communications between all parties as the new Transit Division Director has intimate knowledge of TransDev’s operations. With the joint agreement with ATL, the added layer of collaboration and facilitation has proven beneficial to both Gwinnett Transit and ATL. Real-time communications to customers has become the norm rather than the exception.

The Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board (“GATB”) consists of four members appointed by Commissioners of each of the Commission Districts, and one member appointed by the Chair of the Board of Commissioners. The Advisory Board provides guidance and direction to Gwinnett Transit and the

Department of Transportation on transit-related matters. The Board typically meets the first Wednesday of every month.

## Communications

### Transit

Gwinnett Transit released the Gwinnett Transit Plan in November 2020, which is a collaborative Transit Development document that outlines how the County would like to develop Transit networks to better serve the citizens of the County. The Plan outlined short-, medium-, and long-range plans regarding services, stewardship, and sustainability.

Gwinnett Transit created real-time communication strategies that includes social media posts to keep riders up to date with delays or changes to routes. Transit staff worked closely with TransDev staff to create the real time posts to their Transit website, the “MyStop” mobile application, and to various other social media sites.

### Airport

With the Request for Information that is soon to be released for the redevelopment for the North side of the Airport, the Airport Division and the Department of Transportation are leading communication sessions with the County Administrator’s Office, Finance, Economic Development, Law Department, and with the Commissioners to prepare for redevelopment considerations and economic development decisions that will impact the short-term and long-term use of Airport operations. This economic development opportunity could prove beneficial to Airport Operations and to the citizens for years to come.

## Strategic Initiatives

### Airport

The Airport Division and the County will be releasing the Request for Information for the redevelopment of the North side of the Airport in the coming months. Strategic conversations are taking place with the County Administrator, County departments, and Board of Commissioners as to the decisions that will need to be made in the coming month that will impact the short- and long-term utilization of the Airport operations and property.

### Transit

Gwinnett Transit is researching its agreement with ATL and TransDev for opportunities to create service level agreements and performance expectations of TransDev, and then to be able to better hold the contractor accountable. Gwinnett Transit will continue to explore options in the contract for the vendor to provide the County a financial credit when the contractor does not meet the service level agreements or performance expectations.

## Systems and Applications

### Communications Systems Review

The Intermodal Division is evaluating systems and/or procedures for expedited automatic and integrated communications to customers regarding impacts to service delivery and additional information which may affect transit services. Transit is currently working with the Transit Services vendor TransDev, to provide additional technology strategies for communicating delays or changes to

routes to the Transit Division staff and Transit customers. They have been exploring solutions but have not determined a process to implement.

The Current Text Alert communications process is described as follows:

<b>Name of Process:</b>	Text Alert System
<b>System Process Purpose</b>	The text alert system notifies Transit users of delays or disruptions in scheduled routes.
<b>System Process Function</b>	Public Alert System
<b>System Process Scope</b>	Issues are entered into the system, and alerts are sent via text and email
<b>System Process Input</b>	Issues are sent to the Dispatcher, who sends alerts to the Intermodal Operations team
<b>System Process Flow</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mechanical issues             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Call mechanic first</li> <li>B. Dispatch to team</li> <li>C. The dispatcher sends an alert to Intermodal Operations</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>System Process Output/End-Result</b>	Text/Email alerts are sent
<b>Pain Points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lots of manual work – pulling up text and manually inputting into the system             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. It takes a long time</li> <li>B. 1:58 break down and not notified until 3:40</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. App provides regular scheduling (Avalil) My Stop Mobile             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Complaints are received in the app</li> <li>B. The app is not integrated with real-time issues</li> <li>C. Standard routing</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## Data and Performance Analysis

### Airport

The following table represents the total number of Take Offs and Landings at the Airport. The incomplete data sets make trend and data analysis almost impossible. With reevaluation of the data and/or more complete data provided in the next 15-18 months, further analysis may be provided. The FAA initiated a new system in mid-2021 which electronically tabulates takeoffs and landings based on the aircraft's tail number. Prior to the new system, the FAA used a manual tabulation process which only included aircraft based outside the Gwinnett County Airport.

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Month</b>	Actual	Actual	Actual
			<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
# Gwinnett County Airport Take Off/Landings		<b>January</b>	NA	0	0
		<b>February</b>	NA	0	4
		<b>March</b>	NA	0	0
		<b>April</b>	NA	2	0
		<b>May</b>	NA	0	0
		<b>June</b>	NA	0	0
		<b>July</b>	NA	0	8
		<b>August</b>	NA	3	3,639
		<b>September</b>	NA	0	5,316
		<b>October</b>	NA	0	3,866
		<b>November</b>	NA	2	4,776
		<b>December</b>	NA	3	3,124

### Transit

The following table provide ridership of Gwinnett Transit services by each month for the last two years. With ridership expected to increase significantly in coming months due to the decline of COVID-19 cases and due to the expansion of at least three local service routes and two commuter routes, Gwinnett Transit is on track to exceed expected growth rates.

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Month</b>	Actual	Actual	Actual
			<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
# Transit Riders Carried		<b>January</b>	NA	124,289	60,987
		<b>February</b>	NA	115,177	60,025
		<b>March</b>	NA	87,703	70,188
		<b>April</b>	NA	50,501	68,778
		<b>May</b>	NA	54,567	65,250
		<b>June</b>	NA	68,506	73,047
		<b>July</b>	NA	72,006	73,999
		<b>August</b>	NA	74,705	74,699
		<b>September</b>	NA	75,920	72,860
		<b>October</b>	NA	84,774	75,505
		<b>November</b>	NA	57,580	66,384
		<b>December</b>	NA	62,747	67,419
		<b>Annual Total</b>			928,475



## Observations and Recommendations:

**Observation 1:** The Airport Division is required to submit a revised Master Plan every three years to the Federal Aviation Administration. A revised Master Plan is due to the FAA later this year.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should be proactively communicating the required revisions to appropriate governing boards and County leadership, which would include a timeline for stakeholder input, revision development, data collection, and/or project approvals by County leadership and the Board of Commissioners, in order for a timely submittal to the FAA.

**Observation 2:** The County Procurement Division, in collaboration with the Airport Division, will soon be issuing a Request for Information for the redevelopment of the North side of the Airport (Briscoe Field). Interested vendors will submit bids for the development of one, two, or three sections of the North side of the Airport. The decisions and long-term leases that will result from the selections will have long-term impact on the operations of the Airport and economic development for the areas surrounding the Airport.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should be proactively communicating with County Leadership and the Board of Commissioners concerning the upcoming decisions that will need to be addressed, and the decisions to be approved – which will have long-term impact for future economic development and growth of the local area. County Leadership and the Board of Commissioners should be provided a comprehensive assessment of the complex issues to be addressed in the project (e.g., long-term leases of up to 25-years, economic development opportunities for the County depending on how bidders propose to develop the Airport’s North side, etc.) and timeline for the project.

**Observation 3:** Airport Division staff are responsible for the maintenance of the nearly 500 acres of land that comprises the Gwinnett Airport property (Briscoe Field), which includes the mowing of all areas inside and outside the perimeter fencing. While the Division periodically uses contractors to assist in the mowing responsibilities, Airport staff are responsible for the majority of the mowing requirements.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should collaborate with the Purchasing Division to create a revised RFP for mowing services on the Airport property to better leverage contractors to provide the mowing services rather than Airport staff.

**Observation 4:** The Department recently hired a new Transit Division Director, who previously worked for TransDev Inc. (the vendor who provides Transit services to the County) as the General Manager for the Gwinnett County Contract. The new Transit Division Director has identified opportunities to hold TransDev accountable to certain service level agreements, performance metrics, and communications requirements that are identified in the vendor contract.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should continue to explore additional opportunities to hold the vendor accountable to customer service and performance expectations, and communications opportunities in order to provide exemplary customer service to Transit customers. Further, the Division should continue identifying new customer service and performance expectations which should be considered and included when a new RFP for Transit Services is released in the future.

**Observation 5:** The Transit Division has identified a critical need to expand real-time communications between the County and the vendor, and between the County and Transit customers. For example, if a Transit bus experiences mechanical issues and has to cancel the route, customers who are waiting to be picked up need to know the route has been canceled as quickly as possible so they can make alternate transportation arrangements. The Division has researched communication strategies and systems, and hosted demonstrations from various vendors to explore functionality and become better educated on the features and expectations with varying systems. The Division desires a new system that will easily integrate into the current systems already in place by the Division.

**Recommendation 5:** The Transit Division should collaborate with the County Purchasing Division to identify procurement options to procure a communications system as soon as possible that would meet the County's and customers' need for real-time updates and communications regarding Transit services.

## 3.D.5 Department of Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance Division

Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance ensures a safe and efficient transportation system throughout the County by maintaining the traffic signal system, traffic engineering and monitoring, and the maintenance of County roads, bridges, sidewalks, and the County rights-of-way.

### Key Functions

Key Division functions include the following:

- Traffic Engineering
- Operations and Maintenance

### Traffic Engineering

The Traffic Engineering Division is responsible for maintaining the Countywide traffic signal system, monitoring travel conditions, maintaining traffic volume and data, and providing reports, analysis, and recommendations for corrective measures.

Sections within the Traffic Engineering Division include:

- Advanced Transportation Management System (“ATMS”)/Traffic Control Center (“TCC”)
- Traffic Signal Section
- Traffic Studies and Support

### *ATMS/TCC*

The Advanced Transportation Management System/Traffic Control Center (ATMS/TCC) Section was created in 1996 to aid traffic flow and reduce commute times in the County during the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. The Section has expanded responsibilities to now include making commutes easier and eliminating or reducing as many accidents as possible. The Work of the ATMS/TCC continues to save the County considerable time and money as compared to the alternative of widening congested roadways.

Staff are assigned to staggered shifts throughout the day to ensure coverage of morning and evening commute periods. The morning shift begins at 5:30 a.m., while the evening shift ends at 7:00 p.m. – with staff coverage throughout the entire period. The TCC has access to almost 350 cameras located at primary and secondary intersections throughout the County. When staff on duty at the TCC observes a traffic incident or observes traffic delays, they will quickly diagnose the source of the problem – whether it’s due to a technical issue or a high volume of cars. The TCC then works to ease traffic, either by repairing broken equipment or by adjusting the timing of traffic signals at nearby intersections. The cameras, as they are upgraded, include full-control functionality, including the ability to pan, tilt, and zoom. TCC staff also have access to adjust flashing school beacons, which are typically located in school-zones on roadways near schools throughout the County. This is very useful when the TCC receives complaints that the flashing beacons in school zones are activated on days when school is not in session.

The ATMS is considered a force-multiplier, which means the value of the investment in the technology and infrastructure is valued exponentially compared to the cost of its installation. County Traffic Engineering has already installed more than 225 miles of fiber optic cable connecting traffic devices, signals, and control boxes, with additional cable installations expected throughout this year. This enables TCC staff to diagnosis potential technical problems directly from the TCC office.

Gwinnett County partnered with the Georgia Department of Transportation (“GDOT”) and all five Community Improvement Districts on a Smart Corridor project that will deploy connected vehicle technology at nearly 400 traffic signals, as well as County Fire vehicles, transit buses, and maintenance vehicles. The result will be emergency vehicle preemption of traffic signals for safer response to emergencies, transit signal priority when needed to keep buses on schedule, and safety messages to drivers in the vicinity of County vehicles. This project is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year.

The County is also in partnership with GDOT to use Traffic Responsive technology on a number of traffic signals along selected corridors in the County. This technology allows for the traffic signal system to make signal timing adjustments along a corridor using pre-determined signal timing patterns that better suit the current traffic conditions. The Division is also looking at Adaptive Traffic technology for potential use in the traffic signal system, which allows for the traffic signal system to use predictive algorithms to make timing signal adjustments using current traffic volumes detected by the system. GDOT has committed to funding these projects, which they consider “technology seed projects”, with a 20% match by the County to 80% provided by GDOT.

The Department is working with Gwinnett County Fire Department to get Emergency Vehicle Pre-emption status through GDOT, which would allow the Department’s traffic signals to turn green for passing fire emergency vehicles – which would hopefully allow cars to get out of the way for the fire emergency vehicles. Fire Departments experience increased financial liability when fire trucks/equipment go through an intersection when the fire truck/equipment has a red light. This program connects with the Fire Department’s systems to anticipate the route the trucks are taking to change the signals to green along the anticipated route. The cost of providing this program is far less than cost of building a new fire station, and this effort reduces the Response Time for fire emergency vehicles.

### *Traffic Signal Section*

The Traffic Signal Section is responsible for the installation and maintenance of 750 traffic signals, signal boxes, and pedestrian poles according to Department and GDOT standards.

The Engineering subsection is responsible for reviewing the performance metrics of the traffic signals compared to traffic studies to determine if adjustments to timing is needed, or consideration of the installation of alternate types of equipment, e.g., replacing signage that is posted in an intersection, replacement of the type and/or location of a signal pole, or replacement of a standard left-turn signal with a 4-Head signal (which allows the vehicle to turn left on a yellow-yield-arrow, rather than sitting through an entire light-cycle). The Engineers also consider the retiming of certain corridors in order to allow more traffic to pass during peak/commuter periods.

Engineers also receive requests from the Program Delivery Division to review proposed new intersections as a component of a development project.

The Section Manager noted that GDOT has one Engineer per 50 traffic signals for which they are responsible. For the 750 traffic signals in the County, the Division has one current Engineer, and two vacancies were just approved to hire. By contrast, Cobb County DOT maintains only 230 traffic signals, yet has two Engineers.

The Traffic Signal Construction and Maintenance Team is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the 750 traffic signals, traffic boxes and the fiber optic cables that connects every traffic signal and box to the TCC (currently the Team has installed over 250 miles of fiber optic cable). Signals and boxes that are not connected via fiber optic cable have cellular phone connectivity installed. Since 100% of the signals and boxes are connected to the Department, the TCC staff, Engineers, and Maintenance Team staff may address simple connectivity issues and repairs without having to go to the physical location for initial diagnostic reviews, which often allows repairs to be made faster and traffic returning to more normal patterns with faster recovery periods.

The Traffic Signal Construction and Maintenance Team is divided into three sections based on the type of work performed:

- Construction – which focuses on the initial installation and subsequent repairs of traffic devices;
- Technology – which focuses on upgrades and improvements to existing traffic devices; and
- Locates (811 System) – which responds to citizen/business requests to have their property assess for buried utility lines, cables, etc.

The Section Manager has cross trained all staff in order to better provide efficient responses to customer Work Orders, emergency situations, or other workload considerations. With advances in technology and the systems they use, there is always a staff person On Call 24/7/365 for all after-hours calls. 911 Operators will email a designated email that is assigned to the On-Call staff, which goes directly to their laptop and County-issued cell phones.

#### *Traffic Studies and Support*

The Traffic Studies and Support Section is responsible for speed mitigation programs, the County's residential streetlight program, conducting traffic studies, and managing the Warehouse for the Department.

The speed mitigation programs the Section coordinates include the installation of speed humps on residential streets, short term use of speed detection signs, and residential and commercial street lighting initiatives.

Requests for speed humps typically take at least one year from request to approval. A typical request for a speed hump to be installed on a residential street includes the following steps:

1. Request submitted from homeowner to install a speed hump on a residential street, which includes the reasons for the request, exact location of the requested speed hump, other factors that should be considered from the general area, etc.
2. Section staff visit the requested site to take pictures, measurements, identify proximity to other traffic considerations, and exact location.
3. If the request and survey data meet the requirements for a speed hump, a traffic and speed study will be conducted in the general area where the speed hump will be located.

4. If the study proves that at least 85% of the traffic exceeds the posted speed limit, Section staff will create a layout of the proposed speed hump and a proposal packet for the citizen requesting the speed hump.
5. The citizen requesting the speed hump must collect signatures of property owners in the general area where the speed hump will be potentially located. All property owners of a single property must provide signatures showing approval of the project, not just one of the property owners. The time it takes homeowners to complete this part of the process varies. The project cannot move forward until the citizen collects all the required signatures and returns them to the Division.
6. Section staff have to verify the names and signatures against County property and tax records to ensure all property owners of individual property parcels have signed approving the project.
7. Once the Section recommends approval of the project, the project is placed as an upcoming agenda item for a future Board of Commissioners meeting.
8. If approved by the Board of Commissioners, Section staff contact the contractor/vendor approved for the work to get the installation scheduled. Installations cannot occur during cold weather months, so typical installations only occur between March/April and October/November months.

In cases where the request is submitted by a resident of the County who does not own the property, staff have to follow Steps 1 through 4 above. However, instead of collecting signatures of neighbors, the Department creates a special assessment notification and mails to property owners' addresses of record. Included in the notification is a hearing date to discuss the matter. If no one speaks against the speed hump at the hearing, Section staff will pick up the sequence above starting with Step 7 and completing with Step 8.

The Section staff have posted a significant amount of information on the Department's website regarding the speed hump program, including Speed Hump brochure, which outlines the steps described above.

Staff recommended that a Department or County Speed Hump Policy be created to provide internal and external stakeholders direction and structure on the speed hump program, which should hopefully alleviate requests to installations that may not fully meet the outlined requirements of the program.

The Section also administers the Residential Street Light program, which installs streetlights that automatically turn on at night in areas of the County that does not already have streetlights. The County started requiring in 1997 that new developments install streetlights throughout the development. The County has a significant number of residential homes and neighborhoods which were built prior to 1997 that do not have streetlights.

Requests for Streetlights follow a similar patten to Requests for the Speed Hump program:

1. Request submitted by a citizen for a streetlight.
2. Section staff visit the site where the streetlight is requested, taking measurements and considerations of traffic in the general area.
3. If the request meets the Division requirements, a proposal will be created and shared with the citizen requesting the streetlight.

4. The citizen requesting the streetlight must collect signatures of property owners in the general area where the streetlight will be located. All property owners of a single property must provide signatures showing approval of the project, not just one of the property owners. The time it takes homeowners to complete this part of the process varies. The project cannot move forward until the citizen collects all the required signatures and returns them to the Division.
5. Section staff have to verify the names and signatures against County property and tax records to ensure all property owners of individual property parcels have signed approving the project.
6. Once the Section recommends approval of the project, the project is placed as an upcoming agenda item for a future Board of Commissioners meeting.
7. If approved by the Board of Commissioners, Section staff contact the contractor/vendor approved for the work to get the installation scheduled.

The Section conducts traffic studies and other sight distance and data engineering requests. This may include site distance requests and analysis of historical accident data. Engineers make recommendations for safety improvements which may include the placement of traffic devices, striping modifications to traffic light timing, or other considerations.

The Section is also responsible for the operation and inventory of the Department's Warehouse for supplies and equipment for all Divisions and Sections within the Department. As of the last audit completed on the Warehouse inventory, the value was \$1,797,735.45. There is only one employee who is responsible for maintaining inventory, including items removed or added to inventory records. The Department recently created additional internal controls so that Division management must approve all requested items for purchase for the Warehouse. The list of items is then forwarded to the Finance and Performance Management Division to submit the actual purchase requests.

### Operations and Maintenance

Sections within the Operations and Maintenance Division includes:

- Road Maintenance
- Contracted Services
- Traffic Operations, which includes the following subsections:
  - Traffic Analysis
  - Residential Sign Crew
  - Traffic Operations and Sign Crews
  - Paint Team
  - Thermo Team

#### Road Maintenance

The Road Maintenance Section includes two Superintendents which divides the County geographically and includes six District Crews, the Shoulder Crew, and the Heavy Equipment Team.

The District Crews are assigned a specific geographic area of the County. Each crew is responsible for maintaining all County roadways, which includes removing debris from the roads and right-of-way areas. They are also responsible for mowing areas around the roads and rights-of-way, and removing trees,

limbs, trash, or other debris that may obstruct traffic safety or traffic flow. In periods of inclement weather, the Crews are required to salt and sand roads prior to and during snow and ice storms, as well as pre-treat roads and bridges.

The Section also includes two specialized crews. The Shoulder Crew is responsible for large-patch road repairs, neighborhood road repairs, or in special cases where the road needs to extend by two- to three-feet outside the white lines on both sides of the road – often for the safety of the vehicle operators, e.g., on sharp curves in the road. The Heavy Equipment Team assists with larger construction projects and may be assigned to any area of the County. These may relate to SPLOST projects, turning lane extensions, and curb and gutter projects.

All Road Maintenance Crews are required to be in On-Call status during periods of inclement weather due to snow, ice, hurricanes, tornados, etc.

In addition to regular maintenance responsibilities, the Road Maintenance Crews and Teams are assigned Work Orders based on calls and reports from Customers/Citizens or from other areas of the Department. Work Orders are assigned in the SAP system, which is used throughout the Department.

All work performed by the Crews are logged into what they call a “Red Book”. While at one time the “Red Book” may have been a red-colored book or notebook, however, with updates in technology, the term is used to refer to a spreadsheet file on the shared G-Drive that all Division staff access. The spreadsheet is a daily journal for each Crew/Team to provide details of all work performed, Work Orders, supplies used, time allocated to specific projects, and includes exact addresses of the locations where the work occurred.

Numerous staff complemented the Division on the type and number of tools they are provided to perform their duties. They acknowledged that upwards of 10 years ago, tools and equipment often went missing. But at some point, Division leadership communicated to staff that they were not going to replace any more missing equipment. From that time forward, staff took better care of the equipment and tools, locking them in secure locations at the end of the workdays. Staff acknowledge that the directive helped to rebuild trust between management and staff, and significant turnover allowed new staff to be hired with expectations of taking care of equipment and tools.

#### *Contracted Services*

The Contracted Services Section is responsible for the management and oversight of larger, specific contracts for operations and maintenance services for various Transportation-related initiatives, including:

- Asphalt resurfacing projects. Previous years’ resurfacing projects cost \$20-25M, the current year projection is closer to \$33M.
- Guard Rail installation and repair.
- Landscaping, mowing, and clearing the roads’ right-of-way throughout the County. The County approved a modification to extend this contract requirement for all 12-months of the year, rather than just 6-months of mowing season, so that contractors will be responsible for mowing, trash and debris removal, and periodic landscaping throughout the year.
- Dust Control contracts for dust abatement on the few remaining dirt roads in the County.



- Concrete contractors who assist in the installation and maintenance of curbs and gutters, sidewalks, and major roads inside neighborhoods. Approximate value of this contract is \$1M.

The contracts are typically bid through normal County Purchasing Division processes every four- to five-years. The last contracts were approved in 2017.

On November 24, 2021, a new RFP for Transportation-related services was released, with responses due by February 17, 2022. Division staff anticipate it will take until mid- to late-2022 to review the bid proposals, recommend vendor selections, vet the selected vendors, attain Board of Commissioners approval for the contracts, then begin work with the new group of vendors.

In order to properly assess the roads throughout the County to aid in determining which roads need resurfacing, Section Engineers travel throughout the County assessing the condition of the pavement based on standards from the Georgia Department of Transportation's "Standard Specifications Construction of Transportation Systems". Depending on weather, traffic, and other considerations, it takes the Section Engineers two- to 2 ½ years to assess every road in the County and assign each a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score, (0=worst, 100=best).

The Section received approval in this fiscal year's budget to purchase a digital pavement profiler. This equipment, when attached to a County vehicle, is driven at speeds not to exceed 25 miles per hour over a specific length of road to determine what Engineers may take several hours to assess. This should create efficiencies for additional road assessments, with more comprehensive results, which are automatically uploaded to a cloud-based system. The Section Engineers have 10,300 sections of roads to conduct assessments, totaling more than 2,700 miles of roads maintained by the County.

As Engineers assess each road, they enter the PCI scores into a spreadsheet maintained by Section Engineers. At intervals throughout the year, Engineers sort the road names in ascending order by the PCI score to identify the roads with the lowest PCI scores. The roads with the lowest PCI scores are included in the annual budget assessments and requests for the upcoming fiscal years.

Once roads are approved for resurfacing, contractors on the list of approved vendors are selected for the project. For the upcoming resurfacing projects, the County released an RFP for resurfacing vendors. The RFP divided the County into three geographic regions, and allowed interested vendors to bid on one, two, or three regions. Section management is hopeful the bid selection and approval processes can be expedited in order to award the contracts to allow the vendors to begin resurfacing projects in March/April of this year, which would allow the most opportunities for laying asphalt during the warmer months.

The County has already selected Atlas, Inc. as the third-party vendor that provides contractor inspection, evaluation, and quality control reviews of the work performed by the vendors which will be selected for the resurfacing projects.

### *Traffic Operations*

The Traffic Operations Section is responsible for traffic analysis, manufacturing and installation of residential and overhead signs, the painting and striping of road markings, and the thermal plastic installation of markings at intersections.

The Traffic Analysis subsection receives public requests and complaints about road signs, road markings, and intersection markings. The Traffic Analysts enter the Work Orders into the SAP system for requested repairs or preventive maintenance requests, which get distributed to the appropriate Road Maintenance or Work Crews to address.

The Residential Sign Crew installs, maintains, and replaces residential road signs throughout the County.

The Traffic Operations and Sign Crews manufacture standardized road signs according to specifications in the US Federal Highway Administration's "Manual Uniform of Traffic Control Devices". While the design of the signs seldom change, the materials used often change to increase reflectivity standards of the signs. Sign Crews replace signs as the old signs begin to fade or lose reflectivity.

The Paint Team paints the solid and broken lines on roadways throughout the County. As roads are resurfaced (which often has temporary lane demarcations), the Paint Team has 72-hours to add the permanent painted lines to the roadways. The materials used on the roads follow the Environmental Protection Standards, which are released by GDOT, for paint materials to be used.

The Thermo Team is responsible for installation of the thermal plastic lines and markings (instead of paint) at intersections and school zones. Thermal plastic is more expensive to use but has proven to be worth the investment with increased reflectivity and the average lifespan of seven- to eight-years, compared to an average three-year lifespan for paint.

## Communications

Numerous staff conveyed very good communication from DOT leadership and Traffic Engineering and Operations and Maintenance Directors. Although communications from the County about events and directives may arrive last-minute, Department and Division leadership have emphasized ongoing communication efforts to keep all staff informed of upcoming policy changes and new projects.

Staff have experienced that as technology advancements occur in traffic studies and traffic engineering, there is a direct correlation to the number and complexity of Open Records Requests for technical information about maintenance records, signal timing, etc. Staff are somewhat apprehensive to adequately describe how a repair was completed or maintenance was performed out of fear someone will exaggerate or overly-analyze their work.

## Strategic Initiatives

### Smart Corridor Technology

GDOT recently started emphasizing Smart Corridor Technology, so the Department embraced the topic and committed to integrating throughout appropriate systems and areas. Approximately half of the traffic signals in the County are connected to this technology. Outside of GDOT, this project in the County is the second largest in the state.

### Connected Vehicle Program

The Connected Vehicle Program is cutting edge transportation technology that allows vehicles to communicate with each other and with infrastructure to collect certain data elements, including speed, behaviors (e.g., slamming on brakes, swerving out of lanes to avoid a collision, etc.). The connected vehicle would automatically decrease acceleration or possibly apply the brake to avoid a collision.

GDOT is leading the charge on connected vehicles, seeking funding from the Federal Highway Administration to research and expand the program. The Department agreed to pay 20% of the cost for the devices and GDOT will pay 80% of the costs. The Department partnered with GDOT on the project and released the County’s “Connected Vehicle Technology Master Plan” in October, 2019, which outlined goals of additional program testing and expansion by 2024.

### Traffic Responsive Technology

The County in partnership with GDOT, is using Traffic Responsive technology on a number of traffic signals along selected corridors in the County. This technology allows for the traffic signal system to make signal timing adjustments along a corridor using pre-determined signal timing patterns that better suit the current traffic conditions. This technology allows for the traffic signal system to use predictive algorithms to make timing signal adjustments using current traffic volumes detected by the system.

### Collaboration with TCC and Gwinnett County Police Department

The TCC entered into an agreement with the Gwinnett Police Department to allow real-time access to the Traffic Control Center’s live video footage of the cameras mounted at over 350 traffic signals throughout the County. The Police Department intends to expand their collaboration to include access to traffic cameras of other municipalities, cameras mounted inside and outside Gwinnett Transit buses, and license plate readers, in order to provide expanded opportunities for law enforcement surveillance and real-time, live access to active pursuits.

The County Police Department purchased access to an IBM product that synthesizes and integrates all this information into a single solution, whereby law enforcement only has to perform records searches in this system, rather than performing searches in many disparate systems.

Jurisdictions from around the country are already contacting the Gwinnett County Police Department to better understand how they are collaborating with other internal service departments within the County, at minimal additional costs, to provide such advanced surveillance techniques.

### Systems and Applications

The Operations and Maintenance Division maintains existing County roads, sidewalks, bridges, and surface vegetation within the rights of way. In addition, the Division reconstructs existing roads, builds miscellaneous road projects, coordinates, tests, and oversees annual contracted work in excess of \$25,000,000. The Division is also responsible for promoting safe traffic conditions in the County by installing and maintaining traffic control signing, pavement markings, coordinating road closures, reviewing new developments for traffic impact, and proposing traffic plans to alleviate congestion and dangerous traffic situations.

The Division utilizes SAP to process work orders related to the above functions. Work orders are submitted and tracked in SAP by crews of technicians in the field, supervisors, and management.

### SAP Work Order Process

<b>Name of Process:</b>	SAP Work Orders
<b>System Process Purpose</b>	Process work orders for road maintenance, signal outages, sidewalk repair, etc.

<b>Name of Process:</b>	SAP Work Orders
<b>System Process Function</b>	Work Order Management System
<b>System Process Scope</b>	Gwinnett County Department of Transportation work order management.
<b>System Process Input</b>	Work orders are submitted via the portal on Gwinnett County's website and via phone and processed by staff.
<b>System Process Flow</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Receive work orders via phone/SAP</li> <li>2. Enter work order in SAP</li> <li>3. Receive service request number</li> <li>4. Assign work order to correct Department</li> <li>5. Department receives work orders via email or hard copy</li> <li>6. Technicians visit the site, document in SAP</li> <li>7. Track in the system, enter comments</li> <li>8. Closeout a work order in SAP when complete</li> </ol>
<b>System Process Output/End-Result</b>	Work order is closed out in SAP
<b>Pain Points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They would like all staff to have access to cell phone and additional Toughbooks for time reporting and</li> <li>2. All crews must return to the central office or offsite barns. Some barns do not have internet access due to a lack of broadband access, and the only access is via Foreman's Toughbook access.</li> </ol>

**Data and Performance Analysis**

The following table of information is the operational metrics used in Management Framework on average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) scores of all roads within the County that have PCI scores assigned. Since it appears the Average provided is an annualized amount, this metric does not appear useful presented each month. All roads in the County are required to be analyzed by County Engineers every two years to produce a Pavement Condition Index (PCI), based on standards approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The roads with the lowest ratings/scores are selected for consideration for re-pavement. The list of roads with the lowest scores typically includes almost 1,000 miles of roads needing to be repaved, with an expectation of repaving approximately 100 miles of road each year – based on previous paving amounts and funding.

Metric	Target	Month	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021
Pavement Condition Index/Average Pavement Condition (Road Maintenance)	60%	January	35%	46%	57%
		February	35%	46%	57%
		March	35%	46%	57%
		April	35%	46%	57%
		May	35%	46%	57%
		June	35%	46%	57%
		July	35%	46%	57%
		August	35%	46%	57%
		September	35%	46%	57%
		October	35%	46%	57%
		November	35%	46%	57%
		December	35%	46%	57%

The following table includes data collected for the Traffic Studies and Support Team, which include two years of historical data and the current year's goals.

Traffic Studies Analysis	2020	2021	2022 GOAL
Traffic studies completed	80	100	125
Street Lights added to system	938	978	975
Speed hump <i>requests</i> processed	203	302	300
Speed humps installed	20	91	125

#### Additional Data Needs

With the increase in funding available during the current budget year for road resurfacing, the Department realizes additional data is needed to support the ongoing efforts. There is wide recognition that roads are falling apart faster than in years past based on the lesser-quality of the asphalt used, speed in which asphalt is installed, and other factors. Roads that previously lasted 20 years now have a 5-year life expectancy. Pavement Condition Index scores previously dropped by 3 points between inspections; now they drop by 20 points between inspections.

#### Work Order Analysis

The Division should expand their collection and analysis of data for the Work Orders. With better quantification of data and work performed, leadership would be able to determine analysis including:

- Average time to complete Work Order
- Average time to begin work on a Work Order

- Volume of Work Orders, tracked by week, month, quarter, etc., and sorted by type of Work Order
- Tracking time to completion by type or category of Work Order

### Additional Comparative Staffing Analytics

With the expansion of services provided by the Division due to population growth and the increase in the number of residential and commercial developments, the Division should expand its workload analytics to also compare the number of current staff to the number of staff in previous years with historical workload details of the number of roads, traffic signals, stripping projects, cameras, number of County citizens, etc.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Staffing of the TCC is typically with technical staff trained in the use and repair of the equipment used in the ATMS/TCC, as well as the requirements to observe the complex patch-work of monitors from cameras and live-feeds from 300+ intersections around the County to make traffic analytical decisions on signal operations, equipment diagnostics and repairs, and other operational considerations. Staff expressed concern that there is not enough time or opportunity to evaluate the equipment functionality on a regular basis.

**Recommendation 1:** The Traffic Engineering Division may consider separating the duties of staff working in the TCC observing the cameras, traffic patterns, and the modifications to traffic signal equipment, to those technical duties related to equipment replacement and repair. If given the opportunity to hire additional staff, a pilot hiring project may prove it easier to hire someone with transferrable technical skills that may fit better in one specialty area over another – but maybe not both specialty areas.

**Observation 2:** The Traffic Engineering Division previously collaborated with the Georgia Department of Transportation and local Community Improvement Districts to create Smart Corridor projects and Traffic Responsive Technology projects in order to provide research and experiential data and information for possible expansion of each project statewide. Each of the projects are considered cutting-edge transportation technology, and other Counties in the state are waiting for the results the Department may share.

**Recommendation 2:** The Traffic Engineering Division should expand their utilization of both projects, and include additional federal, state, and local grant opportunities in order to expand the research and experiential capabilities.

**Observation 3:** Staff who are assigned “On-Call” duties on holidays or during a workweek which contains a holiday are often not paid “overtime” pay for the worktime they are called in during “On-Call” hours. Implementation of “On-Call” pay is affected by the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”). The FLSA is considered the minimum actions required by an employer organization but does not prohibit the organization to provide beyond the minimum requirements – especially during periods of inclement weather, hiring and staffing difficulties, and other considerations.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should collaborate with Human Resources to determine if the County may provide additional compensatory options for Non-Exempt staff who are assigned “On-Call” duties as a component of their work assignments.

**Observation 4:** The Contracted Services Section provides oversight and management of contracts for which they are responsible. If instances arise where the quality, quantity, or other performance considerations do not meet the accountability standards and metrics identified in the vendor contract, the Operations and Maintenance Division works with the vendor to try to informally address the concerns. In cases where the standards are still not met, the Division works with the County Purchasing Division to formally address the concerns with the vendor, up to and including the cancellation of the contract, and possible disbarment from future contract considerations. However, there are divisions and sections within the Department who are less familiar with how to better manage the service contracts, and the internal County processes to more formally address the concerns with the vendor.

**Recommendation 4:** The Operations and Maintenance Division should consider allowing the Contracted Services Section and the County Purchasing Division to provide additional training to all areas of the Department on better methods to manage performance and service contracts, including how to informally and formally address accountability and performance concerns that are articulated in the contract.

**Observation 5:** Comments were collected during multiple interviews that the Department has supplies, fuel, equipment, and other assets that either go missing or are stolen from Department property. At the DOT Central location, there is an enormous number of supplies, equipment, vehicles, and other assets that are stored on the campus, often secured only by a lock on a gate. There does not appear to be any security cameras nor any other security devices installed at either the DOT Central building and surrounding areas, nor at the supply yard on the adjacent property.

**Recommendation 5A:** Reports and accusations of theft over a certain dollar threshold should be reported to law enforcement for investigation. Additionally, reports of theft, missing equipment, or inappropriate use of County equipment should be reported to appropriate levels of leadership within the Department and County, with mandatory escalation based on the amounts/value and frequency. Communications should also include Finance and Risk Management Departments.

**Recommendation 5B:** The Department should consider installing security cameras and other security equipment with recording functionality to deter future thefts, as well as provide details, footage, audio, etc. to law enforcement in cases where theft occurs, or missing equipment is reported. The Department should also consult with the Department of Water Resources for advice on the security equipment they have installed on their property, which is next door to the DOT Central campus.

## 3.D.6 Department of Transportation –Staff and Administrative Services Section

The Staff and Administrative Services Section, created in January 2021, provides general administrative and executive assistance to senior Department leadership, operates the Service Request Center (customer service phone lines and emails for the Department), and provides support for Human Resources actions and activities.

### Key Functions

Key Section functions include the following:

- General Administrative Support
- Service Request Center Operations
- Human Resources Activities

### General Administrative Support

The Staff and Administrative Services Section is comprised of one Administrative Section Manager and four staff members. The section provides general administrative support to the Department's senior leadership team, including executive assistance duties like answering phones, greeting in-person customers and employees, scheduling meetings on the leaders' behalf, and creating speaker notes for use a speeches, engagements, and Commission meetings.

Section staff provide coverage for the Department's Front Desk, which includes answering the phones and greeting customers and visitors. The Section staff are also responsible for stocking office supplies for the Department staff located at the One Justice Building, which includes maintaining simple inventory records of office supplies, and providing purchase requests and order details to the Finance and Performance Management Division to place the order. When the supplies are delivered, Section staff reconcile the items received to the shipping list, then provides the reconciliation documentation back to the Finance and Performance Management Division for their records.

Section staff also provided significant operational support during the Department's move last year from the GJAC building to the DOT Central Offices located in the One Justice Center building. Section staff began a year in advance of the move working with Facilities Construction and Technology Services staff to plan, design, and coordinate for all Transportation staff, belongings, files and records, technology equipment, and other items to move from the GJAC building to One Justice Center building.

### Service Request Center Operations

The Staff and Administrative Services Section operates the Service Request Center, which is a sequence of telephone lines into the Department's Administrative Section staff that are identified for the Service Request Center. The Service Request Center is marketed to customers for all Department of Transportation inquiries, requests, and complaints from citizens and customers, available either by telephone or an email address that goes directly to the Service Request Center.



Emails and callers to the Service Request Center are requested to provide details regarding their concerns or complaints, including the caller's name and phone number, the exact location/street address of the issuing being raised, the estimated proximity to any surrounding landmarks or identification markers, and details of the concern or complaint (e.g., pothole located in front of home located at 1234 Broadway Street, Lawrenceville). Concerns and complaints typically raised to the Service Request Center predominantly include potholes and roadway infrastructure. Other types of complaints include the timing of traffic lights at busy intersections – which may appear to favor one direction more than another, signage posted along a roadway that is obstructed by trees or bushes, or complaints about school-zone flashers being activated on days when schools are not in session.

As Section staff are documenting the concerns or complaints, they are also entering information directly into the Department's SAP Work Order System. Based on the information entered in the drop-down fields by Section Staff, the Work Order is systematically assigned to the appropriate Traffic Engineering or Operations and Maintenance Division. Typically, Supervisors who receive the work order review the details of the complaint in the work order, then assign the issues to staff depending on priority and complexity.

### Human Resources Activities

The Staff and Administrative Services Section provides Human Resources-related support and activities to all Managers, Supervisors, and employees in the Department.

During each payroll cycle, the Section staff ensure that all employees have entered their work time and leave used into the SAP system to help ensure payroll is processed timely and accurately. Section staff often have to remind Supervisors to “approve” the work time and leave entered in SAP before the deadline. Section staff also have to enter Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) leave into the Workbench system, which is a component of SAP, in order to accurately track employee's FMLA leave used.

Section staff support Managers and Supervisors in the processes to recruit for and fill vacant positions in the Department. Section staff ensure appropriate HR forms and supporting documentation is collected and forwarded to Human Resources when requesting to post a vacancy and/or make a selection/hire for a position.

Section staff also provide support to Managers and Supervisors with HR personnel actions to promote employee or provide salary adjustments, ensuring all required forms, supporting documentation, and approval from Financial Services is included in the package when submitted to Human Resources.

The Section Manager provides direction and oversight for the Department's employee development program called “DOT Academy”. The Section Manager works with Department leadership to define the curriculum for each cohort that focuses on leadership and managerial competencies within the Department, schedules speakers for each of the seven- to eight-cohort sessions, provides meeting planning logistics for each session, and assists in selecting and notifying participants for each cohort. The Section Manager plans to conduct post-cohort interviews of participants at periodic milestones after completion of the training program to assist in evaluating the program and the participant's experience in the program.

An additional type of employee development coordinated by Section Staff is New Hire Orientation for new Department employees. Whether in-person or virtual, participants are provided detail administrative and programmatic details of working for the Department, including details about each Division and Section within the Department, and how the Department's activities align with other departments and with Board of Commissioner's initiatives.

## Communications

There are a number of Department employees who do not have regular access to a desktop or laptop. In a number of instances, only a Foreman of a work crew is assigned a laptop with cellular technology. Staff need to borrow/use the Foreman's laptop to log their work hours or leave used, as well as to check County email. It was noted that many work crew staff are frustrated with the lack of access to the systems, they often do not check email regularly. The Staff and Administrative Services Section create extra communication efforts to keep the work crews updated on activities, notices, County news, and/or emails to all employees – often printing the documents on paper, and sending to their work locations, to help keep them informed and engaged.

## Strategic Initiatives

### SAP User Group

Section staff previously coordinated an SAP User Group, often inviting representatives from other departments that use SAP to share their experiences and solutions. The User Group was intended to be a group of users communicating about how they operate within SAP. They often arranged for "guest speakers" to present at meetings, which were usually Power Users from other County departments who were willing to train meeting participants on how to approach or accomplish certain tasks or activities. Participants shared shortcuts, templates, and other useful information with others in the group. Staff from other departments praised the Department and the Section Manager for allowing such an open forum and discussion for technical issues, without it turning into a technology-bashing session – instead they created an environment for a technology-solution session.

### Policy and Procedure Repository

The Staff and Administrative Services Section created a repository of Department policies, procedures, and guides located on a shared drive that is available to all Department employees. Many department employees complimented the Section staff for creating such a comprehensive collection of policies, procedures, process guides (which include step-by-step instructions and print-screen images), and forms that are available to Department staff. Section staff also service as de facto experts on many County processes and provide direction and guidance to Department staff upon request.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Section had no data available to analyze. The Section should consider collaborating with Information Technology Services to pull utilization data from the Service Request Center phone lines and emails to identify number of calls and requests, average duration of calls, location or general geographic area of the concern/complaint, and determine if the call was quickly forwarded to another Division or Section inside or outside the Department.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The “DOT Academy” is highly praised by previous participants as an opportunity to gain knowledge and discussion of Department leadership about managerial competencies needed within the Department. While the “DOT Academy” and the County’s “EXCEL” and “LEAD” leadership development programs may have similar programmatic goals, there is significant overlap with curriculum development and meeting planning responsibilities.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should explore collaborating with Human Resources for economies of scale, and potential efficiencies realized by having one department coordinate leadership training and development opportunities.

**Observation 2:** Staff in specific areas of the Department do not have regular access to desktop and/or laptop computers in order to enter their work time and leave used into the SAP system prior to payroll deadlines. The Staff and Administrative Services Section are assigned to notify employees who have missing work time/leave from the System.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should collaborate with Technology Services Department to determine options to providing staff with more frequent access to County systems, information, and email.

**Observation 3:** The Staff and Administrative Services Section did not have data available to review and/or analyze that could provide great detail on the number of phone calls or emails made to the Service Request Center.

**Recommendation 3:** The Section Manager should collaborate with Information Technology Services to determine if reporting could be developed for data this is already collected, or explore options to electronically collect the utilization data, including duration of calls, types of requests, specific locations within geographic areas of the County (analysis by Districts), and other analytics.

## 3.D.7 Department of Transportation – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division within the Department of Transportation to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and additional relevant information, to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Observations

#### Finance and Performance Management

##### *SAP*

- The current version and configuration of SAP is antiquated and old. There is a need for a better interface, easier login, and easier search and navigation capabilities than what is currently in place. Staff must log in to different modules that do not communicate well with one other.
- It is difficult to find reports, and there is no visibility or transparency into the overall process.
- Manual work is required for capital projects, and budgets are often inaccurate.
- The system requires specific data entry for the workflow to communicate with other modules correctly.
- Invoicing is tracked county-wide in SAP and Management Framework, and divisions are assigned an analyst to help update tasks. The Divisions use FileNet to automate the invoice process to route them for approval before paying invoices in SAP.
- The agenda item creation process involves manual work, uploading and downloading documents, printing hard copies, obtaining wet signatures, and using too much paper.
- There is difficulty working between modules because they do not fully communicate. They have ended up with purchase orders for one or two cents that cannot go away until IT forces it off manually.
- For purchase orders, budgets were not appearing accurately across modules, so there is a need for a better-integrated system that can do ERM, accounting, Asset Management, etc.

##### *Other Findings*

- There is no visibility into the operation side of the Department involving Transit grants. Often errors appear before the team can see if something is incorrect, which is inefficient and time-consuming.
- More data is needed to visualize the big picture connection to understand the organization better.

- Performance Tracking should be better managed to determine what data the Department needs to understand how well they operate.
- The Division is currently making things work using the current process but is inundated with too many systems and meetings that take up management's time.
- Microsoft Teams is used for document management, and the Division likes its collaboration capabilities. They can quickly access files, including videos, and find it a great repository for many file types.
- The Division wants to avoid concerns about the cost of functionality when replacing and updating systems.

#### *Capital Program Delivery*

- The Division is satisfied with SharePoint as a document management system due to its collaborative nature, tracking capabilities, and usability.
- The current system developed by Atlas, Teams, lacks automated alerting/notifications for when actions must be completed. Most of the delays in the process result from a lack of engagement from other departments.
- Managing projects and funding are both manual processes that involve many outside departments.

#### *Intermodal Operations*

- Gwinnett Transit: Communications between drivers/on-site personnel, the dispatch team, and Transit Operations are manual and time-consuming. It takes a significant amount of time between the issue occurring and the text alerts sent to users by the Intermodal Operations team. An example of time lag was a bus breaking down at 1:58 p.m., but the Intermodal Operations team did not receive a notification until 3:40 p.m. The users expressed the need for a system to automate and integrate the process of communication and issue tracking to produce real-time transit disruption alerts. Additionally, there are no alerts for route disruptions caused by weather or traffic.
- All vendor contracts go through manual routing, leaving no insight into the routing process. The Division provides contract oversight for FTA, assists liquidated damages, and tracks performance monitoring manually, increasing effort and time while decreasing visibility and transparency. Additionally, multiple systems are being used, including a paratransit system, called Trapeze, owned by the contractor, and the database is in TransTrack. This disparity in systems further hinders performance tracking visibility.
- The County emphasizes customer service and complaints about service reliability and transparency. Engaging customers and keeping them in the loop through better alerting and notifications is a basic requirement.
- The Division does not have Asset Management software. Other departments have gone off-brand and purchased different project management systems or modules that are not shared with other departments.

#### *Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance*

- The Operations and Maintenance Division has made significant progress moving from a fully manual, paper-based process that required handwritten notes to be typed into the system.

- More visibility into data is needed for efficient and effective performance and metric tracking.
- GIS integration is needed.
- There is a lack of cell phones for Maintenance Technicians, which results in potentially serious issues surrounding their use of personal cell phones for County work. Many staff use personal cell phones for GPS to reach sites, take photos, and communicate with their bosses. Personal phones pose an issue if an Open Records Request is made for County work information on personal cell phones. Additionally, there is a disconnect between standards and practices regarding employees using personal cell phones for County-related business.
- The Division needs a better work order system that is user-friendly so technicians can quickly and safely input information in the field, like completing roadwork on a busy highway where they must be alert of their surroundings.
- Maintenance Technicians do not currently utilize SAP effectively, so increased usability is desired.
- The Division wants to look at other platforms to replace SAP-functionality for work orders, which would include functionality using mobile phones and be user-friendly so that workers are not bogged down with a complex system while working in the field.
- The Division wants an Apple iPhone platform, as apps are restricted and require IT approval to download. This issue is troublesome, as the team uses the "Route for Me" app to remove tree debris from a storm, but IT has tightened up security and implemented an approval process for apps. As a result, Maintenance Technicians store apps on their personal devices for use, which is problematic.

## Technology Summary Recommendations

### Finance and Performance Management

- The County should continue its path to replace/update its current ERP and should ensure that all end user requirements and needs are documented and included when evaluating a new ERP.

### Capital Program Delivery

- Determine if Atlas has automated alerting capabilities or replace the system with one that will alert users when action needs to be taken and send reminders after inaction on their part.
- Determine what other departments use project management systems. There is a need for a County-wide project management system that can provide increased visibility and tracking of projects and funding.
- Implement training and provide resources for employees on how to use systems they interact with daily and all future systems.

### Intermodal Operations

- Determine what systems are used across the County and any plans to push specific applications from upper levels of the Department to ensure compatibility and usability.
- Implement alert systems for traffic and weather conditions that affect transit routes.
- Implement a system to support vendor management and quality control/quality assurance requirements to hold vendors/contractors to Service Level Agreements and other key performance indicators.

- Implement an Asset Management software solution and build a framework for managing assets in the system. Provide adequate training to staff on all software for the system and framework to be implemented and used correctly.

#### Traffic Engineering, Operations and Maintenance

- Eliminate all manual processes possible, such as hard copies and wet signatures, using disparate communications tools within projects, and tracking and managing data in Excel.
- Provide additional smartphones to Technicians to use in the field to eliminate personal cell phones for work matters.
- Provide SAP training and resource materials to Technicians to manage timekeeping and work orders more effectively.
- The current stock of Toughbooks should be deployed to Technicians.

## 3.D.8 Department of Transportation – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. This increases the risk of lost documentation, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 2:** The Department does not currently have a formal process for either the project managers or end-user departments to voice opinions about vendor performance, either during or after completion of the project. This may result in continued award to vendors with problematic prior performance.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluation of vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department. Additionally, the Department is revising its strategies for data collections and analysis, which may create discrepancies between prior data collection methods and current data collection methods for similar or the same data point.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department's key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.



**Observation 4:** The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism. Staff perceive a disparity in the treatment of different divisions and sections. The disparity is felt through inconsistent communications and visibility of leadership. Leadership often appears to be most involved in those functional areas in which they have experience and knowledge, leaving staff in other functional areas to feel leadership is only involved in their work when issues arise, having often decided how to act without consulting the staff involved in the day-to-day activities. This perceived lack of opportunities for engagement also results in the perception that only certain divisions or sections have opportunities to engage with external planning processes, or provide input on broader strategic planning or development initiatives.

This perception of lack of knowledge or specific understanding about how all of the divisions and departmental functions may also result in inconsistent consideration of Departmental staff as customers or stakeholders who may be impacted by decisions designed to improve the workflow or workload of one division or section.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations, and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Some divisions and sections feel that there are informal or organic opportunities to engage with leadership and make recommendations or discuss opportunities for efficiency or improvements. Other divisions feel that there are minimal opportunities, or that all information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information. The divisions that have these opportunities often receive assistance in resolving their problems, without consistent consideration of how these potential resolutions may impact other divisions engaged in the same or similar processes or functions.

**Recommendation 4:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past ten - twenty years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

## 5. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.

## 6. Strategic Roadmap

The following pages detail the more than 150 recommendations for all in-scope departments. The recommendations are categorized by applicable owner (enterprise-wide or single department), are assigned a prioritization level for implementation, and include a typical timeframe for implementation. The detailed report should be read in its entirety to better understand the context for the identified observations and recommendations. The County has the ultimate responsibility to determine the prioritization level and timeline for implementation of any of the recommendations in this report.

The County should dedicate resources and engage external specialists where needed to assist with implementation.

“The most dangerous phrase in our language is: *‘we have always done it this way’.*” – Grace Hopper

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Director’s Office	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should consider transferring initial leave use review authority to each end-user division, with Director’s Office staff serving in a spot-check and quality control capacity.</p> <p>The Department may also want to research if there are more automated processes or workflows that could review for appropriate reporting of leave taken that reduce the manual review process.</p>	2	2
Support Services – Director’s Office	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should develop a standard for new hire orientation and onboarding. Administrative staff in the Division should either be responsible for offering these orientations, or providing training to division staff to ensure consistent onboarding and information is provided to all new hires.</p>	3	1
Support Services – Director’s Office	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Administrative Support Associates responsible for issuing badges should coordinate with the Operations and Maintenance Division to ensure that there are updated maps reflecting the placement and identifying information for all security readers in County buildings. The Division should also consider working with end-user departments to create standard access groupings for specific divisions or user titles within each department, to standardize security access and better document when requests for access exceed norms for a position or division.</p>	3	1
Support Services – Director’s Office	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department Director should create and encourage inter-divisional communication and collaboration that focuses on integrated and efficient process design and process improvement.</p>	1	1
Support Services – Director’s Office	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department needs to prioritize filling the two vacant division director positions. Once those positions are filled, the Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.</p>	1	2

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should perform more detailed cost-benefit analysis around the use of contract FF&E designers to determine if it would be more cost-effective to hire an interior designer, given the projected upcoming capital renovations and capital construction projects. The designer could also collaborate with the Operations and Maintenance Division on smaller renovation projects.	2	1
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should work with the County to develop more expedited timelines for contract and change order approval. This may include an executive review and approval function for contracts associated with projects that have been approved by the Board of Commissioners, only requiring Board of Commissioner approval for projects that exceed a specified dollar amount, reduced reviews for change orders within initial contract award amount or within a certain percentage of initial contract amount.	2	1
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal complaints about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.	2	1
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should consider hiring an additional support staff to assist in administrative tasks associated with project management.	3	1
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1



Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Facility Construction	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should consider developing creating a position to assist with coordinating facility condition assessments and strategic, comprehensive facility lifecycle management. This should include space planning and needs assessments to ensure that decisions are taking all impacted divisions and departments into consideration, and factor in projected growth and future space needs. This position could also help determine the need for staff positions for architect and interior design work, as longer-range planning and projections would be available.	1	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should create standardization guides for task code use and perform regular quality control checks to ensure task codes are used consistently and accurately.	3	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should consider allowing for electronic submission of repair requests, with the potential for upload into AssetWorks after acceptance by the Dispatcher. The Division should also work with AssetWorks to understand if additional capabilities or modules are available that allow for better functionality in understanding current workload and assignment of work orders by the Supervisors.	2	2
Support Services – Fleet Management	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider identifying or developing non-public roadways that Technicians could utilize to recreate problems that cannot be recreated safely on the County's public roads.	3	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should collect and assess data on the current number of on-call repairs, as well as scheduled repairs at the fire stations. This data should be leveraged to determine the appropriate number of service trucks, and technicians to staff the trucks, to support the current on-call and on-site workload.	3	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County should include the Fleet Management Division in the next round of facility condition assessments, to determine the current and future space needs of the Division.	2	2

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Fleet Management	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should require end-users to enter accurate mileage data in order to obtain fuel. If the fueling system does not allow for enforcement of actual mileage entry, then the Division should run reports identifying the end-users that are consistently entering inaccurate data and provide that information to end-user Department Directors, requiring enforcement of the policy. The Division may need to consider alternative disciplinary actions, in collaboration with County leadership.</p> <p>Alternatively, the Division should consider investing in an updated fueling system that tags each vehicle and automatically transmits information at each fueling on mileage, idle hours, and other relevant data points.</p>	1	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Division should develop a comprehensive process that includes proactive engagement of the Fleet Maintenance Section of the Division in all VERP and new vehicle specification developments. VERP and new vehicle cost estimates should, as appropriate, consider the costs of additional equipment or training that may be necessary to service or repair the purchased equipment or vehicles.</p>	2	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Departmental and County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Division-developed processes and practices for maintaining vehicles and equipment.</p>	3	1
Support Services – Fleet Management	<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should consider developing comprehensive policies and procedures for data entry and introduce better quality control processes to ensure data entry is complete, accurate, and consistent throughout the Division. Furthermore, the Division should review AssetWorks to determine whether data is being accurately shared between modules and reports. Finally, the Division should ensure established procedures do not require duplication of data entry into different modules or reports.</p>	3	1
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should require that all calls about service within Gwinnett County should go through the Gwinnett County Solid Waste Call Center, to ensure a complete and accurate depiction of the customer service requests and hauler performance.</p>	2	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should update the Solid Waste landing page of the Gwinnett County website to allow for customer lookup of address eligibility for inclusion in County solid waste pickup. The County should also consider allowing citizens to submit complaints through the website, including missed pickup, damage or spills occurring during routes, or other requests.	3	1
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Gwinnett County should review the hauler contracts and ensure that they are enforcing all penalties for failure to meet SLAs for customer request response time. The County may also want to consider updating the contracts to reflect increased penalties and enforcement mechanisms for the County to ensure compliance and appropriate levels of customer service.	2	1
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Fiscal Section should ensure that comprehensive written policies and procedures are finalized and adopted. Procedures should include regular review and revision to ensure that written procedures align with practice. The adoption process should include the clear delineation of personal preference for task performance from standardized processes.	1	1
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County should research and implement signature policies and practices that allow for the use of secured digital signatures for invoice approvals and other tasks.	2	1
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should divide the Fiscal and Solid Waste Division into two separate divisions. It may also make sense to incorporate other departmental responsibilities into the new Fiscal Division.	1	2
Support Services – Fiscal and Solid Waste	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The County should determine a comprehensive strategic direction and prioritization of sustainability, recycling, and green initiatives. County leadership will need to adopt a County-wide plan and strategy for these efforts, and create a collaborative team to ensure appropriate coordination and buy-in across all County departments.	2	2

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Operations and Maintenance	<p><b>Recommendation 1A:</b> The Department should consider at an appropriate time replacing the current tables with tables that are lighter, designed to be moved on castors, and provide more flexibility in how the equipment is utilized.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1B:</b> The Department should encourage customers who use the Conference Rooms to provide layout and design requests for the set-up of the room at least three business days prior to the reservation. The Department should also consider prohibiting or limiting last-minute, on-demand requests to move furniture in the Conference Rooms.</p>	3	11
Support Services – Operations and Maintenance	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should consider shifting the management and responsibilities for holding contractors accountable to performance and quality standards to the Contract Services Section for all contracts for which the Division is responsible. Division management should collaborate with both Trades Section Supervisors and the Contract Services Section to assign tasks and responsibilities needed as components of the steps to hold contractors accountable. With the current workload of the Contract Services Section, if this recommendation is implemented, additional staff will be required for the Section as current staffing cannot support these additional responsibilities.</p>	2	1
Support Services – Operations and Maintenance	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Contract Services Section should expand utilization of the expertise available from the Operations and Maintenance Division in support of Facility Construction projects. Additional Contract Services Section staff is needed to expand the focus on the internal support and expertise available within the Department would benefit the Department in short- and long-term advantages – especially as the Operations and Maintenance Division becomes responsible for the long-term maintenance and warranties of the newly built properties. In addition, Contract Services Section staff should ensure that Operations and Maintenance staff are a component of the final steps of a construction project, including the final punch-list development and training by the vendor and/or vendor’s subcontractors on the warranty and maintenance requirements.</p>	2	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Operations and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should collaborate with the County Purchasing Division to ensure the involvement of Trades Section staff in the development of future Requests for Proposals for Trades services, and possibly in the selection process for those contracts. Contracts for Trades services should include service level considerations and performance standards. Trades Section Supervisors and Division management should be trained on the steps to addressing contractors whose workmanship does not meet “The Gwinnett Standard” and/or expected quality standards.	1	1
Support Services – Operations and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should collaborate with Technology Services and Planning and Development Departments and the Facility Construction Division to identify appropriate scanning and storage equipment available for the digitization project. The Department should use the insights of the collaboration to include in future budget requests for additional or replacement equipment.	1	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As the Real Estate Section and the Law Department reviews and recommends updates to the Land Acquisition Policy, the County should consider providing more clarity to interdepartmental processes, identify those responsible for decision making, and allow more autonomy for the Section in routine processes.	3	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Real Estate Section should consider a project management or project tracking system for their internal workflow, to maintain standardization of and consistency across all projects and work being performed by the Section. At the very least, the Section should consider purchasing a file management system to maintain standardization and record of all necessary documents, if not a more comprehensive program to track the entirety of the project.	2	2
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should review the list of departments’ systems which store information needed by the Real Estate Section and evaluate whether the Section staff could be granted a level of access to these systems, and what level would be most appropriate.	3	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Support Services should collaborate with the Information Technology Department for assistance in assessing the functionality of the Versatile Retention system and determine additional system and budgetary requirements for full-operational efficiency of the system.	2	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Support Services should collaborate with the County Law Department to assess the need for a County administrative policy related to records management and records retention processes for the County’s digital and electronic records. If the need for a new or updated policy is identified, Support Services should continue to collaborate with the County Law Department in the creation/modification of a County administrative policy for these purposes.	1	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Departmental and County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Records Management Section-developed (or Division-developed) processes and practices for records management.	1	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 7A:</b> Support Services should collaborate with the County Purchasing Department to determine requirements for vendor to provide state-of-the art/current computer equipment with minimum processing requirements. The Purchasing Department may recommend the re-bid of this service to achieve current pricing and equipment standards.  <b>Recommendation 7B:</b> Support Services should request that Information Technology Services provide an assessment of the number and type of computers and ancillary equipment needed to support the number of full-time Mail Services Staff, then follow appropriate protocols to purchase the additional computer equipment.	1	1
Support Services – Real Estate and Records Management	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Support Services should collaborate with the County Finance Department and Purchasing Division to determine if alternate methods of electronic payments may be submitted timelier or efficiently to the U.S. Postal Service and/or to the postal equipment vendor Quadrant when adding postage to the postage-meter machines.	1	1

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<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Real Estate and Records Management</b>	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Support Services should collaborate with Financial Services Department to review the ongoing financial viability of the contract for the provision of food services in the GJAC Cafeteria (GJAC Café) and funding to prepare for when the current funding source for the supplements expires. Additionally, terms of the contract should be proactively reevaluated in order to provide optimum opportunities for current or future vendors, as well as reducing financial risk to the County.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Technology</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in AssetWorks and develop the associated projects and business cases.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Technology</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should begin the process of implementing an Electronic Records Management System (ERM) and conduct a Needs Assessment to define the system requirements for a system procurement.	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Technology</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Solid Waste Management Section should implement a geotagging system for trash and recycling bins to better track inventory and report issues with items that cannot be picked up. Additionally, implementing a more comprehensive CRM system and ensuring it is being used fully by haulers can streamline the customer service practice and reduce the number of calls and emails that must be manually processed by staff.	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Technology</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> e-Builder has successfully automated parts of the construction and maintenance of County facilities. The Department should conduct requirements sessions to identify opportunities to increase the use of the e-Builder such as increased system use between departments, electronic signature functionality, and determine where information from e-Builder could be automatically transferred to other County systems, such as SAP.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Support Services</b> – <b>Technology</b>	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should conduct fit-gap sessions or a needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in Lucity and develop the associated projects and business cases.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Support Services – Technology	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should incorporate the results of the recommended system assessments to develop the technology roadmap for the Department. Review the expanded roadmap with Department and IT leadership to prioritize the roadmap projects and determine if there is a business case for funding to accelerate the implementation of the projects on the roadmap. Conduct monthly or quarterly reviews of the roadmap with the Department and IT leadership.	2	3
Support Services – Technology	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Replace laptops and flip phones with smartphones. This would eliminate the burden of connecting to Wi-Fi at various locations and carrying around cumbersome laptops. The smartphones must have cellular service so that they do not require Wi-Fi to access the internet. Although this service would incur a monthly cost, it would also reduce manual labor and time.	1	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities back over to the division directors and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader Departmental priorities.	1	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.	1	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1



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Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should provide strategic direction to all Divisions requesting modification to Department policies, processes, or protocols, to seek active participation, consideration, and input from all Divisions within the Department which are or may be impacted by the revision or modification.	1	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department’s key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.	2	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Departmental leadership should engage with all divisions in strategic planning and goal setting. Where relevant, Departmental leadership should take the lead in creating cross-division lines of communication and collaboration, ensuring consistency in efforts, messaging, and performance tracking. As appropriate, Departmental and division leadership should engage with County leadership to adopt a County-wide plan and strategy for these efforts, and create a collaborative team to ensure appropriate coordination and buy-in across all County departments. Based on the identified initiatives and efforts, a strategic plan for staffing and systems and other costs should be identified and communicated to County leadership to ensure that appropriate resources are provided to assist in helping ensure success.  Once strategies, policies, and procedures have been developed by responsible divisions, Department leadership should support the new or revised practices and consistently enforce the expectations surrounding these efforts with County leadership and other end-user departments.	1	1
Support Services – Department	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal complaints about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.	1	1

<p><b>Support Services</b> – <b>Department</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should create a separate Solid Waste Management Division and consider adding additional staff to support contract oversight and enforcement. The creation of a position to support these efforts would allow the Solid Waste Management Division Director to focus on more strategic efforts, such as recycling and green initiatives and County-level coordination and buy-in.</p> <p>The Fiscal Management Section should be merged with the Director’s Office to create an Administrative Management Division. This Division should include financial and human resources functions as well as serve in a more strategic and analytical role that also works towards strategic efficiency and process improvement across the Department.</p> <p>Facility Construction should be renamed Facility Planning and Construction and take a more active leadership role in facility planning and lifecycle management across the County. The Division should consider hiring an architect responsible for facility planning and lifecycle management, including regular condition assessments and operational assessments for County departments. This Division should assume responsibility for County-wide space planning needs and submit comprehensive capital and asset maintenance budget requests for the County, in collaboration with the Operations and Maintenance Division.</p> <p>Operations and Maintenance should create a Strategic Asset Management Section, with a Section Manager. The Program Analyst I and II currently housed in Operations and Maintenance should report to this newly created position. This team would continue to focus on asset management and energy management, as well as more strategic trend analysis and data review to support asset management, preventative maintenance scheduling, and cost projections. The team should provide quality control to assist in ensuring complete, consistent, and accurate entry of work order cost and labor information into Lucity. Strategic Asset Management can also collaborate with Facility Construction to ensure appropriate data is captured. Work order data is often used to prepare operating costs estimates included in the initial budget request process for new facility construction and capital renovation projects. This team should develop and monitor metrics for sustainability and asset management, and ensure adequate time, staff, and budget are made available to support asset preventative maintenance.</p> <p>Currently, the County budget process is “competitive,” with capital maintenance and renovation projects, and even smaller renovation projects such as flooring or paint, competing against the County’s other budget priorities and new facility construction needs. The County should consider 10-year maintenance costs in</p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
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	all new facility construction budget requests, including the cost of flooring or fixture replacement and repair, and commit to funding the 10-year maintenance budget without the end-user department or Support Services having to submit these requests through each year's annual competitive budget process.		
<b>Planning and Development – Administration</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should share the wikis they created for administrative activities with other Departments for possible modification and/or replication. Other departments could efficiently create their own wikis based on those provided by the Administration Division.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Administration</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Administration Division and/or Department leadership should collaborate with Human Resources to seek guidance and training on processes, procedures, and considerations for submitting certain personnel actions to Human Resources in order to expedite the processes and create efficient outcomes to the hiring and promotion processes.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Administration</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Administration Division and Department Leadership should collaborate with Support Services Facilities Construction Division for recommendations and/or advice on how to better utilize the Lobby space to provide exemplary customer service and provide direction to customers as they enter the area.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Administration</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Administration Division should explore technical training options for the Customer Service staff available from external sources or by creating training within the Department. As a minimum, if each section manager within Planning Review and Planning sections would create a half-day training for the Customer Service staff, the result will be better customer service, less dependency on technical staff for process questions, and a boost in morale for the Customer Service staff.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Once the Permitting and Inspections Section has updated the staffing levels and finalized the technology applications and processes for performance of key processes and functions, the Section should consider conducting a fee study to ensure that fees are commensurate with the new operating costs.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should research process improvements to automate background check request submission to the Police and Fire Departments. These improvements should include a workflow that allows the Licensing and Revenue Associates to see where the background checks are in process, to provide updated information to the customer about timeline for completion. The Division should also consider including automated lookups or site queries for state license confirmation and Board of Health approvals, to improve efficiency and allow Licensing and Revenue Associates to spend more time in value-add tasks.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should work to ensure that there is communication between Accela and the CRM used by Licensing and Revenue Associates to provide automatic notifications when the temporary certificate of occupation (CO) has expired. It may also be relevant to initiate automated workflow for business follow-up to determine whether the business license should be revoked due to failure to obtain permanent CO.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should ensure all Commercial Code Enforcement Officer positions are filled and the Officers are expeditiously, though thoroughly, trained. Officers in the Commercial Code Enforcement Teams should be assigned specific zones, similar to those in the Residential Code Enforcement Teams, in order to provide the best possible coverage of and service for the entire County.	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should identify the primary types of information needed by Code Enforcement Officers, and compare this list with County systems or databases that may provide the information. The Division should coordinate with other divisions and departments to determine if access may be made available to Officers. Alternatively, the Division should purchase subscriptions to resources.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should discuss with the Gwinnett County Police Department the assignment of specific police officers to support the Code Enforcement Section when needed. This assignment could be full-time or part-time, depending on the needs and availability identified by the two departments.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

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<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Department and County leadership should coordinate with the Gwinnett County Magistrate Court to ensure case assignments allow for Code Enforcement Officers to appear for testimony in regards to the entirety of each case, as well as in a timely manner.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of Code Enforcement Officers and better respect Officers’ discretion in setting timelines for violation remediation and citation issuance. Leadership should balance the needs of both customers – the complainant and the property owner – and should recognize that the needs of one or both might best be addressed through education. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants, especially in cases where Officers determine no violation is present. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with the Code Enforcement Section, so that the Officers who are best equipped to address the specific case can do so.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should introduce and enforce standards for Accela entry. The Division should also review the specific needs of the Code Enforcement Section and determine if the current setup of Accela can meet those needs. The Division may need to consider additional workflow modification or process modification, as well as conduct cost-benefit analysis for purchasing the code enforcement module.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development</b> – <b>Permit, Inspection, and Enforcement</b>	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Commercial Code Enforcement Team should continue reviewing and begin implementing means to encourage businesses to appear in court for code violations. For example, Code Enforcement Officers could issue citations to individual parties with responsibility over the business, such as an owner or manager, after continued non-compliance by the business entity.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

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Planning and Development – Planning	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should provide training and discussions with staff from all divisions and sections to openly discuss how their work is aligned to the Department’s mission and the “2040 Unified Plan”. Further discussions can provide how the Division is aligned with the Department, how the Department is aligned with County Administration, and how the County is aligned with the vision of the Commissioners.	2	1
Planning and Development – Planning	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider expanding the concept of the “Pre-Application Meeting” to additional Divisions for expanded support to the customer, with the addition benefit of information for the Department.	3	1
Planning and Development – Planning	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should consider offering similar training opportunities for staff on a periodic and regular basis to increase their skills in report writing and compliance with Division standards.	3	1
Planning and Development – Plan Review	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should collaborate with the Department’s Administration Division to create a Frequently Asked Questions resource that could be posted on the Department’s website or have hard copies available for in-person customers.	3	1
Planning and Development – Plan Review	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Division and Departmental leadership should collaborate with staff to determine additional support needed to meet the two-week mandate for completion of all Plan Review applications or evaluate opportunities to provide expanded time to complete the evaluation and approval processes for the most complex applications and cases.	1	2
Planning and Development – Plan Review	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should evaluate the fee structures for each Section at a minimum of every two to three years to ensure fees include updates to staffing, technology, and other considerations.	1	2
Planning and Development – Plan Review	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should collaborate with the Administration Division to create technical training opportunities for the Customer Service staff related to all areas of Plan Review.	3	1

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Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Process and Technology Manager should communicate the Accela current Roadmap to the Department Leadership Team to review and prioritize the roadmap to determine if the project priorities are accurate.	2	1
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Conduct fit-gap sessions, or a needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified in the Permits, Inspection, and Enforcement Division CRM system and develop the associated projects and business cases.	2	2
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Conduct fit-gap sessions or a needs assessment to define the Department's business intelligence requirements and develop the associated projects and business cases.	2	2
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Conduct fit-gap sessions, or a needs assessment to define the Queue Management system requirements and develop the associated projects and business cases.	2	2
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Expand the Accela Roadmap to become the technology roadmap for the Department by adding the projects resulting from the analysis of Permits, Inspection and Enforcement Division, Customer Services, Business Intelligence, and Queue Management described above.	2	2
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Review the expanded technology roadmap with Department and IT leadership to prioritize the Roadmap projects and determine if there is a business case for funding to accelerate the implementation of the projects on the roadmap.	2	2
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Conduct monthly or quarterly reviews of the Roadmap with the Department and IT leadership.	2	1
Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Escalate/communicate the need for the License and Revenue involvement in the new ERP system project with the appropriate department.	1	1

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Planning and Development – Technology	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Escalate/communicate the need for enterprise credit card processing standards to the Finance Department and include the new ERP system project requirements if applicable.	1	1
Planning and Development – Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1
Planning and Development – Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department’s key mission and priorities. The Department should continue to leverage the Process and Technology Manager and Fiscal and Special Projects Manager positions to ensure consistent collection and entry of data, and include quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.	2	1
Planning and Development – Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff’s understanding of specific cases and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all customers - the complainant, property owners, internal customers, etc. - and should recognize that the needs of one should not automatically outweigh the needs of the others, and that oftentimes external customers’ needs are best addressed through education. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with front-line staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific case can do so.	1	1
Planning and Development – Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider subscribing to a language line or other service that provides access to on-demand translation in a variety of languages.	2	1



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<b>Planning and Development – Department</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.</p> <p>Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Department</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should identify and consistently leverage available customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions. The Department should consider creating more standard templates and forms across divisions for publication of customer-facing materials, to ensure a more consistent customer experience regardless of the division they initially engage.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Department</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should collaborate with Human Resources to seek guidance and consultation of opportunities to address the compensation, work-assignment, and job-related concerns within the merit system structure and County policies. The Department should allow staff interested in broadening their technical and work experiences to request a broader spectrum of work assignments within their assigned division and/or across divisions.</p>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Planning and Development – Department</b>	<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should explore technological opportunities that allow management and leadership to review and provide feedback to Staff Reports electronically. Further, Department leadership should create a work environment where staff are comfortable and encouraged to ask questions about the feedback, raise issues of inconsistencies of feedback, or raise issues of compliance with current policies, procedures, and guidance.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

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<b>Planning and Development – Department</b>	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluations and identified issues about vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider realigning the organizational chart using client departments with similar matters. The Department should also ensure a more equitable allocation amongst the three Deputy County Attorneys to allow for succession planning and attorney support for more complex or time-consuming matters assigned to all of the Deputy County Attorneys.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should continue to add Assistant Attorney positions and assign at least one Assistant Attorney to support each client department. This will also support succession planning and provide additional opportunities exposure to new or different client departments or matters, such as real estate or litigation.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should create a more detailed, robust onboarding and training process for newly hired attorneys and staff. The onboarding and training process should include more training on Gwinnett County requirements, such as the process for records retention, as well as include more training on using Aderant. This may also require the creation of more user guides or job aids for standard processes.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should review the staffing of attorneys relative to workload. Additionally, the Legal Manager should hold regular Legal Associate II meetings to review workload and consider temporary reassignment or support of specific attorneys based on workload.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department needs to create unique naming standards for use in Aderant, including identification of order of title as well as which acronyms or abbreviations are to be used.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Law	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should consider hiring an Open Records Specialist, to provide additional support and training to end-user departments as well as to serve as a back-up to the tasks performed by the Open Records Officer. In the interim, the Department should ensure another Departmental staff member is fully cross-trained in the responsibilities of the Open Records Officer, especially those around ensuring compliance with the timelines for responding to record requests.	2	1
Law	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Legal Manager should institute regular meetings with the Legal Associates to review workload, help address issues or concerns, and ensure consistent communication about office operations or other changes.	1	1
Law	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should review and revise the current Policy Manual and Employee Handbook to reflect current practices. The Policy Manual and Employee Handbook should be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with current practice.  The Department should also identify opportunities for the creation of job aids or user guides that provide clear foundational parameters for matters such as contract review. Where relevant, the Department may also need to consider crafting County policies to ensure consistent end-user department processes for matters such as anti litem hold notification or open record request processing.	1	1
Law	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Department should consider revising the contract review process to allow for staff to review contracts and other agreements for basic terms and conditions and data point verification, reserving attorney time for more complex analysis and review.	2	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Law	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents. The County should also establish a standard timeline and process for contract review, to ensure that all contracts are reviewed at the same or similar points in the overall contract review and acceptance process and to reduce risk for the County.	2	1
Law	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Open Records Officer should maintain current lists of all trained end users and power users for GovQA. The Open Records Officer should routinely review these lists with end-user departmental leadership and ensure that separated or reassigned employees' access is revoked or revised in a timely manner.	3	1
Law – Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> We recommend that the County continue the process to evaluate alternatives to replace Aderant and expand the working group to include a group of Attorneys to further define and validate the system requirements. In addition, we recommend that the County expand the system requirements to include the requirements for eDiscovery, Litigation Holds and Privileged Log to determine if the Case Management system vendor have solutions for these processes.	2	2
Law – Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> When possible, encourage the submission of Open Records Requests through GovQA. Continue to tweak the system as needed to address the findings identified in this Assessment.	1	1
Transportation – Finance and Performance Management	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should better formalize cross-training of key financial functions, and ensure that there is appropriate delegation of more rote or routine tasks as possible.	1	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Transportation – Finance and Performance Management	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should assess whether the current SharePoint process can be modified to replace the manual entry of invoices on a spreadsheet and reduce the duplication of entry.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Finance and Performance Management	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The application should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Finance and Performance Management	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County and then the Department need to determine the intent of the performance management and data collection process, to ensure that the use of staff time results in appropriate performance measures or workload indicators that add value and insight into each Department’s core mission and functions. Additionally, the Department should leverage the knowledge of the Program Analysts to perform more review and analysis of available data. This additional responsibility should be balanced with the core requirements of the job and the Department, to ensure that this work is value-add and provides insight that meaningfully impacts Departmental operations.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Capital Transit Improvement	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As transit funding, demand, and capital projects increase in the future, the Department should consider creating a dedicated transit sub-organization within the Department’s organization that encompasses the Capital Transit Improvement Program, the Transit Division, and other potential transit-related delivery functions.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Capital Program Delivery	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Preconstruction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify engineering firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly impacts the assignment of work provided to each engineering firm.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
<b>Transportation – Capital Program Delivery</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Construction Division staff should be heavily involved in the procurement process to prequalify construction firms and there should be formal mechanisms for staff feedback and evaluation that directly considers and impacts future awards. The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project”.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Transportation – Capital Program Delivery</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider procuring its own ROW management software or when the current Atlas contract expires, add a requirement in the future RFP for ROW acquisition services that the vendor maintain ROW management software that can be accessed in real time by Capital Program Delivery staff.	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Transportation – Capital Program Delivery</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Capital Program Delivery should consider purchasing formal construction project management software that can be used by multiple divisions to better, and more formally, manage capital projects throughout the entire lifecycle.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Transportation – Capital Program Delivery</b>	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Construction Division and Department as a whole should continue to market and educate the public on all completed and planned transportation projects, and the numerous benefits realized.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Transportation – Intermodal Operations</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should be proactively communicating the required revisions to appropriate governing boards and County leadership, which would include a timeline for stakeholder input, revision development, data collection, and/or project approvals by County leadership and the Board of Commissioners, in order for a timely submittal to the FAA.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Transportation – Intermodal Operations	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should be proactively communicating with County Leadership and the Board of Commissioners concerning the upcoming decisions that will need to be addressed, and the decisions to be approved – which will have long-term impact for future economic development and growth of the local area. County Leadership and the Board of Commissioners should be provided a comprehensive assessment of the complex issues to be addressed in the project (e.g., long-term leases of up to 25-years, economic development opportunities for the County depending on how bidders propose to develop the Airport’s North side, etc.) and timeline for the project.	1	1
Transportation – Intermodal Operations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should collaborate with the Purchasing Division to create a revised RFP for mowing services on the Airport property to better leverage contractors to provide the mowing services rather than Airport staff.	3	2
Transportation – Intermodal Operations	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should continue to explore additional opportunities to hold the vendor accountable to customer service and performance expectations, and communications opportunities in order to provide exemplary customer service to Transit customers. Further, the Division should continue identifying new customer service and performance expectations which should be considered and included when a new RFP for Transit Services is released in the future.	1	1
Transportation – Intermodal Operations	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Transit Division should collaborate with the County Purchasing Division to identify procurement options to procure a communications system as soon as possible that would meet the County’s and customers’ need for real-time updates and communications regarding Transit services.	1	2
Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Traffic Engineering Division may consider separating the duties of staff working in the TCC observing the cameras, traffic patterns, and the modifications to traffic signal equipment, to those technical duties related to equipment replacement and repair. If given the opportunity to hire additional staff, a pilot hiring project may prove it easier to hire someone with transferrable technical skills that may fit better in one specialty area over another – but maybe not both specialty areas.	3	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Traffic Engineering Division should expand their utilization of the Smart Corridor and Traffic Responsive Technology projects, and include additional federal, state, and local grant opportunities in order to expand the research and experiential capabilities.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should collaborate with Human Resources to determine if the County may provide additional compensatory options for Non-Exempt staff who are assigned “On-Call” duties as a component of their work assignments.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Operations and Maintenance Division should consider allowing the Contracted Services Section and the County Purchasing Division to provide additional training to all areas of the Department on better methods to manage performance and service contracts, including how to informally and formally address accountability and performance concerns that are articulated in the contract.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Traffic Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance	<p><b>Recommendation 5A:</b> Reports and accusations of theft over a certain dollar threshold should be reported to law enforcement for investigation. Additionally, reports of theft, missing equipment, or inappropriate use of County equipment should be reported to appropriate levels of leadership within the Department and County, with mandatory escalation based on the amounts/value and frequency. Communications should also include Finance and Risk Management Departments.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 5B:</b> The Department should consider installing security cameras and other security equipment with recording functionality to deter future thefts, as well as provide details, footage, audio, etc. to law enforcement in cases where theft occurs, or missing equipment is reported. The Department should also consult with the Department of Water Resources for advice on the security equipment they have installed on their property, which is next door to the DOT Central campus.</p>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Transportation – Staff and Administration Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should explore collaborating with Human Resources for economies of scale, and potential efficiencies realized by having one department coordinate leadership training and development opportunities.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>



Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Transportation – Staff and Administration Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should collaborate with the Technology Services Department to determine options to providing staff with more frequent access to County systems, information, and email.	3	1
Transportation – Staff and Administration Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Section Manager should collaborate with Information Technology Services to determine if reporting could be developed for data this is already collected, or explore options to electronically collect the utilization data, including duration of calls, types of requests, specific locations within geographic areas of the County (analysis by Districts), and other analytics.	3	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should continue its path to replace/update its current ERP and should ensure that all end-user requirements and needs are documented and included when evaluating a new ERP.	1	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should determine if Atlas has automated alerting capabilities or should replace the system with one that will alert users when action needs to be taken and send reminders after inaction on their part.	1	2
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should determine which other departments use project management systems. There is a need for a County-wide project management system that can provide increased visibility and tracking of projects and funding.	1	2
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should implement training and provide resources for employees on how to use systems they interact with daily and all future systems.	2	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should determine what systems are used across the County and any plans to push specific applications from upper levels of the Department to ensure compatibility and usability for all divisions.	2	2
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Intermodal Operations should implement alert systems for traffic and weather conditions that affect transit routes.	2	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should implement a system to support vendor management and quality control/quality assurance requirements to hold vendors/contractors to Service Level Agreements and other key performance indicators.	1	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should implement an Asset Management software solution and build a framework for managing assets in the system. The Department should provide adequate training to staff on all software for the system and framework to be implemented and used correctly.	1	3
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Department should eliminate all manual processes possible, such as hard copies and wet signatures, using disparate communications within projects, and tracking and managing data in Excel.	2	2
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Department should provide additional smartphones to Technicians to use in the field to eliminate personal cell phones for work matters.	1	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Department should provide SAP training and resource materials to Technicians to manage timekeeping and work orders more effectively.	2	1
Transportation – Technology	<b>Recommendation 12:</b> The current stock of Toughbooks should be deployed to Technicians.	1	1
Transportation – Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1
Transportation – Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should work with Purchasing to develop a process for formal evaluation of vendor performance or project completion. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.	1	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
<b>Transportation – Department</b>	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should review the currently available and planned data points to determine which data best aligns with the Department’s key mission and priorities. The Department should identify staff who can assist in ensuring consistent collection and entry of data, including quality control review for completeness and accuracy of data collection. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Transportation – Department</b>	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn’t only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.  Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Enterprise-wide</b>	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Enterprise-wide</b>	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.	2	1
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.	2	1
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.	1	2
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.	2	1
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant’s work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.	2	1

Department	Recommendation	Priority/ Sense of Urgency:  1=High 2=Medium 3=Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = < 90 days; 2 = 91-180 days; 3 = 180+ days
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.	2	1
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities ( <i>e.g.</i> , using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).	1	1
Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.	2	1



**Executive Summary:**  
**Phase 3 Operational and Performance  
Assessment – *Communications and  
Water Resources Departments***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

May 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 2
- 3. Departments..... 4
  - 3.A Communications Department..... 5
  - 3.B Department of Water Resources ..... 14
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 35
- 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations ..... 37
- 6. Conclusion..... 42

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This Executive Summary report represents the summary work product of Phase 3 which includes the Communications and Water Resources departments. Our detailed report should be read in its entirety to gain additional insight and context.

Phase 3 fieldwork began in March 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Executive Summary report identifies numerous recommendations and our detailed report provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates



## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 3 scope included the following departments:

- Communications
- Water Resources

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well,” “what needs improvement,” and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

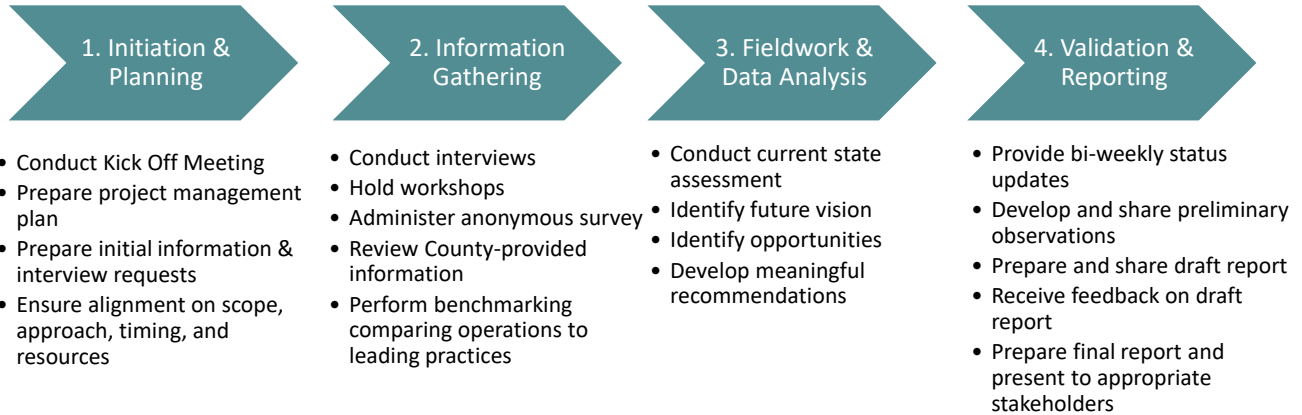
### Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 106 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This Executive Summary report summarizes analysis and fieldwork completed between March and May 2022. Our detailed report should be read in its entirety to gain additional insight and context.

## 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Communications
- B. Water Resources

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Leadership and Management
- Survey
- Department Recommendations

# 3.A Communications Department

## Communications at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Manage all external messaging about County government initiatives, programs, and services
- 2 | Manage all external communications channels including website, newsletters, printed materials, videos, government-access cable television, and social media
- 3 | Manage all internal communications channels including the intranet
- 4 | Manage the County government’s interactions with media
- 5 | Manage the County government’s brand, ensuring proper use across all County government collateral

**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021\*):**

<b>\$3,752,090</b>	<b>\$2,027,889</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

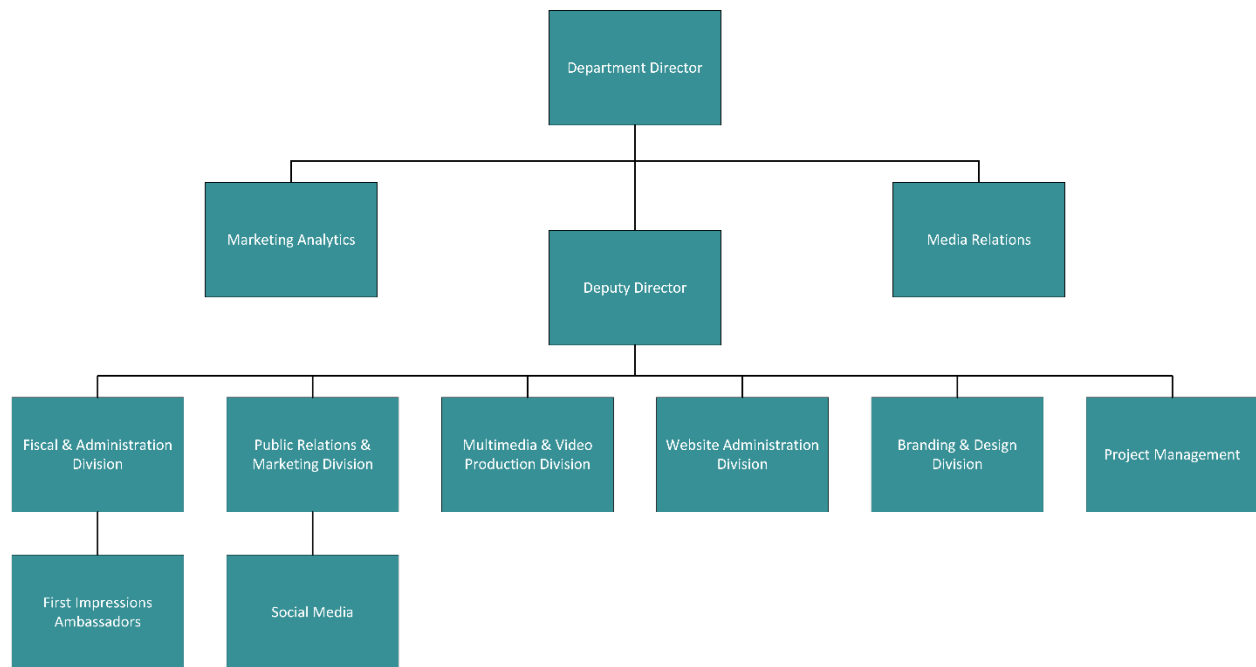
\*The Communications Department was established partway through 2021

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through March 2022	Communications
	Filled	
Allocated		52

\*counts include two positions funded by other departments

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### First Impressions Ambassadors



The Department's willingness to provide the necessary support and resources to the First Impressions Ambassadors, including hiring additional staff to the role, demonstrates the Department's understanding of the Ambassadors as an important communications and customer experience resource. The Ambassadors provide to GJAC visitors resources and handouts developed through 20+ years of experience.

### Agency-style Structure



As the Department grows and fills newly allocated positions, the Department is moving in the direction of functioning similar to a private sector public relations agency, rather than a traditional public information office. The agency-style structure provides end-user departments with resources and expertise through an efficient customer service delivery model.

### 20+ Years of Video Production



Gwinnett County boasts a longstanding commitment to telling the County's story through video, produced in-house for more than 20 years. Through resources like the dedicated studio space and governmental cable access channel funding, the Department produces videos at little cost to the County that visibly demonstrate the Gwinnett Standard.

### Web Administration Leading Practices



The Department provides a massive number of resources for Gwinnett County employees through a well-manage intranet. And on the public website, the Department has emphasized the importance of applying user experience best practices and providing training for end-user departments' approved web content publishers.

### Brand Box



The Department provides end users with important training on how to create content within the guidelines of Gwinnett County's brand, with three levels of access to branded templates and resources based on need and capabilities.

## Introduction

The Communications Department ("Communications" or "Department") is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned public communications channels, including the website, printed and electronic newsletters, video and audio productions, TV Gwinnett, printed materials, and social media. Additionally, the Department is responsible for internal communications channels, media relations, and management of the County government's brand.

The Department originated as a division within the County Administrator's Office. In order to respond to the priorities of the Board of Commissioners, Communications was established as its own department in October 2021. The reorganization of the Communications function to a full department roughly doubled the staff size. Many of the newly created positions are not yet filled and the Department is still developing strategic direction for positions, divisions, and overall Departmental initiatives.

## Organization

The Communications Department is led by a Department Director and Deputy Director. Department staff are organized into five divisions:

- Fiscal and Administration
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Multimedia and Video Production
- Web Administration
- Branding and Design

In addition to the five divisions, there are several important functions that report directly to the Department Director or the Deputy Director:

- Marketing Analytics
- Media Relations
- Project Management

### Fiscal and Administration Division

The Fiscal and Administration Division is responsible for the financial and administrative functions of the Department. On the fiscal side, the Division manages budgets, vendors, invoices, and procurement oversight for the Department; on the administration side, the Division performs select HR functions in support of the Administrative Assistant, who reports directly to the Department Director. The Department is still determining what administrative functions will remain under the purview of the Administrative Assistant and what will be fully assumed by the Fiscal and Administration Division. The administrative responsibilities of the Division also include the First Impressions Ambassadors – the members of staff who answer the phones and provide reception and information services at the Gwinnett Judicial and Administration Center.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and includes a vacant Business Manager position, two Senior First Impressions Ambassadors, and three First Impressions Ambassadors.

### Public Relations and Marketing Division

The Public Relations (“PR”) and Marketing Division is responsible for developing external-facing marketing and communications pieces on behalf of the elected officials, appointed officials, and departments of the Gwinnett County government. The Division is separated into four proposed teams: three PR teams responsible for general content pieces and a social media team. The PR teams liaise with various County government entities in order to develop content ranging from brochures, website articles, and podcast scripts to talking points, ribbon cutting speeches, and proclamations. The social media team manages the County’s social media channels, which includes providing oversight of those accounts managed by individual departments.

The Division is headed by a Division Director. The one current PR team is led by a PR Manager and includes four Senior PR Specialists, one of whom is funded by the Gwinnett County Police Department. The social media team currently includes one Social Media Coordinator and one part-time Social Media Assistant. When fully staffed, the Division will include two more PR teams – each with a PR Manager, one with three Senior PR Specialists and one with four Senior PR Specialists (including a Fire Department-funded position) – and will grow the social media team to include a Social Media Manager and two additional Social Media Coordinators.

### Multimedia and Video Production

The Multimedia and Video Production Division produces videos, podcasts, and livestreams for the County government, including both public- and internal-facing productions. This includes providing audio/visual (“A/V”) support for and recording all public meetings. The Division also manages the government-access cable television channel, TV Gwinnett, and the associated Public, Educational, and Governmental (“PEG”) funds budget.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes a Video Production Manager and Senior Video Producer. The Video Production Manager serves as a video producer as well as the technical lead. When fully staffed, the Division will add four more Senior Video Producers, one of whom will also serve in a production lead role. The Division outsources professional services on a per project basis to supplement the current staff.

### Website Administration

The Website Administration Division manages the content, organization, design, user experience (“UX”), search engine optimization (“SEO”), reporting, and Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliance for the County’s public website (GwinnettCounty.com) and intranet (GC Workplace). The Division works with the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department on the back-end management of the website and oversees the content changes to the public website made by staff in other departments.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes a UX Content Coordinator. When fully staffed, the Division will include a Website Administration Supervisor, two Senior Website Administrators, and one Website Administrator.

### Branding and Design

The Branding and Design Division is responsible for oversight of Gwinnett County’s brand, as well as the production of marketing materials. The Division reviews marketing materials produced by other departments and produces templates for use by employees of other departments who have graphic design experience. The marketing materials produced by the Division range from flyers and booklets to digital banner ads and video graphics. The Division also provides photography services for Gwinnett County events.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes three Senior Graphic Designers. When fully staffed, the Division will include a Graphic Design Supervisor and a fourth Senior Graphic Designer.

## Media Relations

The Media Relations Manager reports directly to the Department Director and is responsible for all interactions between the County government and members of the media. As spokesperson for the County government, the Media Relations Manager is also responsible for media training. A vacant Special Projects Writer position is assigned to the Media Relations function as support, though at the time of our Assessment, conversations were underway to shift the Special Projects Writer position to the PR and Marketing Division and shift a Senior PR Specialist position to the Media Relations function to serve as a media specialist.

## Marketing Analytics

The Department has a vacant Data Analytics Manager position which has not previously been filled. Once filled, this position will report directly to the Department Director and be responsible for reviewing and analyzing data from the website, social media, videos, and PR and marketing campaigns. The Department will be able to utilize this data analysis in developing more strategic direction.

## Project Management

The Department has a vacant Project Manager position which has not previously been filled. Once filled, this position will report to the Deputy Director. As of the time of this Assessment, the Department had not fully determined how to utilize this position.

## Leadership and Management

Department leadership has earned the trust of the Department staff over the course of their decades of service to the County in Communications roles. Divisional leadership, too, has earned the trust of their staff through their experience and their willingness to listen to feedback and ideas. Because the Department grew from a team of four, leadership embraces a small-team environment in which management supports the growth and development of their staff. The drawback, however, to the small-team mentality is managers are often required to be working managers – performing day-to-day tasks in addition to supervising and supporting staff. As the Department's staff size grows, managers, supervisors, and Division Directors will need to relinquish their day-to-day responsibilities and focus primarily on strategic positioning and staff supervision.

The Department Director and Deputy Director trust their staff to perform their jobs as experts in their field and do not require unnecessary layers of approval and oversight. This trust allows their staff to grow as they seek to prove themselves. By creating an environment of trust without unnecessary micromanagement, Department leadership encourages success as staff rise to the occasion of their respective roles. Where Department leadership can grow is in strategic positioning and setting expectations with the rest of the County government. Leadership should take the lead in developing a comprehensive communications plan and transitioning the Department to function similar to a private sector entity. Department leadership should work with County leadership to establish policies and practices governing the utilization of the Communications Department as an internal resource and communicate expectations around those policies and practices to end-user departments.



As the Communications Department's leadership works toward making the Department function more like a private sector entity, leadership should consider seeking managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff with private PR or advertising agency experience. The majority of Departmental and divisional leadership made their careers in government communications – most in Gwinnett County; bringing in managers and supervisors with private sector experience will help the Department stay current on leading practices in private industry and transition smoother into functioning similar to a PR agency.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Twenty responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 65%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Communications employees were for the following questions:

1. I am proud to work for the County
2. I would recommend the County as a good place to work
3. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County

The lowest three scores from Communications' employees were for the following questions:

1. I receive guidance and support for improving my performance
2. My workload is appropriate for my role
3. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- The respondents saw the members of the staff as the Department's greatest strength – of note were the talent, dedication, and passion of the staff.
- Respondents also noted the staff's ability to get every job done regardless of timeframes. However, this theme also exposed the Department's habit of accepting all projects, including last-minute projects. Many respondents expressed frustration with the Department's apparent inability and lack of empowerment to say "no" – and to explain to end-user departments why project requests were turned away. Respondents felt the Department is subject to unrealistic expectations.
- The respondents stated that the Department is reactive, due in part to the large number of last-minute requests. Members of the Department suggested that the Department accepts every project, even when staff recognize the initiative or campaign will be ineffective. Staff also suggested the Department begin tracking and utilizing performance data – some respondents listed output data as the only collection points, while others couldn't identify any data collected for their subject matter areas. In all, respondents believed the Department could behave more proactively and strategically through performance data.

- Respondents recognized many of the issues with the lack of proactivity and workloads results from the lack of staff. Respondents identified several staff positions that are desperately needed and recommended the Department be more strategic in filling open positions.
- Along with additional staff, respondents recommended the Department focus on staff training. The request for staff training fell into three categories: better training for new staff, additional emphasis on established staff receiving professional development opportunities, and increased cross-training. Staff feel their workloads are too heavy for professional development opportunities, which can be exacerbated by a lack of cross-training between roles.
- Another positive element identified by respondents is the expertise of the staff and the Department. However, staff noted their expertise is not always respected, both by end-user departments and by other members of the Communications Department. Some respondents suggested leadership and coworkers trust subject matter experts, however, other respondents suggested some members of the staff can be overly territorial, suggesting a balance between expertise and collaboration is necessary.
- Respondents felt that overall cohesion and collaboration in the Department can be improved. Certain respondents felt that not all areas of the Department are involved in projects from the start, resulting in silos, bottlenecks, and other inefficiencies. Respondents recognized a need for improved communication within the Department, including more productive meetings – whether smaller divisional or team meetings (as opposed to the Department-wide meetings), project-specific meetings with all relevant parties involved, or reorganized meetings that encourage better collaboration.
- Respondents saw the expansion of the communications function to a full department as an opportunity to provide some additional structure. Respondents recommended working to ensure all members of the Department are on the same page regarding policies, procedures, workflows, and processes – ranging from how to use Hive to restructuring the central approval process.
- Respondents also saw the establishment of Communications as a standalone department as an opportunity to reintroduce themselves to the rest of the County government. Several respondents recommended a Departmental roadshow, highlighting the resources the Department can provide and the expertise of the staff. Respondents cautioned, though, that the roadshow should be inclusive of all divisions, as individual divisions have hosted their own roadshows, resulting in uneven understanding of services provided by the Department.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** As the Department fills the newly allocated positions and begins to balance workloads, the Department should embrace its position as the County’s center for marketing and communications expertise. The Department should collect and analyze available performance metrics that align with Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities and make data-driven decisions, proactively sharing with end-user departments leading-practice and data-proven strategies for developing marketing and communications campaigns and initiatives. The Department should also consider building out an annual content calendar with each division working together to promote similar topics, events, programs, and initiatives across all channels at relevant times of the year, and to ensure all Departmental employees are aware of those expected projects that will require heavier use of Departmental resources. Overall, the Department should identify and take advantage of opportunities to operate in a more proactive manner, providing strategic direction for the entire County’s communications efforts. In the meantime, the Department should manage expectations with internal clients, including County leadership, as the Department builds out its staff, ensuring internal clients understand the limitations the Department has while it is understaffed.

**Recommendation 2:** County and Departmental leadership should collaborate to fully establish a vision and mission for the Communications Department. Especially important is the need to determine the Department’s degree of authority over and interaction with other departments’ communications personnel and initiatives. County leadership should clearly communicate the duties, responsibilities, and objectives of the Communications Department to all members of the County government.

**Recommendation 3:** Department leadership should lead the effort to establish a comprehensive communications plan, establishing the policies, procedures, and practices that will govern the Gwinnett County government’s internal, external, and emergency communications. Departmental leadership should communicate and consistently enforce these policies, procedures, and practices with County leadership and end-user departments.

**Recommendation 4:** As Communications continues to hire for newly allocated positions, the Department needs to position itself more as a resource for end-user departments. The Department should consider conducting a roadshow once staff are in place and forms and processes have been developed, inviting other County departments to come learn the capabilities of the Department and understand the advantages of working with the Department. County leadership should encourage end-user departments to view the Communications Department as a resource and utilize the Department for campaign planning and collateral design. While the County will undoubtedly go through growing pains as end-user departments lose a degree of autonomy, the County should set a goal of establishing a common practice of including the Department in all communications efforts, thereby building a more unified brand and voice.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.

**Recommendation 6:** As the Department shifts to function similarly to a private PR or advertising agency, the Department should consider seeking managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff with private PR or advertising agency experience. Bringing in managers and supervisors with private sector experience will help the Department stay current on leading practices in private industry.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should prioritize implementing Hive as a fully functional project management system, creating the necessary forms and workflows that will help with staff efficiency. The Department should ensure all divisions understand how to utilize the system and actually do use the system for management of projects.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should consider establishing the Project Manager as the role responsible for implementation and governance of the Department's systems, such as Hive. The role could also serve as a "traffic manager," helping oversee the project management process and help balance workloads within the Department.

# 3.B Department of Water Resources

## Water Resources at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Provide safe, reliable drinking water to homes, businesses, and other facilities
- 2 | Deliver wastewater along more than 3,000 miles of sewer pipeline to three wastewater treatment facilities where water is treated above industry standards
- 3 | Manage more than 1,400 miles of stormwater drainage pipes to safely convey stormwater runoff to streams, rivers, and lakes
- 4 | Update and maintain the County's water, stormwater, and sewer infrastructure through predictive, preventative, and corrective maintenance
- 5 | Partner with local universities, national research organizations, and experts from around the world to conduct research, guide policy makers, and situate Gwinnett County as an international innovation hub for water research

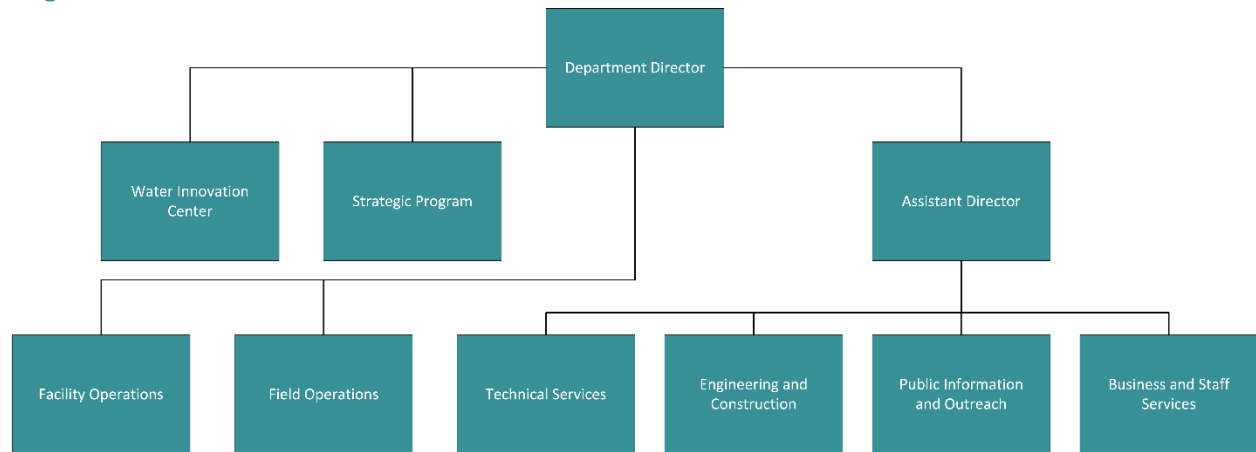
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$396,618,534</b>	<b>\$220,509,305</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through December 2021	Water Resources
	Filled	
Allocated		649

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### GAWP Plant of the Year



For each of the last five years, one of Gwinnett County's water plants has been named Plant of the Year by the Georgia Association of Water Professionals. The award recognizes facilities based on bacteriological monitoring, flow volumes, and overall operations. Lanier Filter Plant is GAWP's 2022 Plant of the Year.

### Uptime Awards



The Department received an Uptime Award from Reliabilityweb.com in 2016 and 2020. The 2016 Special Recognition Award celebrated the County's precision alignment, while the 2020 Best Asset Condition Management Program Award celebrated the County's precision, predictive, and condition-based monitoring.

### GAWP Best Tasting Water in Georgia



Gwinnett County won the Georgia Association of Water Professional's regional Water Taste Test Competition in 2022, going on to subsequently win the statewide "taste-off."

### Highly Decorated Department



The Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources has received more than 45 statewide and national awards in the last five years.

### Employee Skills Development Program



The Department introduced a program to automatically promote staff while encouraging continual job and personal growth. As members of the Department achieve new skills important for the functioning of the Department, those staff receive automatic promotions to the next job level. The program began in the Field Operations and Technical Services Division, and expanded to include the members of the Facility Operations and Engineering & Construction Divisions.

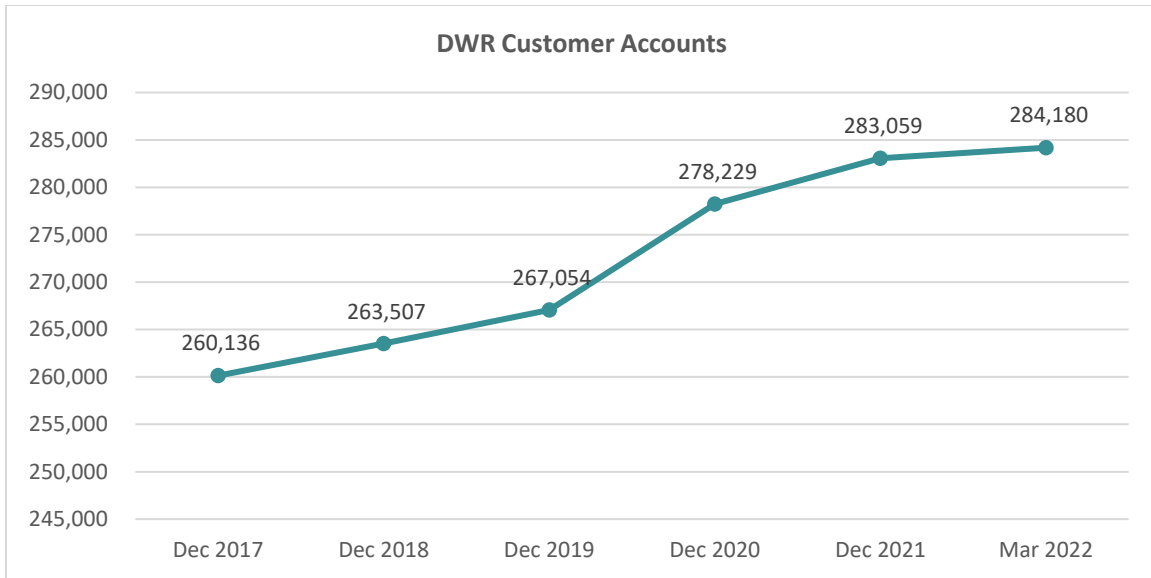
### Technical Staff with Industry Experience



Many Department professionals are former consultants who have significant industry experience serving other utility organizations, bringing industry leading practices and lessons to Gwinnett County.

## Introduction

Gwinnett County's Department of Water Resources ("DWR") is responsible for providing drinking water and treating wastewater in Gwinnett County. As of March 2022, DWR reported more than 284,000 water accounts, representing single family homes, office parks, schools, industry, and multi-unit residential units. As shown in the following table, customer accounts have risen approximately 9% over the past four years.



There are 14 different classifications for customer type. For 2022, Residential Single Unit accounts made up 77.9% of all accounts. Rental Properties accounted for 14.8% of all accounts, with Commercial accounts constituting another 5.2%. The other 11 account types accounted for the remaining 2.1%.

## Organization

The Department of Water Resources is led by a Department Director who is supported by an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director oversees three divisions and one section, with two other Deputy Directors reporting directly to the Department Director. Department staff are organized into five divisions, plus one section:

- Business and Staff Services
- Engineering and Facility Construction
- Facility Operations
- Field Operations
- Technical Services
- Public Information and Outreach Section

Our discussion of divisions, sections, and units all reflect the approved titles and position counts as of the beginning of our fieldwork. As noted in other sections, DWR has noted some issues with turnover and retention in a number of divisions, with multiple changes in staff during the course of our fieldwork. Many of the positions we've noted were vacant for some or all of our fieldwork; in some instances, entire crews that are approved were vacant, which impacts not only workload but on-call schedules for staff as well.

Many of the Divisions also have staff have titles with level modifiers between level I and level V within the same title, such as Trades Technician I, II, III, or IV. For many positions, the Department has discretion in hiring employees based on the selected applicant's skills level and experience, so a position could be filled using any of these levels dependent on the selected applicant.

Additionally, employees are eligible for promotion within title based on several factors. The Department has developed a robust internal training program, and is working on implementing the Employee Skills Development (“ESD”) program that allows for advancement and promotion based on demonstration of competency in necessary job skills in addition to tenure or educational achievements. The ESD program allows employees to advance to higher levels based on demonstration of skills and competency in the field, as well as classroom training completion, so vacant positions may be reflected at one level, but could be hired at a different level based on initial experience, or could have been changed during our fieldwork based on someone successfully demonstrating skills competency and receiving a level promotion. Based on these two programs, our descriptions of positions are not noting specific positions in certain divisions.

### Business and Staff Services

Business and Staff Services provide many of the support and administrative functions for the rest of the Department. Business and Staff Services is divided into five divisions:

- Customer Service
- Systems and Technology
- Finance
- HR
- Safety and Training

### Customer Service

The Customer Service Division, also known as the Customer Care Division, is responsible for all billing and account-related interactions with customers. The Division is led by a Division Director and Section Manager, who are supported by an Administrative Associate II and a Program Analyst II who helps with data review and analysis.

There are six units within the Division. There are two Residential/Commercial units, each with a Customer Service Supervisor. These units are responsible for all customer calls and can assist with account status research, new service or service termination, payment acceptance, and assisting with other account-related issues. One Customer Service Supervisor oversees eight Customer Services Associates (“CSAs”) and two temporary CSAs, with the other Customer Service Supervisor overseeing seven CSAs and one temporary CSA. The Division has been using temp-to-hire for filling vacant CSA positions, with mixed results.

The Quality and Training Unit is responsible for training all newly hired Division staff, as well as performing QA/QC reviews for Division staff interactions with customers. The Customer Service Supervisor – Quality and Training has a staff of four CSA IIIs, although only one position was filled during our fieldwork.

The Billing Unit is overseen by a Customer Service Supervisor and supported by a staff of seven CSAs. The Billing Unit is responsible for generating approximately 12,000 invoices daily to DWR’s water and sewer customers. This includes reviewing readings for potential outliers, providing proactive notifications to customers, and assisting with leak adjustments and communicating with meter reading contractors.



The Cash Management Unit is responsible for reconciling and ensuring that all payments have been processed. This Unit processes check and cash payments made at the front lobby or the drive-thru window. This Unit is led by a Customer Service Supervisor, and has nine CSA positions, and one Administrative Services Associate (“ASA”) position.

The Customer Service Division recently added a Customer Service Advocate position, focused on ensuring all processes are considerate of the customer experience, and considering changes in process, service, or offerings in pursuit of better customer service. Once fully staffed, this Unit will have two Customer Service Advocates and a part-time analyst.

Within Customer Service, there are minimal opportunities for advancement within the CSA role. CSA IIIs are considered lead workers, with CSA II positions serving as entry-level. Outside of advancement to Customer Service Supervisor, there are minimal additional opportunities for advancement within the Department.

### *Systems and Technology*

The Systems and Technology Division serves as IT support for the Department, and also serves as liaison with the County’s Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department. The Division is led by a Division Director, and includes six additional positions. The Planning Manager over software acquisition supports all technology budgets, contract oversight and licensure assignment, and assists in software acquisition, including liaising for procurement processes where needed.

The Division also has an IT Associate III who supports user testing specifically for the Customer Service Division, and can assist in creating and analyzing test environments prior to rolling out upgrades or new systems. The Unit also has a Business Analyst, Tech Support who supports some generalized applications for the Department, such as WebEx, as well as provides vendor management and initial break-fix and helpdesk support. The Systems and Technology also has a part-time clerk, a part-time tech assistant, and an intern position.

There are also two SAP consultants assigned specifically to support DWR.

### *Finance*

The Finance Division provides all payment processing and non-utility bill revenue recognition for the Department, as well as support in data collection and some mandatory reporting. The Division is organized into four units:

- Capital Unit
- Operating Unit
- Revenue and Reporting Unit
- Project Controls Unit

The Capital Unit is responsible for processing all payments associated with capital projects and budgets. This includes review and approval of all P-Card purchases. The Capital Unit is led by a Business Manager and supported by a Program Analyst II and Financial Analyst II.

The Operating Unit is responsible for processing all payments associated with operating budgets, including P-Card purchases. The Operating Unit is led by a Business Manager, with four supporting positions. There is a Business Services Associate (“BSA”) III, two BSA IIs, and a part-time BSA.

Revenue and Reporting is responsible for accounting functions associated with DWR revenue, including all reconciliations and ensuring the different interfaces are communicating correctly. This includes special revenue, such as funds received from system development charges and other intergovernmental revenue, as well as collecting and preparing consumption data for reporting as well as non-revenue water reporting. This unit also serves in an internal audit type capacity, auditing warehouse cycle counts, P-Card utilization and reconciliation, and other internal function. Revenue and Reporting is led by a Program Analyst, with a full-time Financial Analyst II and a part-time Financial Analyst to complete the team.

The Project Controls Unit is led by a Program Analyst, with four supporting positions. The team is comprised of a Financial Analyst II, Business Officer, BSA II, and a part-time project controls position. This Unit is responsible for managing the on-call and demand service contracts for the Department, as well as providing secondary invoice review for those services and supporting project management. This Unit also coordinates with the County's Law Department and Real Estate Section of Support Services in obtaining and managing easements.

#### *HR*

The HR Unit is comprised of three full-time employees as well as an intern position. The Unit is led by a Project Coordinator, with two Administrative Associate Support. This Unit is responsible for liaising with Gwinnett County HR on all HR transactions and supporting internal employee morale initiatives. The Unit also assists internal end-user divisions with all the necessary HR paperwork, including justification memos.

#### *Safety and Training*

The Safety and Training Unit is responsible for all safety and security coordination for DWR. This includes facility and field worksite safety efforts, including overseeing contractor safety. The Unit also maintains security for the facilities, including administering badge access, security gates, and security cameras. The Safety Section is led by a Section Manager, with four additional full-time employees. There is a Safety Officer, Construction Manager II over Safety, an Emergency Services Coordinator over Safety, and an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Training Section within the Safety and Training Unit is responsible for working with end-user divisions to develop, design, and provide training to all DWR employees. The Section is led by a Training Coordinator and is comprised of two Training Associates, an Administrative Support Associate II, and two interns.

#### *Engineering and Construction*

Engineering and Construction ("E&C") manages the design and construction of capital improvements to the County's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems as well as water production and water reclamation facilities. E&C inspects the construction of water, sewer, and stormwater systems for capital projects and new development. The Division is led by a Deputy Director, and is divided between Linear and Vertical assets for project design and construction. E&C consists of two divisions – Linear (pipe) and Vertical (facilities).

The Linear Division consists of a Division Director and three Section Managers supporting linear assets, stormwater, and construction. The Linear Assets Section is supported by multiple Engineer and Construction Manager positions. The Stormwater Section is supported by multiple Engineer positions. The Construction Section is supported by Construction Manager and Contract Inspection positions.

The Vertical Division is supported by a Vertical Assets Section Manager and multiple Engineer, Construction Manager, and Business Manager positions.

Based on the type of asset classification (linear or vertical) for the proposed capital project, the E&C divisions oversee the final design of capital projects by leveraging on-call external consultants, and provide project management support overseeing external construction contractors construct the capital project to specification.

### Facility Operations

Facility Operations is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the water production and wastewater facilities throughout the County, including maintenance of these assets. Facility Operations is organized in three divisions:

- Operations
- Plant Engineering
- Maintenance

### Operations

The Operations Division manages operations for the five County facilities. These facilities operate 24/7. There are two water production facilities: Lanier Filter Plant and Shoal Creek Filter Plant. There are three wastewater facilities: Crooked Creek, F. Wayne Hill, and Yellow River.

The Division is led by a Division Director, with two Section Managers – one responsible for Water Production and one responsible for Water Reclamation, or wastewater.

The Water Production Section Manager is supported by a Business Services Associate, and has an Operations Superintendent for each plant. Each plant also has a Plant Manager over operations.

At Lanier, there are two night shifts and two day shifts, for a total of four operating crews. Each crew is led by a working Water Shift Supervisor and has two Water Technicians, who can vary in position level from I to IV based on current licensure level and experience. Lanier also has two floating Water Technician positions who can fill in on shifts that may be short a Water Technician due to absence or vacancy. Lanier Filter Plant also has an intern position.

Shoal Creek Filter Plant also has four shifts, each led by a Shift Supervisor with two Water Technicians per shift. Shoal Creek Filter Plant has one floating Water Technician and an intern.

The Water Reclamation Section is led by a Section Manager, with Plant Superintendents located at each of the three plants.

Yellow River and Crooked Creek share an Administrative Associate II, who splits time between the plants. Each plant has an intern position, and operations are split between four shifts, with two day and two night shifts. Each shift is led by a Wastewater Shift Supervisor and has two Wastewater Technicians, varying in level between I and IV based on licensure and experience.

Additionally, Yellow River has an additional Water Reclamation Trades Associate who serves in a maintenance and operational managerial support capacity for the plant.

F. Wayne Hill Plant has a dedicated Administrative Associate II, as well as an intern position. F. Wayne Hill has two Wastewater Managers, with one primarily overseeing liquids handling and the other Wastewater Manager responsible for solids handling.

Like the other two wastewater plants, F. Wayne Hill has two day and two night shifts, each led by a Wastewater Shift Supervisor. Night shifts at F. Wayne Hill have three Wastewater Technicians, with day shifts assigned to either five or six Technicians.

### *Plant Engineering*

The Plant Engineering Division is responsible for supporting the operations and maintenance of all of the DWR facilities. Plant Engineering is organized into four sections currently:

- Asset Management and Reliability
- Contracts
- SCADA Projects
- Information Systems

Plant Engineering has been approved for positions to create a fifth section, Plant Engineering. The Division Director is working to develop the full responsibilities for this new section and will begin hiring soon.

Asset Management and Reliability is led by a Section Manager and divided into two units: Planning/Scheduling and Asset Reliability. Planning/Scheduling is responsible for developing the schedule and creating the work orders for the facilities maintenance staff. This Unit is also responsible for creating the preventive maintenance schedules in Maximo that allows for auto-generated work orders for certain types of preventive maintenance. Planner/Schedulers can also assist with coordinating the timing and materials needed to perform the work or coordinating with vendors needed to support or perform some maintenance functions. This Unit is led by a Trades Coordinator and has five Planner/Scheduler positions, with Planner/Schedulers assigned to specific facilities or types of facilities.

The Asset Reliability Unit is responsible for analyzing issues and failures with assets throughout the facilities and determining root causes for failures, or making recommendations about rotation strategies to improve asset lifespan and reliability.

The Contracts Sections is responsible for tracking and managing contracts, including coordinating purchasing and procurement needs. This Unit also works to confirm completion of all contract deliverables, and reviews invoices for compliance with contract specifications and approved pricing. The Contracts Section has a Section Manager who oversees a Construction Manager II and a Program Analyst III. The Construction Manager II oversees a Construction Manager I, with the Program Analyst III overseeing a Program Analyst II.

The SCADA Projects Section serves as the SCADA system support unit, supporting engineering and process design as well as overseeing the current SCADA vendor transition. This Section is also responsible for ensuring cybersecurity standards are met in SCADA system management. The SCADA Projects Section is led by a Section Manager and includes two Engineer IVs, an Engineer V, and an intern.

The Information Systems Section serves as initial technical support for many of the information systems in the facilities. This includes Maximo, as well as other operations and lab software systems. This Section can provide initial onsite troubleshooting and escalate issues to the vendor, the Systems and Technology Section, or Gwinnett County ITS, as needed. This Section also manages Jira for DWR. This section is comprised of five full-time Program Analysts at either the Program Analyst II or III level, plus an IT Associate IV, an intern, and a part-time analyst who are all led by a Section Manager.

### *Maintenance*

The Maintenance Division is led by a Division Director, and is responsible for maintaining the plants, along with the pump stations, tanks, and booster stations throughout the County. The Division is organized into five sections:

- Water Production
- Pump Stations
- Predictive Maintenance
- Water Reclamation
- Building and Grounds

The Water Production Section is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and reliability of the water production plants as well as the associated tanks and boosters that assist with distributing the water throughout the County. The Section is led by a Section Manager. There are two Trades Coordinators that oversee crews of Trades Technicians that are assigned to each of the water production facilities. A third crew is overseen by a Trades Supervisor and is responsible for the tanks and boosters in the water distribution system.

Trades Technicians range from level I to level IV based on experience and licensure. Some Trades Technicians are electrical specialists, other are mechanical specialists, and some are more generalized in their skillsets.

There are two Process Control Associates who each report to the Section Manager and are responsible for instrumentation and telemetry across the water production assets and equipment. Each Process Control Associate is supported by a Trades Technician.

The Pump Stations Section is responsible for the maintenance and operations of the wastewater collection pump stations that assist in ensuring wastewater is returned to the water reclamation plants for treatment. This Section is organized into five units that are supervised by a Section Manager. Four of the units are led by a Trades Coordinator, with the fifth unit led by a Process Control Associate who is responsible for instrumentation and telemetry at the pump stations. The instrumentation and telemetry crew is comprised of three Trades Technicians.

The other four Pump Stations Section units each have specialized areas of focus. One unit is responsible for odor control and ARVs, one oversees large repair jobs and coordinates with contractors. The other two units are geographically assigned to perform regular inspections on all of the pump stations, providing preventive maintenance and identifying any issues that may require additional coordination to address. Each one of these units has between six and eight Trades Technician positions assigned to the unit.

The Predictive Maintenance Section is responsible for monitoring the assets at the plants and assessing the data to identify and mitigate potential issues before they cause equipment failure or shutdowns. This Section utilizes a variety of data collection and analysis methods, include vibration testing, infrared thermography, ultrasound, and the use of UAVs, or drones, for visual inspections of the facilities. This Section is led by a Trades Manager and has six Trades Technicians to perform much of the testing and data collection, along with two Program Analyst IIs who are responsible for analyzing the data and reporting the results.

The Water Reclamation Section is responsible for maintenance and asset reliability at the three water reclamation plants in the County. This Section is led by a Section Manager and organized into six crews. These crews are led by Trades Coordinators and assigned to each of the water reclamation plants, with two crews assigned to F. Wayne Hill. One crew is led by a Process Control Associate and staff assigned to F. Wayne Hill, with Crooked Creek and Yellow River splitting another Process Control Associate and crew.

The maintenance crews are responsible for mechanical and electrical maintenance at the plants, with the Process Control Associate and crews responsible for instrumentation and SCADA support.

When there are staff shortages on crews, Technicians may volunteer to work on crews at other facilities. This can be challenging as each plant operates differently and has different equipment and processes.

The Building and Grounds Section is responsible for non-asset related operations maintenance, such as general facilities maintenance and repairs. This Section is also responsible for non-process and operational facility support. The Section Manager oversees an Operations Maintenance Unit, a Grounds Unit, and a Contract Inspection Associate II who oversees contractor compliance for the Section and also serves as project management for larger projects that may require coordination of several contractors or trades.

The Operations Maintenance Unit within the Building and Grounds Section is responsible for non-process maintenance and is overseen by an Operations Maintenance Manager, supported by a Building Services Coordinator and a Trades Associate II. Responsibilities include coordinating and performing non-process electrical, HVAC, paint, plumbing, and other facilities maintenance.

The Grounds Section is responsible for landscaping outside all of the facilities, including DWR Central Facility, as well as providing supporting in transporting equipment to Support Services Fleet Management Division for servicing, as well as coordinating with landscaping contractors. The Grounds Section is led by a Trades Supervisor who oversees a staff of five Trades Technicians.

## Field Operations

Field Operations is responsible for overseeing all of the pipes, manholes, valves, and other assets in the ground to support the efficient flow of clean water and wastewater. Field Operations is organized into two divisions:

- Field Operations
- Maintenance

### *Field Operations*

The Field Operations Division is organized into two sections: Materials/Warehouse and Contracts.

The Materials/Warehouse Section is responsible for managing warehouses at DWR Central Facility as well as four facilities, plus a warehouse for pumpstations. The Section has a Section Manager, with a Warehouse Manager over the plant warehouses and a separate Warehouse Manager over the Central Facility Warehouse. There is also a Program Analyst II who serves as a liaison with Support Services Department's Fleet Management Division as well as a liaison for purchasing and warehouse contract support.

Central Facility Warehouse has an Administrative Support Associate III, a Business Services Associate III, a Warehouse Supervisor, and four Warehouse Technicians.

The Plants Warehouse Manager has five direct reports: Warehouse Supervisors at Lanier Filter Plant and F. Wayne Hill Water Reclamation Plant, and Warehouse Techs for pump stations, Yellow River, and Crooked Creek. Lanier Filter Plant has an additional Warehouse Technician and F. Wayne Hill has two Warehouse Technicians, with one who is designed to serve in a floater role should any of the other plants need additional support due to workload or staffing absences.

The other Section within the Field Operations Division is the Contracts Section. This Section has a variety of responsibilities that aren't all contract related. This Section, led by a Section Manager, has six units:

- Meters
- Meters and Backflow Prevention
- Investigations
- Annual Contracts
- Stormwater Maintenance and Repair
- Data

Each unit's leader has a different title, and there are certain teams where the section leader's title is the same as someone lower on the organization chart in another section or unit.

The Meters Unit is led by a Trades Coordinator who oversees two Trade Supervisors. Each Trade Supervisor has a team of five Trades Associates. This Unit is responsible for meter replacement and repair throughout the County.

The Meters and Backflow Prevention Unit is led by a Construction Manager I and supports larger and commercial meter installation and repair, or oversees contractors tasked with this work. This Unit is also responsible for overseeing backflow device installation and testing compliance, to ensure that contaminated water doesn't infiltrate the clean water supply. This Unit has two Contract Inspection Associates and an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Investigations Unit is led by a Construction Manager II and houses the Dispatch Team and the Investigations Team. The Dispatch Team is a 24/7 emergency call center that takes calls about water outages, leaks, or spills. This Team also monitors the SCADA system for alarms related to the pump stations and reports alarms to the Facility Maintenance Section responsible for pump station maintenance. This Team is led by a Water Reclamation Services Supervisor and is staffed with seven Water Services Associates.

The Investigations Team is responsible for investigating the complaints and issues reported to the Dispatch Team. This Team has three Water Trades Supervisors who each oversee a crew of two Water Trades Associates. The Unit is also supported by an Administrative Support Associate II. This Unit works seven days a week to investigate and resolve potential leaks, spills, breaks, or other outages.

The Annual Contracts Unit is responsible for overseeing the work of annual contractors for water and sewer line assessment, rehabilitation, and repair. This includes site inspections and project management, as appropriate. This Unit is led by a Construction Manager II. There are four Construction Manager I positions each assigned a specific contract or type of contract, such as meter reading. Each Construction Manager I oversees a Contract Inspection Associate, and the unit is supported by an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Stormwater Maintenance and Repair Unit is overseen by a Construction Manager II and is responsible for stormwater system maintenance and repair, as well as overseeing contractors tasked with initial system condition assessments as well as relining and replacement.

The Section also has a Data Unit, which administers Lucity for the Division and ensures that work order data is entered accurately. This Section also helps prepare monthly outcome and performance reports and helps coordinate audit responses for the Division. The Data Unit is led by a Program Analyst III who is supported by two Program Analyst I positions.

### *Maintenance*

The Maintenance Division is divided into two sections: Preventive Maintenance and Corrective Maintenance.

The Preventive Maintenance Section is responsible for proactive condition assessments and initial service support for the water and sewer lines throughout the County. The Section Manager is supported by a Preventive Maintenance Planner/Scheduler position, and oversees two Trades Coordinators: one over water preventive maintenance, and one over sewer preventive maintenance.

The Water Trades Coordinator oversees three Trades Supervisors, with each over a specific subset of water line preventive maintenance: valves, flushing, and leak detection. Each Trades Supervisor oversees a team of Trades Associates. The Valve Trade Supervisor has five positions assigned, with the other two Supervisors each overseeing two Trades Associates.



The Sewer Trades Coordinator also oversees three Trades Supervisors who oversees between four and six Trades Associates. Crews are assigned based on the type of equipment they primarily use: either SL-RAT, CCTV, or Hydrojet.

In the Corrective Maintenance Section, the Section Manager oversees two Trades Managers: one over stormwater, sewer, and wastewater collections, and one supervising clean water, landscaping, and restoration. The Section Manager is also supported by an Administrative Support Associate II. This Section is responsible for larger scale corrective maintenance, or repair and replacement work on the water, sewer, and stormwater lines throughout the County.

Each Trades Manager oversees two Trades Coordinators. The Trades Coordinator over stormwater corrective maintenance oversees five Trades Supervisors, who each supervisor two Trades Associates.

The Trades Coordinator over sewer and wastewater collections oversees four Trades Supervisors, who are assigned functional areas such as pipe repair and manhole repair. Each sewer and wastewater collections Trades Supervisor oversees two Trades Associates, with two additional vacant Trades Associate positions not currently assigned to a crew.

The Trades Coordinator over Clean Water Distribution oversees seven Trades Supervisors, all assigned specific functional areas such as pipe repair or hydrant repair. Each Trades Supervisor has a crew of two Trades Associates.

The Trades Coordinator over Landscaping and Restoration oversees one Trades Supervisor, with a crew of seven Trades Associates split between restoration work and the dump trucks. There is also a Maintenance Technician III providing basic maintenance and support to the dump trucks.

### Technical Services

The Technical Services Division (“Technical Services”) supports, improves, and optimizes the operation and maintenance of DWR’s assets. The Division provides permitting, regulatory compliance, planning, and operational assessment services related to the County’s water, sewer, and stormwater program delivery. This includes the prioritization, planning, and preliminary design of projects based on long-range planning, capacity, risks, and needs.

Technical Services is led by a Deputy Director and the organization consists of the following four sections:

- Permit and Regulatory Services
- Stormwater Services
- Water and Sewer Technical Services
- Infrastructure Support

### *Permit and Regulatory Services*

The Permit and Regulator Services Section is responsible for maintaining compliance with state issued Environmental Protection Authority (“EPA”) permits and for issuing and monitoring County Industrial Pretreatment Permits. The Section consists of two units – Water Quality and Industrial Pretreatment.

The Water Quality Unit is led by a Water Quality Superintendent and supported by numerous Environmental Scientist and Water Quality positions that sample and test water and wastewater on a daily basis throughout the County to ensure compliance with multiple EPA permits. The County has received multiple EPA water and wastewater permits to provide drinking water and treat wastewater for County users that require a great deal of compliance with federal and state requirements. The EPA permit requirements necessitate regular water and wastewater sampling and testing.

The Industrial Pretreatment Unit is led by a Water Quality Coordinator and supported by multiple Water Quality positions. The Unit issues and monitors compliance for Industrial Pretreatment Permits. Industrial Pretreatment Permits are issued by the Unit to various commercial/private sector organizations for wastewater discharge into the County system related to the organization's business (laundromats, manufacturing plants, etc.). Industrial Pretreatment Permits are designed to protect the County's water system and reduce conventional and toxic pollutant levels discharged into the environment by industries.

#### *Stormwater Services*

Stormwater Services provides active monitoring and reporting for the County's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems ("MS4") Permit, monitoring other stormwater related strategic initiatives, and supports capital projects related to stormwater.

The Division is led by a Division Director and supported by multiple Planning, Engineer, Construction Manager, Water Quality, and Contract Inspection positions.

#### *Water and Sewer Technical Services*

The Water and Sewer Technical Division is responsible for the capital planning and preliminary design of water and wastewater projects before the Engineering and Construction Division constructs the projects. The Division is divided into two primary asset classifications – linear (pipe) and vertical (plants/facilities). The Division is also responsible for asset management and leverages Lucity for managing linear assets and leverages Maximo for managing vertical assets.

The Division is led by a Division Director and supported by a Linear Assets Section Manager and a Vertical Assets Section Manager. The Linear Assets Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer positions. The Vertical Assets Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer and Scientist positions.

#### *Infrastructure Support*

The Infrastructure Support Division is responsible for assisting developers with new construction development projects and for maintaining asset and GIS information for the Department. The Division is led by a Division Director and is supported by a Development Section Manager and a Data Management section Manager.

The Development Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer positions and is responsible for assisting developers in the construction planning phase to support capital investment and the related economic benefits to the County.

The Data Management Section Manager is supported by multiple Planning Manager, GIS Associate, and Program Analyst positions. The Data Management Section is responsible for managing the CMMS which oversees service requests, inspections, and work orders; and also is responsible for the Department’s GIS database.

### Public Information and Outreach

The Public Information and Outreach Section is responsible for developing and overseeing internal and external communication strategies for the Department. Public Information and Outreach is led by a Section Manager. The Section Manager has primary responsibility for emergency communications management, responding to media inquiries, drafting press releases, and other strategic communication efforts.

The Section has a Water Resources Outreach Manager who is responsible for public outreach through a variety of events, such as workshops, festivals, clean-up days, and career fairs. The Water Resources Outreach Manager, along with a Resources and Marketing Specialist, an intern, and a part-time Analyst may schedule, promote, and host events as well as attend events hosted by other County Departments or organizations.

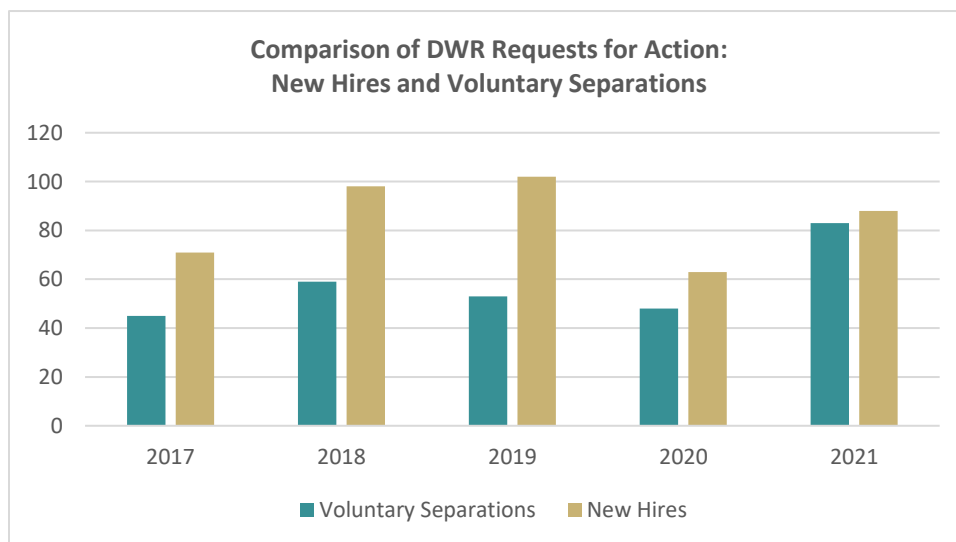
The Water Resource Program Coordinator is responsible for all K-12 school education outreach, including conducting programs within classrooms as well as afterschool clubs and activities. The Water Resource Program Coordinator is also responsible for water conservation programs throughout the County. The Water Resource Program Coordinator is supported by two interns.

The Section’s Project Coordinator is responsible for construction communications. Construction communications includes proactive engagement with residents and stakeholders who may be impacted by Department construction projects.

The Section has two contractors to support its functions.

### Overall Hiring and Retention Challenges

As demonstrated in the following table, the Department is seeing a lot of new hires as well as voluntary separations each year.



The Department feels that there has been a lot of turnover and are struggling to maintain employees in many technician and operator roles, especially those that require specific skill sets. In 2021 alone, the Department lost approximately 13% of its total workforce to voluntary separation. This figure does not include retirements, transfers to other Departments within Gwinnett County, or involuntary separations. The Department is losing approximately 3% of its workforce to retirement every year.

Hiring is complicated by the limited set of available titles in use throughout the Department. This can create some confusion in understanding the differences in how titles are used in different divisions. The use of fairly generic titles may also cause issues in the hiring process, as the titles and general descriptions may not accurately describe the role to be performed, or the skill sets that may be necessary. Additionally, the use of a consolidated list of titles has resulted in the inclusion of skill requirements that may not always be applicable. For example, the job description for Trades Technician I notes that some positions require a CDL. Many of the Technicians work on crews, so having each crew member hold a CDL is redundant, and may discourage talented applicants who are otherwise not interested in holding a CDL.

The use of a limited set of titles also poorly reflects the differences in skillsets and experience required to hold different roles. Within the Customer Service Division, the use of CSA interchangeably across all of the teams fails to highlight the additional skills necessary to be a successful performer in cash management or billing roles.

The broad application of titles may also impact the use of one of DWR's strongest programs: ESD. As some positions have licensure requirements and others do not, the ESD program is not available to all employees, and due to the limited number of titles available within the Department, may inhibit ESD from being applied to all groups who may benefit, due to discrepancies in the requirements between different units of employees who hold same or similar titles.

The Department and the County have made some efforts to correct some of the low pay issues noted throughout the Department. These efforts have not been consistently applied – increased wages for new hires may mean that inexperienced new hires may be earning the same, and sometimes more than, experienced staff. Additionally, there are disincentives to promote from staff to coordinator level positions, since the coordinator level positions do not always qualify for on-call and overtime pay. This could result in an employee taking a functional pay cut to take on more responsibilities. We noted several voluntary demotions on the HR Requests for Action report for 2017 – 2021; anecdotally we were told that some of those voluntary demotions were the result of employees deciding to take the demotion to increase their chances of better pay through on-call and overtime eligibility.

As DWR's mission directly relates to public health and can impact public safety, the 180-day hold period that is automatically applied to most positions after separation can also hinder hiring, along with the length of the County hiring process.

Many divisions, sections, and units have just enough staff to perform all of the work if all employees are working full-time and there are minimal absences. We also noted, on average, approximately 40 employees who were either on FMLA or short-term disability each of the last five years. While this is a normal part of operations, the combination of positions that are filled but not actively staffed and working can further contribute to workload issues.

The Department is also seeing several separated employees returning. Over the past five years, the Department has processed 56 rehires of employees who previously worked for the County, suggesting that the current work environment is not a significant decision-maker for those choosing to leave the County, and may be an incentive for employees to return. Anecdotally, we spoke with several employees who left the County and then returned, citing DWR's work environment as a positive factor in choosing to return.

## Leadership and Management

Senior Leadership in the Department has done a lot to change operations as well as perceptions within the Department, undergoing a significant organizational realignment in the past three years. Time has also been invested in ensuring that staff understand the vision for the Department and are bought in to the strategic direction and priorities of the Department.

Employees in several divisions, all independent of each other, cited that the Department was focused on doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason, suggesting that the mission is being consistently shared and adopted throughout the Department. Staff are interested in opportunities for more organic interactions and visibility of Senior Leadership outside of Central Facility, to encourage more buy-in and opportunity for staff input across all levels of the Department.

The opportunities for buy-in and engagement are somewhat complicated by the depth of the organizational chart and the number of management positions that some staff may need to work through to have their ideas shared or concerns heard. Corrective Maintenance Trades Technicians of the staff in Field Operations, for example, have to go through five levels of management before reaching the Deputy Director over Field Operations. Water Technicians or Wastewater Technicians in Facility Operations would also need to go through five levels of management. There is a perception that recommendations and input often get lost in all of the middle management levels, either due to lack of interest or lack of prioritization.

The Department has also done a lot to facilitate leadership growth and promotion from within. There are broad-based opportunities for leadership and supervisory training through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's "Succeeding as a Supervisor" course and the Gwinnett Tech Leadership Academy, which DWR is continually assessing to ensure the right mix of courses for the workplace. Employees across the Department noted that having Coordinators, Managers, and Supervisors who were promoted from within helped with understanding their concerns and helping advocate for their needs.

There were noted gaps in the training or initial support provided for newly promoted managerial or leadership positions, especially around administrative functions, such as finance, purchasing and P-Cards, and HR transaction requirements. Many staff noted that the support from those units is great, but there was minimal initial discussion around processes, expectations, etc. so everything was learned as mistakes were made.

Many large decisions, such as capital planning or introduction of new processes or programs are often being made by a collective of divisions. Much of the decision-making focuses on including the units directly responsible for implementation and the divisions responsible for initial analysis. Many discussions fail to proactively include or incorporate consideration of impact on support functions, such as reporting, customer care, etc. These units feel that they are the last to know, and often find out informally rather than being included in process design and decision-making.

DWR has won a variety of awards for its customer service, operations, and maintenance uptime. Some staff feel that the appreciation/acknowledgement of the work it takes to earn these awards doesn't always trickle down to appreciation of individual employees. Staff expressed interest in internal programs and acknowledgements that highlight individual employees of the month/year/etc. – both to provide more visibility into what these different teams do to support overall award-winning operations, but also to consistently highlight good work.

Due to perceived imbalanced workloads and overworked staff in certain areas, the Department has focused on the creation of additional middle management roles to manage workload and ensure more equitable distribution of work. These new roles do not always feel strategic, and may have been introduced without a proper evaluation of workload, workflow, and the opportunity for more efficient processes rather than additional levels of management. There is a general sense that many middle management roles were not defined prior to creation, and significant authority has been given to higher-level managers in determining what should be assigned to the newly created roles, rather than strategically assigning work in an intentional and structured way. The independent assigning of work and responsibilities has created some inconsistency in how titling is used throughout the Department, and some disparities in roles and responsibilities within the same title band. Additionally, not all managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, so there is a perception that some of these managers are micromanaging lower-level staff to fill their days, as some of the current managers do not relinquish their responsibilities and fail to delegate managerial and decision-making authority down the line. The multiple levels of management also means that a lot of time is spent in meetings, so many middle managers also cited a struggle to find balance in attending meetings and keeping staff updated, while also getting the work done and overseeing and supporting their downline staff.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. One hundred and ninety-eight responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 29%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from DWR employees were for the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role
3. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens

The lowest three scores from DWR employees were for the following questions, with two sets of responses tied for the third-lowest score:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I have opportunities to advance within the County
3. My workload is appropriate for my role
4. Management clearly communicates decisions in a timely manner

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified a collaborative, dedicated workforce as the Department's greatest strength. Employees indicated collective and individual pride in providing high-quality services to Gwinnett County residents.
- The respondents indicated three communications concerns within the Department. First, respondents suggested not all messages trickle down successfully from Departmental leadership to all employees at every level and location. While some respondents acknowledged an improvement in top-down communications, inconsistencies due to schedules, locations, and middle management still exist.

The second communications concern stemmed from the belief that issues, ideas, and messages are not being communicated by entry-level staff all the way up to Departmental leadership. Respondents suggested management does not consistently convey communications up the chain.

The third communications concern related to communications among the divisions. Respondents cautioned that processes, activities, and projects relevant to multiple divisions within the Department are not accurately communicated among divisions with consistency or timeliness.

- Respondents cited concerns with staffing levels due to vacancy issues. Due in part to the fact that compensation is not competitive with the private sector, respondents felt the Department struggles to fill vacant positions, resulting in uneven workloads for current staff.
- In addition to vacancy issues, respondents also saw allocation of positions by employee level as a cause for uneven workloads. Respondents believed the Department has a disproportional number of middle management positions in comparison to frontline positions.
- According to respondents, some areas of the Department lack adequate buy-in for change within the Department. Respondents suggested the lack of buy-in stems from a combination of resistance to change and inadequate explanation of why changes are necessary or beneficial.
- As previously mentioned, respondents noted pride in the Department's high-quality services. However, respondents also noted recognition exists primarily at the Department-level, while the individuals of the Department are not recognized for their efforts and dedication.
- Respondents recommended better utilization of data. The Department tracks numerous data points and metrics, according to respondents, but either does not fully utilize these data assets or is unable to effectively utilize these data assets due to the aforementioned staffing levels.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level technology recommendations and division-level recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Recommendation 2:** Department leadership should continue efforts to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts that seek to involve staff who may be housed at different locations.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department needs to assess and inventory all contractor compliance functions to understand which roles and tasks reside in each workgroup. The Department should create consistent levels and clearly document who is responsible for which tasks. This may include expanding the use of Jira or other software to include all employees who oversee contractors, to ensure comprehensive compliance review and deliverable oversight files are maintained in a single repository for each contract.

The Department may want to consider renaming some of the workgroups to better reflect their roles.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should explore purchasing a formal project management system for use in multiple divisions.

**Recommendation 5:** Standard procurement service level agreements (“SLAs”) should be considered by County leadership for the County’s Purchasing Department (and other internal service functions) to ensure procurement lifecycle expectations are consistent. Procurement policies and procedures may need to be evaluated and adjusted. Additional resources may also be needed.

**Recommendation 6:** The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project.”



**Recommendation 7:** The Department should work to develop internal training classes or programs on the administrative requirements of management positions. The Department should also consider creating more job aids and cheat sheets for staff new to these positions, to ensure that they are performing these functions consistent with Department and County policies and procedures.

**Recommendation 8:** DWR should ensure that it is performing full workload analysis prior to creating new management positions. This analysis should always include an analysis of current positions above and below the manager, to determine if there needs to be shifts in workloads. It should also include an assessment of where technology and automation may assist in reducing workload, instead of creating new positions. When new positions are justified, Department leadership should clearly document which responsibilities will be assigned to each role, and follow up to ensure that this is consistently enforced and implemented.

**Recommendation 9:** DWR should work with Fleet Management to develop preventive maintenance schedules that include consideration of engine time, and should regularly review and share engine idle time with Fleet Management to coordinate preventive maintenance appointments.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department should review current timelines and processes for end-user divisions and staff to check warehouse inventory for needed parts and materials. The Department may need to modify processes and extend forecasting timelines to ensure that the warehouse had longer periods of advance notice to get parts and materials.

The Department may also need to create revised inventory rules for critical operating parts and materials, as many parts may be on backorder for more than six months, and others may be used in sets instead of single parts.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Recommendations (from the Phase 1 and 2 Report)

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

### **Additional Recommendations Identified During Phase 3 Assessment**

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

## 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations

County leadership should consider the following “quick win” recommendations extracted from the full report for each of the Phase 3 In-Scope Departments. These recommendations may provide an opportunity for executive leadership to make an immediate approval/decision or prompt action to provide rapid successes:

### Communications

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** As the Fiscal and Administration Division more fully defines the administrative duties for which it is responsible, the Communications Department leadership should provide clear guidance on who is responsible for specific Department’s HR functions.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Fiscal and Administration Division should consider installing permanent signage for the information desks in order to direct GJAC and Nash building visitors to the desks.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** The County should consider expanding the use of current language solutions, such as the Department of Water Resources’ language line, Lionbridge.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider replacing the cameras in the front counter and drive-thru areas with cameras that also record audio. These camera feeds can also be used to conduct quality assurance reviews of staff in these areas.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The Department should ensure each division informs the Fiscal and Administration Division of all purchases and should establish a formal procedure for receipt and submission of invoices. The Department should consider replicating the Department of Transportation Financial Section’s model utilizing SharePoint for automated invoice approval workflow.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** Department Divisions should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** As the Public Relations and Marketing Division continues to increase the number of PR Specialists and redistribute workloads, the Division should ensure the PR Specialists begin to proactively approach and engage their internal clients with strategic planning of campaigns. Leading practices include start-of-year planning meetings and regular status meetings with end-user departments to understand the internal client’s strategic priorities, establishment of a content calendar to identify focus areas for different parts of the year, and a review of previous initiatives’ performance to best understand the tactics and strategies that work for each internal client.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9:** The Public Relations and Marketing Division should view social media as a key communications resource, similar to other media and channels. Social media should be considered as a possible tactic, similar to video or printed flyers, for all campaigns at the beginning of the campaign planning process. The social media team should be brought into conversations at the same time the Multimedia and Video Production or Branding and Design Divisions would. The Information Technology Services Department, in conjunction with the Website Administration Division, should consider social media when making functional changes to the website. The Multimedia and Video Production Division should be aware of social media video leading practices to ensure social media-friendly cuts are produced for many, if not all, videos. Overall, the Department should work to better integrate social media into Departmental strategy and should promote a wider understanding and appreciation of social media as an important communications tool.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** The Public Relations and Marketing Division should consider subscribing to a social media listening tool in order to perform sentiment analysis and strategically address those County programs and initiatives members of the public view most negatively.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11:** The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for project intake and project management – as well as processes, practices, and policies for how end-user departments request projects and provide appropriate lead time – in order to ensure the Division performs as efficiently as possible. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies for project requests and lead time adherence.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** County leadership should consider establishing clearer delineation of duties, responsibilities, and user rights for management of the public website, and communicate these expectations to both the Communications and ITS Departments. County leadership should enforce expectations regarding management of the public website and staff in both departments should have opportunities to freely express concerns regarding management of the public website to departmental and County leadership.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** Departmental and County leadership will need to set an example for the rest of the County government in accepting the necessary shift in mindset on the website. As the website undergoes a modernization process, Departmental and County leadership should encourage end-user departments to look to the Website Administration Division as the experts in structuring and promoting website content and services.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** As the website undergoes the modernization process, the Website Administration Division should continue to determine ways customer service capabilities can be enhanced on the website and how the website can become more user friendly.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 15:** The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for brand management and requirements for end-user departments submission of collateral pieces for review. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies to ensure brand management.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 16:** Branding and Design Divisional and Departmental leadership should work with the Information Technology Services Department to determine a list of requirements for the laptops used by the Division, and should ensure the Division has enough laptops meeting these requirements for consistent use by current and future employees.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 17:** The Media Relations Manager should consider developing a set of guidelines explaining what makes a story newsworthy and likely to be published by news outlets. Departmental leadership should share these guidelines with end-user departments as part of the Communications Department's established policies, procedures, and practices. The Department should consider whether recommending social media promotion of stories is appropriate in those cases when a press release may not be the best way to publicize a story.

## Water Resources

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** The Quality and Training Unit should work with the Safety and Training Division to develop and record trainings that could be made available on-demand to provide reminder or refresher training to CSAs.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with HR to receive copies (redacted, as appropriate) of all workplace incidents and occupational injuries reported. This information should be standardized and also used to assess the effectiveness of workplace safety training and other initiatives implemented by the Safety Officers.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** Formal feedback regarding the performance of engineering design consultants should be discussed among the Division's leadership, and if agreed to in consensus, discussions with the engineering consultant and future work assignment implications should occur and be documented.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** The Facilities Operations Division should create an additional position to ensure adequate staffing support for residual processing.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The Facilities Operations Division should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent staff per shift, or more floater positions should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** Engineering and Construction should coordinate with Facilities Operations to ensure that project managers are regularly onsite and serve as the official contact for contractors.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** The wastewater plants should consider creating floater positions to support shift shortages. These positions could also be used to support training of new employees. If the floater positions are staffed with experienced operators, when not needed in a supplemental capacity these positions could also be leveraged to provide on-the-job training for new hires without taking time away from the operational requirements of the shift.

The Facility Operations Division should also collaborate with the Water Innovation Center to develop additional training opportunities, potentially including experiential training in a testing environment, rather than in the operating environment.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** Wastewater Operations should consider hiring an additional Administrative Associate, so that both Yellow River and Crooked Creek have a dedicated Administrative Associate on site.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9:** Facility Operations should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent maintenance staff per location, or experienced skilled floater positions with electrical or instrumentation experience should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** Facility Operations should consider creating a data analyst position. This position could support the development of standard protocols for using Maximo, to ensure consistent naming standards and work order notes entries. This position could assist with QA/QC for work orders to ensure integrity of the data that is captured, as well as provide additional data analysis for themes, trends, or prediction of emerging issues based on historical data.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11:** The Plant Engineering Division should work with Technical Services and Engineering and Construction to assist them in understanding the value of incorporating the Asset Management and Reliability Section in scoping, design, and technical specification development conversations.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** The Field Operations Division should work with the County to identify if basic foreign language skills, or key phrases education could be provided to Dispatchers to improve customer service. Potential solutions could include both customized foundational classes, or potentially subscriptions to language learning software.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** The Field Operations Division should review its current protocols for planned outage notification to determine how more lead-time of notice for planned outages can best be achieved. This may include engaging the Unit Manager in planning meetings, creating additional Lucy workflow notifications to the Dispatch Supervisor, or scheduling regular meetings with the Construction Manager or Supervisor in this Unit.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** The Department should review staffing levels and assignments within many of the units that have blended preventive and corrective maintenance roles. The Department may need to increase the Unit size, or consider creating crews specifically dedicated to preventive or QA/QC capacity expansion.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 15:** The Data Unit should be shifted into more of an analytical role, rather than a work-order level QA/QC role. Many of the Unit and Section Managers cite a lack of time to effectively pull and review data for trends and potential future areas of concerns. The Data Unit should shift away from 100% QA/QC and should work with Unit and Section Managers to complete more trend analysis to assist in predictive analytics of aging system assets and more effective preventive maintenance efforts.

To ensure more consistent and accurate work orders, the Data Unit should work with the Training Section within Business and Staff Services to develop comprehensive Lucy training for new employees who are required to use Lucy within their jobs. The training should include job aids or cheat sheets to aid employees in the field.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 16:** The PIO Section should budget time and funding to support public speaking, writing for public consumption, and media training for all Section members. As the Section fills its vacant positions, it should consider seeking applicants who have communications experience or training as well as the other job requirements.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 17:** The PIO Section should consider splitting water conservation and education outreach into two separate positions. If there is a separate position dedicated to water conservation, a more targeted strategic plan should be developed to ensure consistent, effective initiatives are developed to provide information about water conservation initiatives and programs.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 18:** The Technical Services Division should assess all its current data/performance tracking and potential data/performance tracking needs to ensure that all data managed is relevant and reported. Leadership should approve a data/performance catalog that specifies what data is maintained and assessed, the period of reporting, and who the target audiences should be.



## 6. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.



## Phase 3 Operational and Performance Assessment – *Communications and Water Resources Departments*

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

May 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 3
- 3. Departments ..... 5
  - 3.A Communications Department ..... 6
    - 3.A.1 Communications Department – Fiscal and Administration Division ..... 21
    - 3.A.2 Communications Department – Public Relations and Marketing Division ..... 30
    - 3.A.3 Communications Department – Multimedia and Video Production Division ..... 37
    - 3.A.4 Communications Department – Website Administration Division ..... 43
    - 3.A.5 Communications Department – Branding and Design Division ..... 51
    - 3.A.6 Communications Department – Media Relations ..... 56
    - 3.A.7 Communications Department – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 59
    - 3.A.8 Communications Department – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 61
  - 3.B Department of Water Resources ..... 64
    - 3.B.1 Department of Water Resources – Business and Staff Services ..... 90
    - 3.B.2 Department of Water Resources – Engineering and Construction ..... 103
    - 3.B.3 Department of Water Resources – Facility Operations ..... 110
    - 3.B.4 Department of Water Resources – Field Operations ..... 129
    - 3.B.5 Department of Water Resources – Public Information and Outreach ..... 146
    - 3.B.6 Department of Water Resources – Technical Services ..... 150
    - 3.B.7 Department of Water Resources – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 160
    - 3.B.8 Department of Water Resources – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 171
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 175
- 5. Conclusion ..... 179
- 6. Strategic Roadmap ..... 180

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This report represents the work product of Phase 3 which includes the following departments:

- Communications
- Water Resources

Phase 3 fieldwork began in March 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 3 scope included the following departments:

- Communications
- Water Resources

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well,” “what needs improvement,” and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

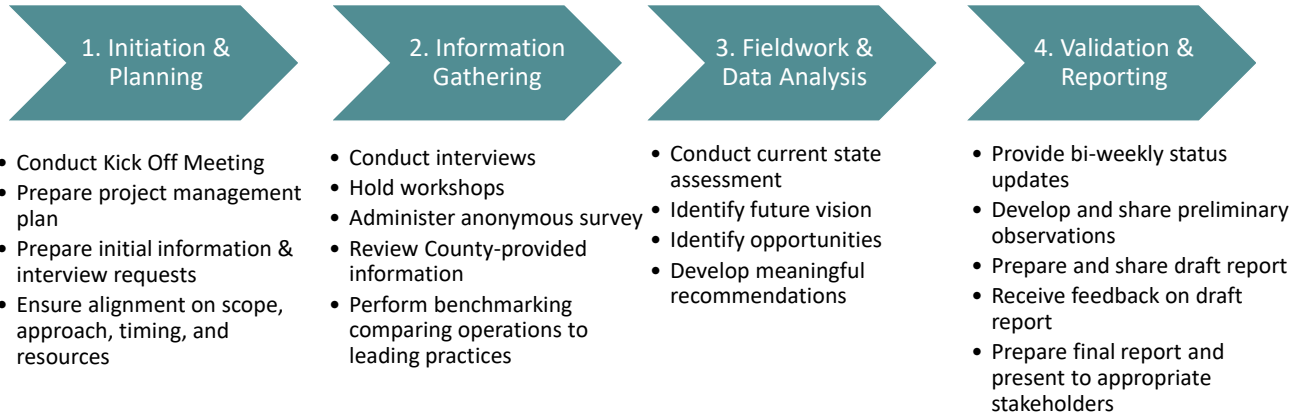
### Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 106 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This report represents the culmination of our Phase 3 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between March and May 2022.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Communications
- B. Water Resources

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Strategic Priorities
- Leadership and Management
- Technology
- Customer Service
- Survey
- Technology Observations and Recommendations
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

Also within each departmental section, divisions are described and contain the following divisional attributes:

- Introduction
- Key Functions
- Communications
- Strategic Initiatives
- Systems and Applications
- Data and Performance Analysis
- Division-specific Observations and Recommendations



# 3.A Communications Department

## Communications at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Manage all external messaging about County government initiatives, programs, and services
- 2 | Manage all external communications channels including website, newsletters, printed materials, videos, government-access cable television, and social media
- 3 | Manage all internal communications channels including the intranet
- 4 | Manage the County government’s interactions with media
- 5 | Manage the County government’s brand, ensuring proper use across all County government collateral

**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021\*):**

\$3,752,090	\$2,027,889
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

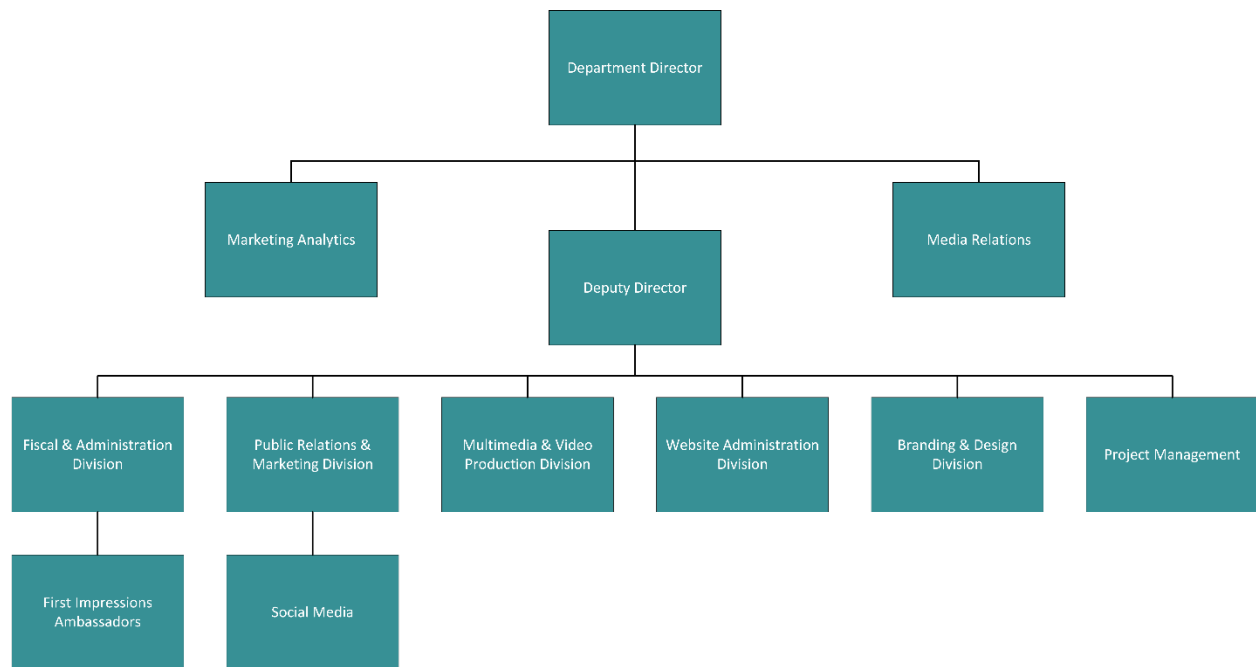
\*The Communications Department was established partway through 2021

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through March 2022	Communications
	Filled	
Allocated		52

\*counts include two positions funded by other departments

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### First Impressions Ambassadors



The Department's willingness to provide the necessary support and resources to the First Impressions Ambassadors, including hiring additional staff to the role, demonstrates the Department's understanding of the Ambassadors as an important communications and customer experience resource. The Ambassadors provide to GJAC visitors resources and handouts developed through 20+ years of experience.

### Agency-style Structure



As the Department grows and fills newly allocated positions, the Department is moving in the direction of functioning similar to a private sector public relations agency, rather than a traditional public information office. The agency-style structure provides end-user departments with resources and expertise through an efficient customer service delivery model.

### 20+ Years of Video Production



Gwinnett County boasts a longstanding commitment to telling the County's story through video, produced in-house for more than 20 years. Through resources like the dedicated studio space and governmental cable access channel funding, the Department produces videos at little cost to the County that visibly demonstrate the Gwinnett Standard.

### Web Administration Leading Practices



The Department provides a massive number of resources for Gwinnett County employees through a well-manage intranet. And on the public website, the Department has emphasized the importance of applying user experience best practices and providing training for end-user departments' approved web content publishers.

### Brand Box



The Department provides end users with important training on how to create content within the guidelines of Gwinnett County's brand, with three levels of access to branded templates and resources based on need and capabilities.

## Introduction

The Communications Department ("Communications" or "Department") is the internal services department responsible for management of County-owned public communications channels, including the website, printed and electronic newsletters, video and audio productions, TV Gwinnett, printed materials, and social media. Additionally, the Department is responsible for internal communications channels, media relations, and management of the County government's brand.

The Department originated as a division within the County Administrator's Office. In order to respond to the priorities of the Board of Commissioners, Communications was established as its own department in October 2021. The reorganization of the Communications function to a full department roughly doubled the staff size. Many of the newly created positions are not yet filled and the Department is still developing strategic direction for positions, divisions, and overall Departmental initiatives.

## Organization

The Communications Department is led by a Department Director and Deputy Director. Department staff are organized into five divisions:

- Fiscal and Administration
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Multimedia and Video Production
- Web Administration
- Branding and Design

In addition to the five divisions, there are several important functions that report directly to the Department Director or the Deputy Director:

- Marketing Analytics
- Media Relations
- Project Management

### Fiscal and Administration Division

The Fiscal and Administration Division is responsible for the financial and administrative functions of the Department. On the fiscal side, the Division manages budgets, vendors, invoices, and procurement oversight for the Department; on the administration side, the Division performs select HR functions in support of the Administrative Assistant, who reports directly to the Department Director. The Department is still determining what administrative functions will remain under the purview of the Administrative Assistant and what will be fully assumed by the Fiscal and Administration Division. The administrative responsibilities of the Division also include the First Impressions Ambassadors – the members of staff who answer the phones and provide reception and information services at the Gwinnett Judicial and Administration Center.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and includes a vacant Business Manager position, two Senior First Impressions Ambassadors, and three First Impressions Ambassadors.

### Public Relations and Marketing Division

The Public Relations (“PR”) and Marketing Division is responsible for developing external-facing marketing and communications pieces on behalf of the elected officials, appointed officials, and departments of the Gwinnett County government. The Division is separated into four proposed teams: three PR teams responsible for general content pieces and a social media team. The PR teams liaise with various County government entities in order to develop content ranging from brochures, website articles, and podcast scripts to talking points, ribbon cutting speeches, and proclamations. The social media team manages the County’s social media channels, which includes providing oversight of those accounts managed by individual departments.

The Division is headed by a Division Director. The one current PR team is led by a PR Manager and includes four Senior PR Specialists, one of whom is funded by the Gwinnett County Police Department. The social media team currently includes one Social Media Coordinator and one part-time Social Media Assistant. When fully staffed, the Division will include two more PR teams – each with a PR Manager, one with three Senior PR Specialists and one with four Senior PR Specialists (including a Fire Department-funded position) – and will grow the social media team to include a Social Media Manager and two additional Social Media Coordinators.

### Multimedia and Video Production

The Multimedia and Video Production Division produces videos, podcasts, and livestreams for the County government, including both public- and internal-facing productions. This includes providing audio/visual (“A/V”) support for and recording all public meetings. The Division also manages the government-access cable television channel, TV Gwinnett, and the associated Public, Educational, and Governmental (“PEG”) funds budget.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes a Video Production Manager and Senior Video Producer. The Video Production Manager serves as a video producer as well as the technical lead. When fully staffed, the Division will add four more Senior Video Producers, one of whom will also serve in a production lead role. The Division outsources professional services on a per project basis to supplement the current staff.

### Website Administration

The Website Administration Division manages the content, organization, design, user experience (“UX”), search engine optimization (“SEO”), reporting, and Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliance for the County’s public website (GwinnettCounty.com) and intranet (GC Workplace). The Division works with the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department on the back-end management of the website and oversees the content changes to the public website made by staff in other departments.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes a UX Content Coordinator. When fully staffed, the Division will include a Website Administration Supervisor, two Senior Website Administrators, and one Website Administrator.

### Branding and Design

The Branding and Design Division is responsible for oversight of Gwinnett County’s brand, as well as the production of marketing materials. The Division reviews marketing materials produced by other departments and produces templates for use by employees of other departments who have graphic design experience. The marketing materials produced by the Division range from flyers and booklets to digital banner ads and video graphics. The Division also provides photography services for Gwinnett County events.

The Division is headed by a Division Director and currently includes three Senior Graphic Designers. When fully staffed, the Division will include a Graphic Design Supervisor and a fourth Senior Graphic Designer.

## Media Relations

The Media Relations Manager reports directly to the Department Director and is responsible for all interactions between the County government and members of the media. As spokesperson for the County government, the Media Relations Manager is also responsible for media training. A vacant Special Projects Writer position is assigned to the Media Relations function as support, though at the time of our Assessment, conversations were underway to shift the Special Projects Writer position to the PR and Marketing Division and shift a Senior PR Specialist position to the Media Relations function to serve as a media specialist.

## Marketing Analytics

The Department has a vacant Data Analytics Manager position which has not previously been filled. Once filled, this position will report directly to the Department Director and be responsible for reviewing and analyzing data from the website, social media, videos, and PR and marketing campaigns. The Department will be able to utilize this data analysis in developing more strategic direction.

## Project Management

The Department has a vacant Project Manager position which has not previously been filled. Once filled, this position will report to the Deputy Director. As of the time of this Assessment, the Department had not fully determined how to utilize this position.

## Strategic Priorities

The Communications Department was established as a standalone department in response to the strategic priorities of the Board of Commissioners. As part of the shift to its own department, the number of positions allocated to Communications doubled. The expectations and responsibilities of the Department have increased significantly, as have the number of projects routed through the Department. The Department's ability to think proactively and strategically has been limited by the increase in service delivery expectations with half of the allocated positions not yet filled. Last-minute requests hamper the Department's ability to strategically plan campaigns with end-user departments or recommend leading practices for promoting end-users' initiatives. Once the Department fills the newly created/vacant positions, Departmental leadership has expressed a desire to focus on analytics for data-driven decisions and a more proactive approach to serving end-user departments' needs through strategically designed campaigns and content scheduling. Without a content calendar for the Department, efforts are often scattered and separate from division to division – as the Department gains staff, shifts responsibilities, and is able to act more proactively, the Department should start planning content and campaigns in advance, as well as recommending promotional methods and focus areas to end users.

In addition to growing into a more proactive entity, Communications is trying to fully understand the direction from the Board of Commissioners and other County leadership for the new Department. Historically, the County maintained a culture of limited communications. Social media, for example, was not introduced as a communications tool for the County until 2019. Communications as a function transitioned abruptly from a division of the County Administrator's office to a standalone department, with limited strategic planning for growing, shaping, and guiding the new Department. Staff have felt unsure as to the direction, mission, and expectations of County leadership for the Communications Department, resulting in reactive operations and a culture of accepting every project, regardless of the timeline or the likelihood of success of said project. A clearer vision for the Department from County leadership would help staff focus on those projects, initiatives, and campaigns most aligned with County and Departmental goals and objectives.

End-user departments, too, are working to fully understand the Department's role within the County – especially those departments with their own public information officers (“PIOs”) or marketing/communications personnel. As the Communications Department continues its efforts to fill the newly allocated positions, the Department will need to develop a comprehensive communications plan, detailing the means, methods, and purposes of the County's communications channels, as well as appropriate and inappropriate uses. The communications plan should cover external and emergency communications, as well as internal communications. The County has long maintained an intranet as a leading example of internally focused resources, but would benefit from additional structure and expectations around the intranet and other internal channels through the creation of an internal communications plan. A comprehensive communications plan developed by the Communications Department and supported by County leadership would provide direction for the Department and for all end-user departments on communications tactics, resources, procedures, and the appropriate uses of communications channels.

As Communications continues to grow, Departmental leadership would like the Department to function more like a private public relations agency rather than a traditional government PIO function. The Department would act as a true internal services department, treating end-user departments as internal clients and producing high-quality content and collateral pieces for said internal clients. The Department would ideally be viewed by other departments as the premier resource for communications and branding needs with projects submitted to the Department by end-user departments. Once projects are submitted, the account manager for that internal client (PR Specialists currently serve as the account managers) would manage the project from initiation through production to final delivery.

The Department would also proactively assist end-user departments build their communications and marketing strategies, proposing campaigns, methods, and analyzing data to identify leading practices for those departments' specific initiatives. In order to function similar to a private sector entity, the Department will need to set service-level agreements (“SLAs”) governing project delivery for clients. SLAs for the Communications Department should include lead times – a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. Lead times are generally specific to the type of project and account for the amount of time needed for each individual task. Communications would need to build out lead times appropriate for the types of projects assigned to the Department and the Department's ability to deliver on workloads.

One leading practice that might benefit the Department is building latitude into lead times to account for any last-minute projects (especially those from high priority internal clients, such as the Board of Commissioners) that may delay other projects. Ultimately, the Communications Department will need to be responsible for setting expectations with end-user departments, and both Departmental and County leadership will need to ensure those expectations around practices, policies, and procedures are clearly disseminated, supported, and enforced throughout the Gwinnett County government.

As the communications culture shifts in Gwinnett County, the County government will experience growing pains. End-user departments accustomed to a high degree of autonomy over their public information functions may struggle to accept additional oversight, direction, and involvement from the Communications Department. Departments accustomed to designing their own collateral and posting to their own social media channels may struggle to accept surrendering some graphic design work and execution of social media strategy to the Communications Department. And departments accustomed to submitting last-minute requests may struggle to think proactively and strategically in order to submit requests timely to meet Departmental lead times. But as end-user departments become more accustomed to Departmental policies and SLAs, the growing pains will lessen and the County government as a whole can come to appreciate the Communications Department as a resource.

### **Leadership and Management**

Department leadership has earned the trust of the Department staff over the course of their decades of service to the County in Communications roles. Divisional leadership, too, has earned the trust of their staff through their experience and their willingness to listen to feedback and ideas. Because the Department grew from a team of four, leadership embraces a small-team environment in which management supports the growth and development of their staff. The drawback, however, to the small-team mentality is managers are often required to be working managers – performing day-to-day tasks in addition to supervising and supporting staff. As the Department's staff size grows, managers, supervisors, and Division Directors will need to relinquish their day-to-day responsibilities and focus primarily on strategic positioning and staff supervision.

The Department Director and Deputy Director trust their staff to perform their jobs as experts in their field and do not require unnecessary layers of approval and oversight. This trust allows their staff to grow as they seek to prove themselves. By creating an environment of trust without unnecessary micromanagement, Department leadership encourages success as staff rise to the occasion of their respective roles. Where Department leadership can grow is in strategic positioning and setting expectations with the rest of the County government. Leadership should take the lead in developing a comprehensive communications plan and transitioning the Department to function similar to a private sector entity. Department leadership should work with County leadership to establish policies and practices governing the utilization of the Communications Department as an internal resource and communicate expectations around those policies and practices to end-user departments.

As the Communications Department's leadership works toward making the Department function more like a private sector entity, leadership should consider seeking managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff with private PR or advertising agency experience. The majority of Departmental and divisional leadership made their careers in government communications – most in Gwinnett County; bringing in managers and supervisors with private sector experience will help the Department stay current on leading practices in private industry and transition smoother into functioning similar to a PR agency.

## Technology

The following describe the Communications Department's current technology:

### Gwinnett County Website

The Communications Department manages many aspects of the Gwinnett County website, GwinnettCounty.com, including content and interface architecture. The Department utilizes Liferay as a content management system that enables other departments to provide proposed content modifications for Communications Department approval. The website is going through a reconstruction and modernization review with the County soliciting bids for consulting firms. The Department recently hired a full-time employee to manage user experience and user interface.

### Intranet

In addition to the public website, the Communications Department also manages many aspects of the Gwinnett County government's intranet, GC Workplace. The Department utilizes SharePoint as a content management system, allowing each department to build out its own resources and directories, in addition to the Communications Department-managed County-wide resources and directories.

### Project Management

The Communications Department recently selected Hive as the Department's primary project management system. Ultimately, the system will host a series of intake forms for project requests and will serve as a workflow tracking system that manages approvals and allows for collaboration with end-user departments. Implementation is not yet consistent across the Department with some divisions, such as the Branding and Design Division, regularly utilizing Hive, while others, such as the Multimedia and Video Production Division, have not yet utilized Hive for project management. The Branding and Design Division Director is currently serving as project manager for the rollout of the system.

### Social Media

The Communications Department manages the County-wide social media accounts across multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Other departments across the County, such as the Fire Department, have their own communications personnel who post to their department's social media accounts with oversight from the Communications Department. The Department uses Buffer as its social media management tool.

### Design and Video Production

The Communications Department utilizes several systems for creative projects, ranging from Adobe Creative Suite for design projects to Pro Presenter for on-screen graphics in live video productions. The Department also uses Carousel from Tighrope Media Systems as the automated management system for the TV Gwinnett broadcast.

### Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

The Communications Department uses the County's current ERP system, SAP, for all financial management and forecasting. Currently, the Department utilizes the system's Supplier Relationship Management module for purchasing and R/3 module for contract management.



## Switchboard

The Communications Department uses Cisco Unified Attendant Console as the County-wide switchboard. The Department is able to manage the switchboard from any system-activated computer and receives monthly reporting on call data. The system contains one of the County's most complete employee rosters.

## Customer Service

The Communications Department is, at its core, an internal service department focused on providing excellent customer service to its internal clients (*i.e.*, the other departments in the County government). Currently, four primary roadblocks exist to prevent the Department from providing the highest levels of customer service.

First, due to the newness of the Department and the recent allocation of positions, effectively doubling the staff size of the Communications function, the Department struggles to meet the expectations of the County. County leadership and end-user departments often treat the Communications Department as a fully staffed entity, resulting in high expectations for service delivery. While the Department strives to respond to all requests in a timely and efficient manner, the lack of staff hampers the Department's ability to respond to each request timely and efficiently while also continuing to provide the degree of attention each request requires. As the Department continues to hire more staff, the ability of the Department's marketing and communications professionals to meet the demands of the County's high volume of communications needs will increase. The County will need to align expectations with the Department's current staffing and the Department will need to ensure expectations by County leadership and end-user departments are being managed in terms of time required for project completion.

Second, the Communications Department has poorly defined and enforced the policies and processes for how best to submit content creation and review requests. The informal process in place encourages end-user departments to submit requests through their liaison in the Public Relations and Marketing Division. However, many requests are being addressed directly to other divisions or through Departmental leadership. This lack of a singular entry point for the Department's projects can lead to confusion and difficulty setting priorities, timelines, and managing expectations with internal clients. While intake forms and a fully functional project management system will help alleviate some of this problem, Departmental leadership should establish clear policies explaining how requests should be submitted to the Department and establishing the official communications channels. These policies should be regularly communicated to the rest of the County government and actively enforced to avoid a breakdown in procedure. When requests come into the Department to anyone other than the established point of contact or in any other way than through the established procedure, requestors should be redirected and reminded of policy, rather than the Department bending the rules.

Third, end-user departments have not uniformly accepted the Communications Department as the County's leading marketing and communications experts. Many end-user departments have hired their own PIOs, marketing specialists, or graphic designers, who become experts in their department's subject matter but are managed by non-communications personnel. As a result, the messaging is often highly technical and exactly what the department wants to promote, however the design does not adhere to the County's established brand standards.

When the Communications Department receives a content piece for review from these departments, oftentimes the Branding and Design Division completely redesigns the piece in a way that adheres to brand standards but may lose necessary elements of the original messaging. End-user departments often raise concerns about changes to messaging, as well as the time required for what they envision as a “simple review.” Many end-user departments also produce their own marketing collateral in order to “help out” the Communications Department, not understanding the amount of time required for the project could have been reduced if the content had been provided to the Department originally and without a design applied. Ultimately, the County and the Department need to find a way to bridge the gap between the Department and its internal clients. The PR Specialist positions funded by the Police and Fire Departments set leading examples of how end-user departments can receive the specialized attention they require while also ensuring a strong relationship with the Communications Department. Not all end-user departments need a funded specialist position in the Communications Department, however better integration between departments’ in-house subject matter communications experts and the Communications Department ensures projects maintain a necessary balance between brand adherence and messaging fidelity.

As the Department grows, ensuring Departmental liaisons, such as the PR Specialists, spend time onsite with their internal clients learning their clients’ messaging and unique needs will help ease some of this tension – however County leadership should also set and enforce policies and procedures encouraging end-user departments to recognize the Department as marketing and communications experts and responsible for enforcing approved brand standards.

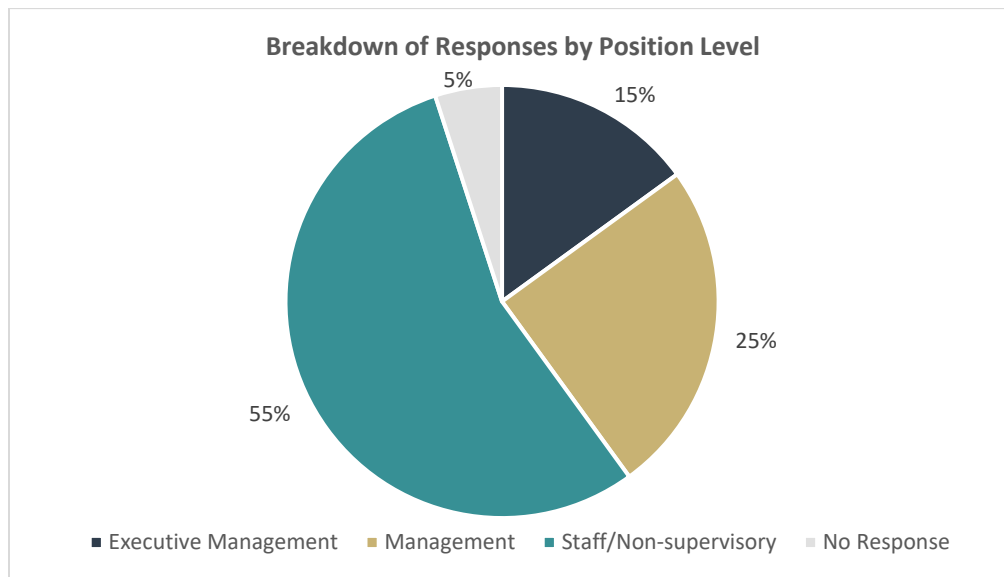
Finally, the Department is limited in its ability to provide exceptional customer service due to a lack of comprehensive project management oversight. While Departmental leadership oversees the operations of the entire Department, there is not a position currently with responsibility over the efficient and effective project management process. The Branding and Design Division Director is currently managing the implementation of the new project management system, Hive, while simultaneously performing the responsibilities of the Division Director role. When the Department hires the new Project Manager position, the Department should consider utilizing this position to oversee the implementation of Hive and then subsequently oversee the project management process.

A “traffic manager” position is commonplace in private industry PR and advertising agencies – someone who helps account managers (in this case, the PR Specialists) intake projects, ensure projects are set up in the project management system with timelines and approval workflows, and who helps team leaders manage workloads by recommending reassignment of projects when a designer, video producer, or copywriter’s workload is causing a bottleneck. As the Department continues to hire staff and define the responsibilities of the newly allocated roles, Departmental leadership should consider utilizing the Project Manager position for oversight of the project management process and as a “traffic manager” to help ensure a level of customer service that exceeds the Gwinnett Standard.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Twenty responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 65%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

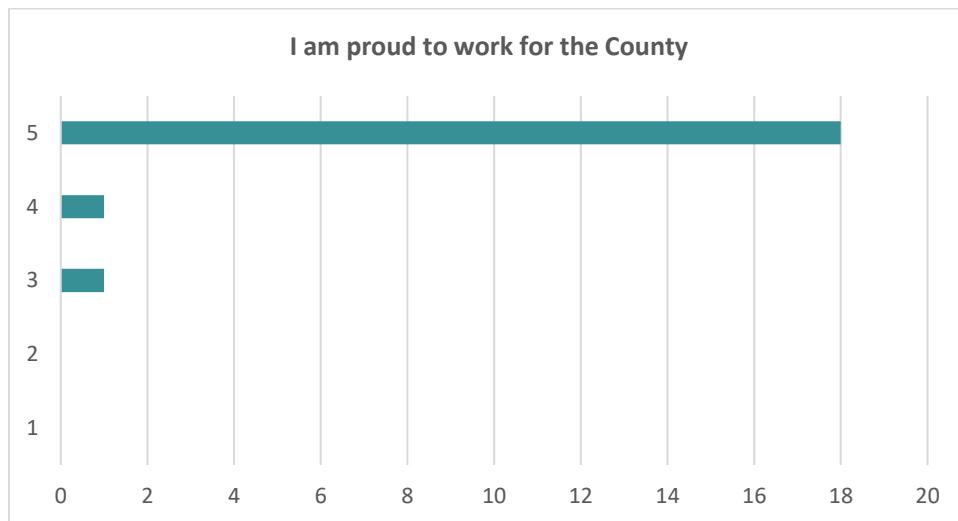
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

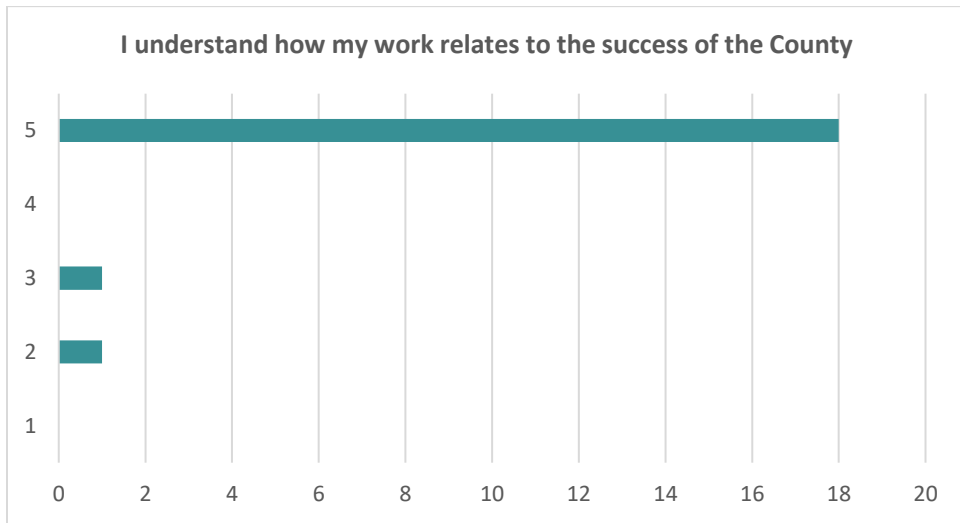
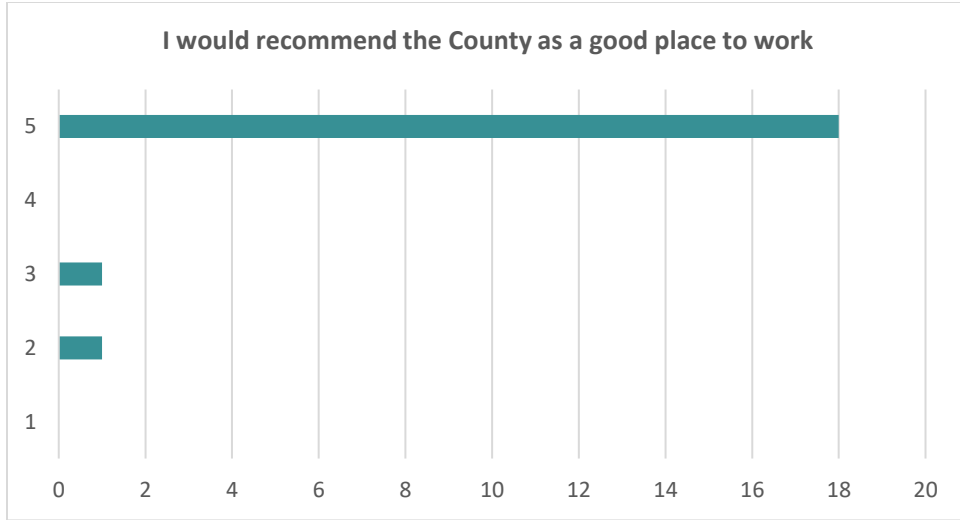
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	4.6
I understand my mission and vision of my department	4.6
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.8
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.2
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.9
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.5

Survey Statement	Average Score
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.3
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	3.1
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	4.0
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	4.2
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.9
I have opportunities to advance within the County	4.2
My supervisor encourages my professional development	4.3
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.7
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	4.6
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	4.2
I am proud to work for the County	4.9
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.8

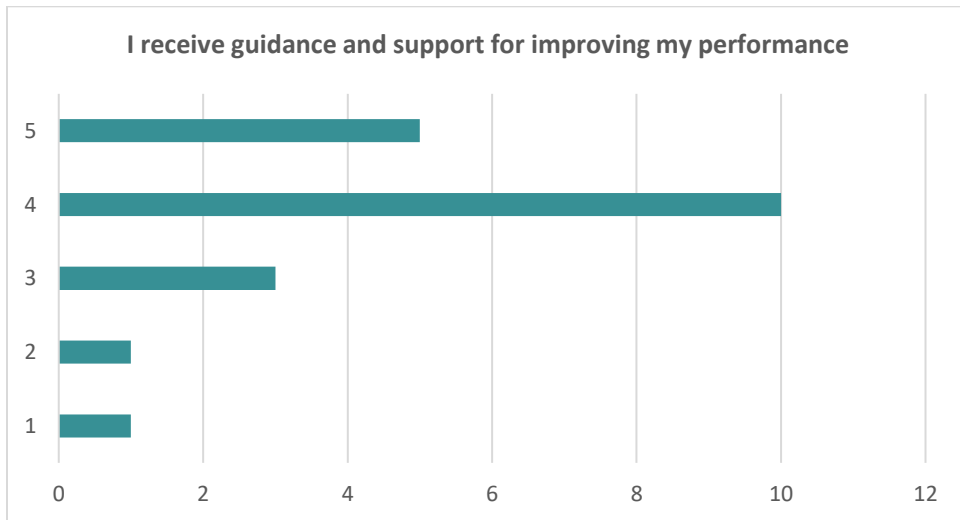
The average score for all the survey statements is 4.2. The lowest score is 3.1 and the highest score is 4.9.

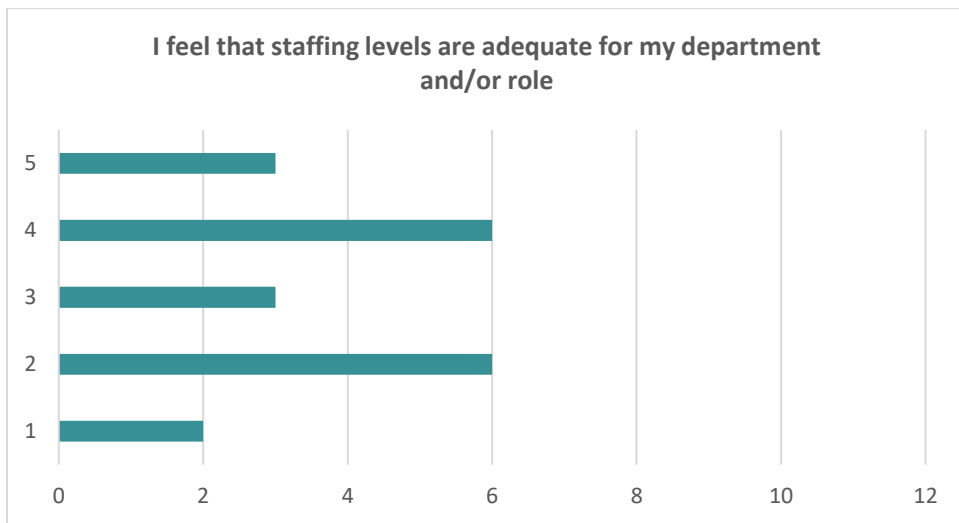
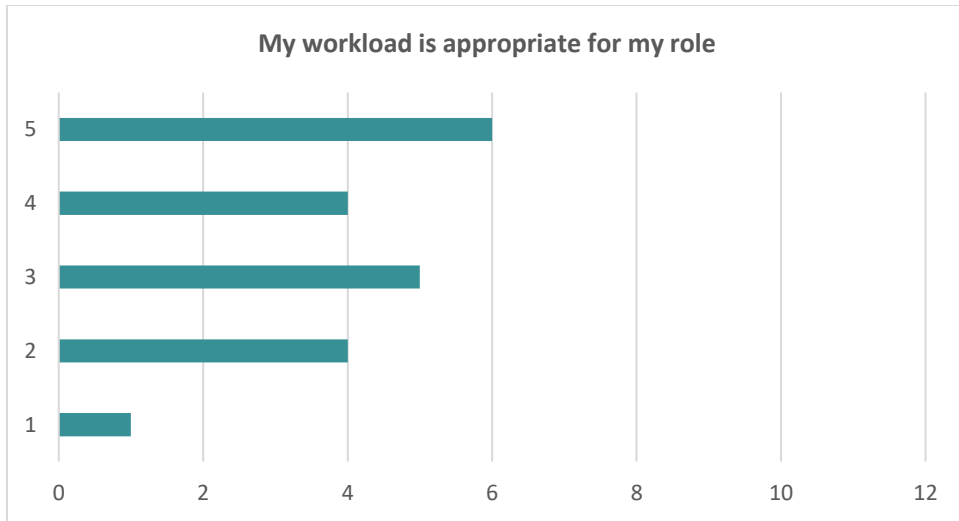
The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- The respondents saw the members of the staff as the Department’s greatest strength – of note were the talent, dedication, and passion of the staff.
- Respondents also noted the staff’s ability to get every job done regardless of timeframes. However, this theme also exposed the Department’s habit of accepting all projects, including last-minute projects. Many respondents expressed frustration with the Department’s apparent inability and lack of empowerment to say “no” – and to explain to end-user departments why project requests were turned away. Respondents felt the Department is subject to unrealistic expectations.

- The respondents stated that the Department is reactive, due in part to the large number of last-minute requests. Members of the Department suggested that the Department accepts every project, even when staff recognize the initiative or campaign will be ineffective. Staff also suggested the Department begin tracking and utilizing performance data – some respondents listed output data as the only collection points, while others couldn't identify any data collected for their subject matter areas. In all, respondents believed the Department could behave more proactively and strategically through performance data.
- Respondents recognized many of the issues with the lack of proactivity and workloads results from the lack of staff. Respondents identified several staff positions that are desperately needed and recommended the Department be more strategic in filling open positions.
- Along with additional staff, respondents recommended the Department focus on staff training. The request for staff training fell into three categories: better training for new staff, additional emphasis on established staff receiving professional development opportunities, and increased cross-training. Staff feel their workloads are too heavy for professional development opportunities, which can be exacerbated by a lack of cross-training between roles.
- Another positive element identified by respondents is the expertise of the staff and the Department. However, staff noted their expertise is not always respected, both by end-user departments and by other members of the Communications Department. Some respondents suggested leadership and coworkers trust subject matter experts, however, other respondents suggested some members of the staff can be overly territorial, suggesting a balance between expertise and collaboration is necessary.
- Respondents felt that overall cohesion and collaboration in the Department can be improved. Certain respondents felt that not all areas of the Department are involved in projects from the start, resulting in silos, bottlenecks, and other inefficiencies. Respondents recognized a need for improved communication within the Department, including more productive meetings – whether smaller divisional or team meetings (as opposed to the Department-wide meetings), project-specific meetings with all relevant parties involved, or reorganized meetings that encourage better collaboration.
- Respondents saw the expansion of the communications function to a full department as an opportunity to provide some additional structure. Respondents recommended working to ensure all members of the Department are on the same page regarding policies, procedures, workflows, and processes – ranging from how to use Hive to restructuring the central approval process.
- Respondents also saw the establishment of Communications as a standalone department as an opportunity to reintroduce themselves to the rest of the County government. Several respondents recommended a Departmental roadshow, highlighting the resources the Department can provide and the expertise of the staff. Respondents cautioned, though, that the roadshow should be inclusive of all divisions, as individual divisions have hosted their own roadshows, resulting in uneven understanding of services provided by the Department.

## 3.A.1 Communications Department – Fiscal and Administration Division

The Fiscal and Administration Division (“Division”) is responsible for the financial and administrative functions of the Department. The Division provides financial support for the Department, as well as houses the First Impressions Ambassadors. The Division also provides HR support for the Department as backup to the Administrative Assistant who reports to the Department Director.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Providing Financial Support
- Executing HR Liaison Functions
- Staffing the Information Desks
- Responding to Public Questions via Switchboard and Email Inbox

### Providing Financial Support

The Division Director, eventually with the support of the Business Manager once hired, is responsible for overseeing most financial activities in the Department. The Division manages the capital and general operating budgets for the Department, including forecasting expenditures based upon expected projects and initiatives. The Division also handles much of the purchasing for the Department, as well as contract administration over the technical outsourced services contract, on-demand printing contracts, and business card printing contract. Because each of the other Division Directors have purchasing cards (“P-Cards”), the Fiscal and Administration Division doesn’t handle all purchasing, but instead administers the Department’s P-Card program in accordance with the Financial Services Department’s rules and regulations. While providing oversight over the P-Card program and purchasing by other divisions, the Fiscal and Administration Division reviews the coding for purchases entered by the end-user division and ensures the necessary approvals are received. Finally, the Division is responsible for accounts payable and receivable processing, including all invoices that come into the Department and all charge backs to end-user departments.

Of note, the Division does not manage the Public, Educational, and Governmental (“PEG”) capital funds utilized for video production. The Division notates the expected PEG revenue in the annual budget, but the Multimedia and Video Production Division manages the PEG budget.

### Executing HR Liaison Functions

Most of the Department’s HR functions are currently managed by the Administrative Assistant who reports to the Department Director, including timesheets and FMLA documentation. The Fiscal and Administration Division, however, has begun supporting those HR functions as a backup to the Administrative Assistant and liaising with the Human Resources Department.



The Division has begun to take the lead in the hiring process for the Department and is considering the feasibility of absorbing more HR functions as part of the Division's administrative role. The Division intends to request approval for a temporary position to perform HR functions and may eventually request to transition the position to permanent status if the need is determined to be great enough once the Department has filled its approved vacant positions.

### Staffing the Information Desks

One of the primary administrative functions of the Division is staffing the information desks – thereby providing reception services for all visitors to the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center (“GJAC”) at both the GJAC and Charlotte J. Nash Court Building (“Nash”) entrances to the main County government complex. The two Senior First Impressions Ambassadors and three First Impressions Ambassadors (“FIAs”) greet visitors as they enter the complex through either of the two public entrances, answering questions and providing directions as requested. The FIAs keep a large selection of one-page customer information sheets, maps, and other documents readily available at the two desks in order to quickly respond to visitors' needs. As additional needs are identified, the FIAs continue to develop new handouts and update databases with contact information to meet the needs of Gwinnett County citizens. The FIAs have developed informational handouts not just detailing Gwinnett County government resources, but also local business resources and state government resources – especially those with locations in Gwinnett County. Signage identifying the information desks, however, is limited so not all visitors to the complex are aware of the existence of the information desks, especially the one near the GJAC main entrance due to its location next to the exit rather than the entrance. The FIAs also act as backups to the Support Services Department staff person who provides reception services to the Board of Commissioners office.

In addition to answering questions and providing directions, most of the FIAs are certified as notaries, with the remaining FIAs undergoing training to receive their appointment as notaries. The FIAs follow the County's notarization policy and consult with the Notary Supervisor in the County Clerk's Office as necessary. When FIAs are not permitted to notarize a document in accordance with County policy, they provide the requestor with a contact sheet identifying private businesses that provide notarization services.

### Responding to Public Questions via Switchboard and Email Inbox

The FIAs also respond to public questions via the telephone switchboard and the County's information email inbox. On the days the Division is fully staffed – and isn't covering the Board of Commissioners office – two FIAs are assigned to each information desk: one of whom is responding to in-person questions while the other answers the phones. Due to space limitations at the desks and the potential for distractions when FIAs are simultaneously responding to phone calls and in-person questions, the Division has expressed a desire to move the FIAs covering the County phone line into the Communications Department office once renovations to the space are complete. Overflow calls are directed to the call center within the Support Services Department's Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division. The FIAs are each assigned to cover the email inbox for a week on a rotating basis and respond to any emailed questions during their downtime between phone calls and in-person questions.

## Communications

The Fiscal and Administrative Division is often the first line of communication between citizens and the County government. The team maintains constant communication with one another via Microsoft Teams and phone calls. Whenever an FIA steps away from their respective information desk, they immediately notify the other desk so a changeover can happen in management of the switchboard.

The biggest challenge for the Division replicates a challenge seen across the County in customer service functions: the First Impressions Ambassadors are limited in their ability to communicate with members of the public in every language. While several of the FIAs are multilingual, it is impossible for them to know every language. The County government maintains a list of County employees who speak multiple languages; however, the list is not consistently updated and the volunteers on the list are not always available. FIAs attempt to understand citizens' needs as best as possible, and listen for a particular word or phrase that will indicate the non-English speaker's needs. However, the County does not have a comprehensive language solution to consistently communicate with citizens in their native languages.

## Strategic Initiatives

The First Impressions Ambassadors were previously housed in the Support Services Department. When Communications became a standalone department, the FIAs were transferred to Communications as they were seen as a strategic communications channel between the citizens and government of Gwinnett County. Department and County leadership has embraced the FIAs' inclusion in the Department and have provided the necessary resources, including additional staff allocations. To further stress the importance of visitors' first impressions as a strategic communications tool, the Division is working with the Sheriff's Office to develop a consistent greeting provided by the FIAs and the sheriff's deputies to all entrants to the GJAC and Nash buildings.

On the fiscal side, the Division has several ongoing strategic initiatives. First, the Division Director is breaking each division down to its own cost center in order to better understand the expenditure patterns and needs of each communications channel. Second, the Division is attempting to compile all of the contracts held by the Department in order to create a calendar detailing each contract's renewal dates. Third, the Division is developing budget forecasts by reviewing annual contract amounts and tracking recurring invoices to improve the strategic nature of the Department's budget requests.

## Systems and Applications

### Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

The Fiscal and Administration Division uses the County's current ERP system, SAP, for all financial management and forecasting. The Division utilizes the system's Supplier Relationship Management ("SRM") module to create shopping carts and make purchases each time an invoice comes in from a vendor. Due to the newness of an in-house fiscal function within Communications, the Division is not yet familiar with all regularly recurring expenses and is not always involved in procurement for the Department. Oftentimes, the Division is discovering invoices by searching through FileNet (the County's document storage system) – and is commonly discovering invoices only a few days before the payment deadline. Many of the other divisions use SAP to make and code their own purchases, with the Fiscal and Administration Division expected to ensure all purchases have appropriate approvals, often without advanced notice.

The Division also utilizes SAP’s R/3 module for contract management. The Division is currently reviewing all annual contracts of the Department within the system in order to better understand annual expenditures and vendor utilizations. Between the two modules, the Division is working to better understand annual budget spends and forecast future budgetary needs.

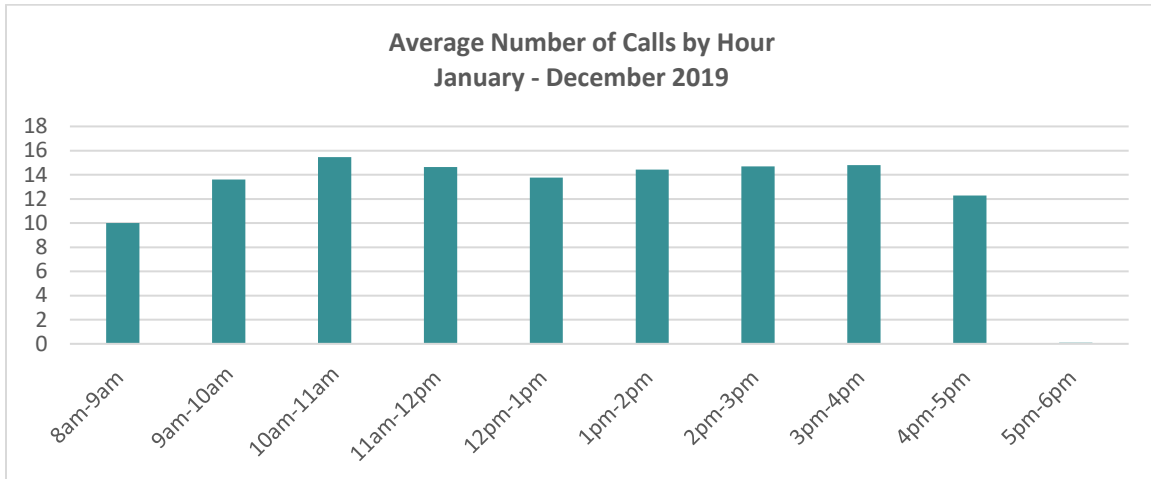
### Switchboard

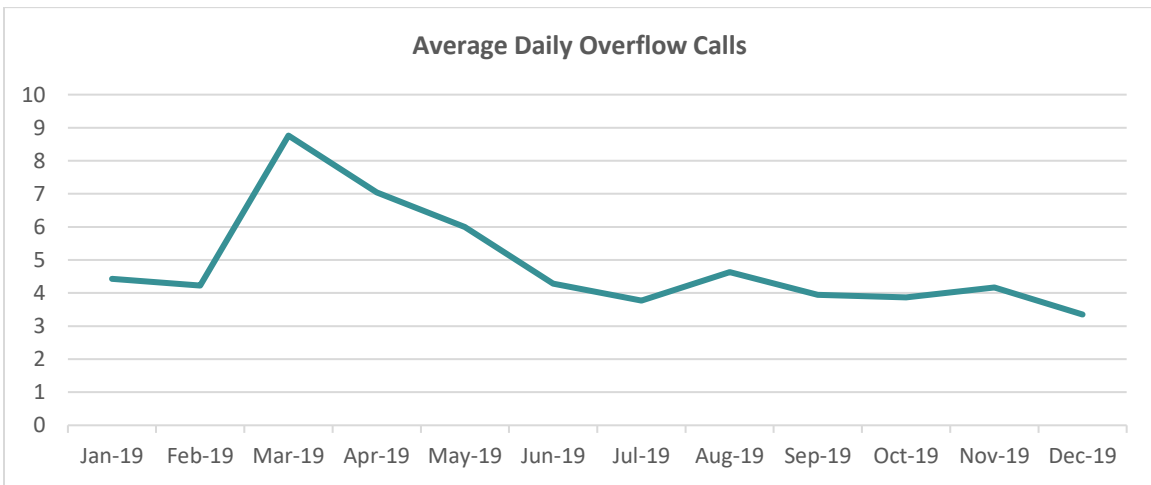
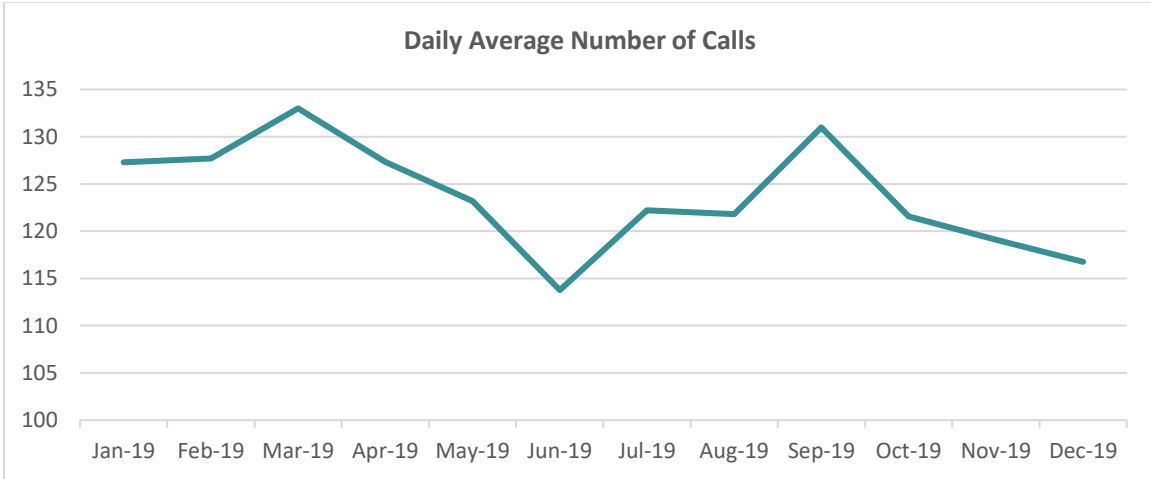
The Fiscal and Administration Division uses Cisco Unified Attendant Console as the County-wide switchboard. The Department is able to manage the switchboard from any system-activated computer and receives monthly reporting on call data. The FIAs will notify one another when going on break or when overwhelmed at the desk currently responsible for the switchboard so the other desk can take control of incoming phone calls. The system contains one of the County’s most complete employee rosters, allowing the FIAs to quickly redirect phone calls to the appropriate person or department.

### Data and Performance Analysis

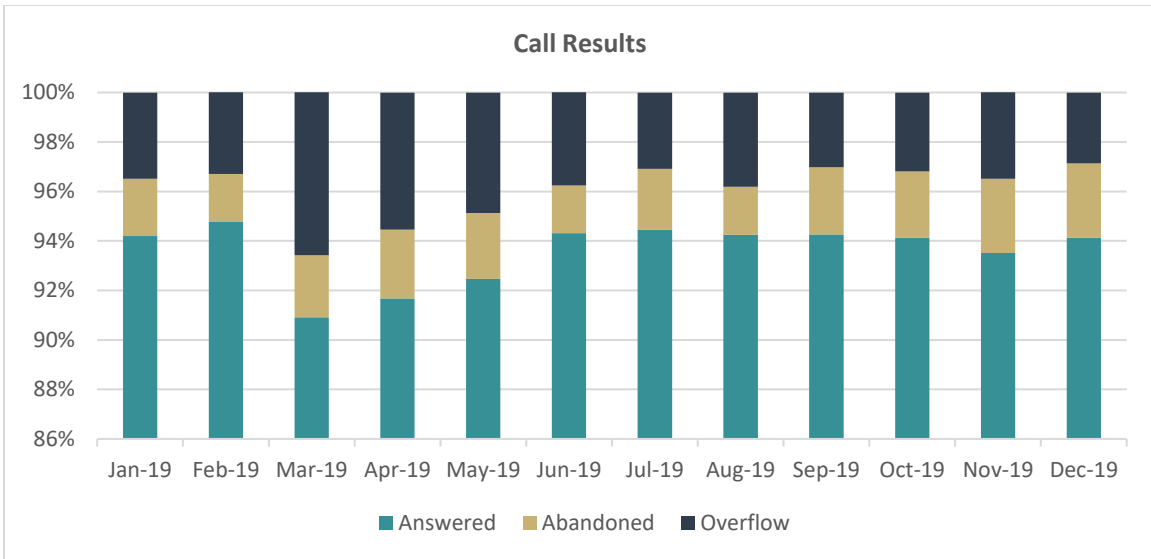
The Fiscal and Administration Division is tracking multiple sets of data for the First Impressions Ambassadors, including switchboard statistics, notarization data, language count data, and a comparison of numbers of entrants into GJAC with the number of customer issues. A limited amount of data was available for analysis during this Assessment, however the M&J team was able to confirm each of the aforementioned datasets.

The switchboard metrics provided to the Division by the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department includes daily data on number of calls per day, time of day, overflow, etc. The following graphs show some of this data mapped out from January to December 2019.

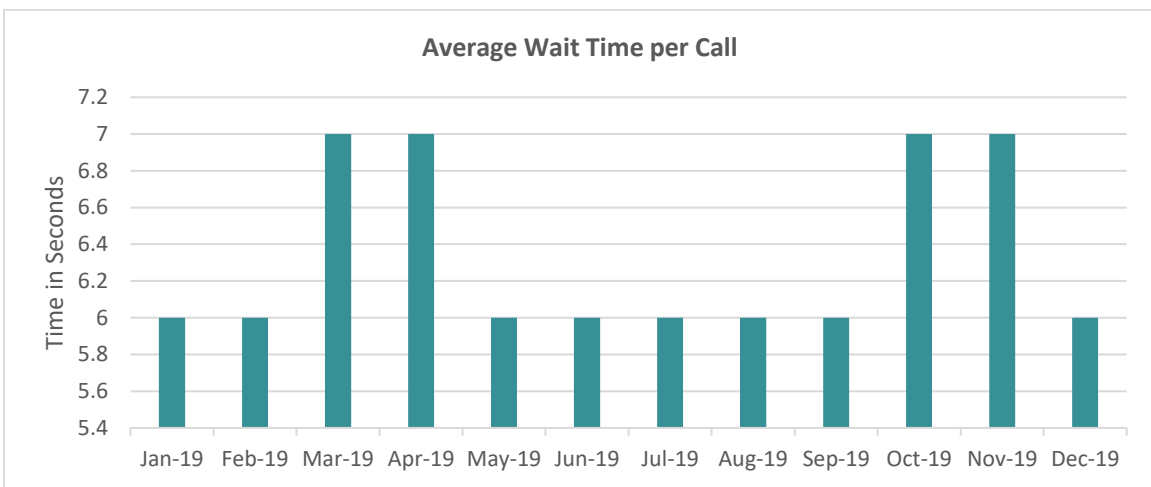




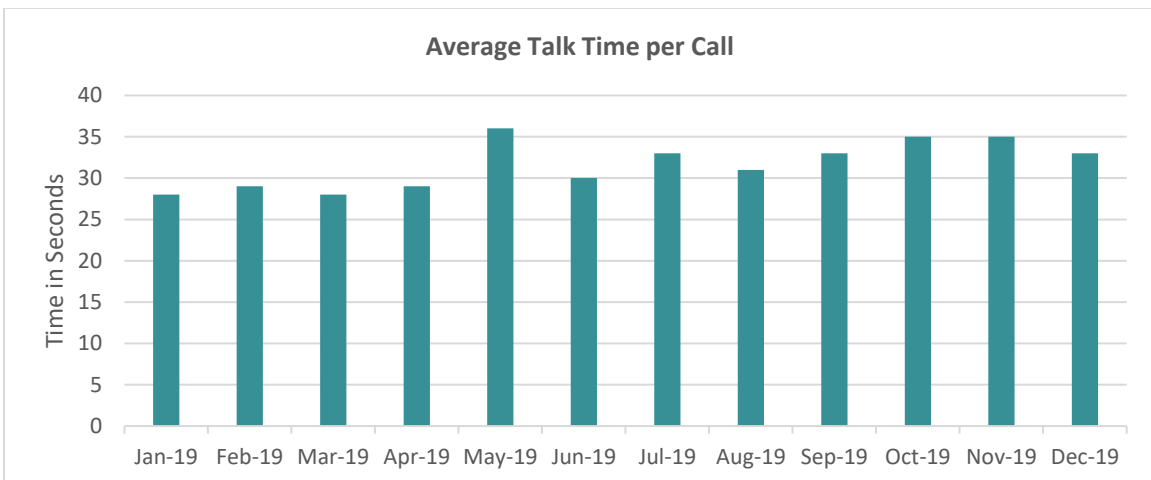
The Division collates and disseminates these data points on a monthly basis, illustrating the number of calls that come into the switchboard on a daily basis, at what times, and how many overflow to the Support Services Department. This data could be used to help set staff schedules, identifying the periods where additional support is needed. The reports from ITS also contain a series of data points that can be used to report on performance for the Division. The following graphs demonstrate some of these potential performance data metrics.



The graph above details the percentage of calls per month that were answered, abandoned, and overflowed to the Support Services Department.

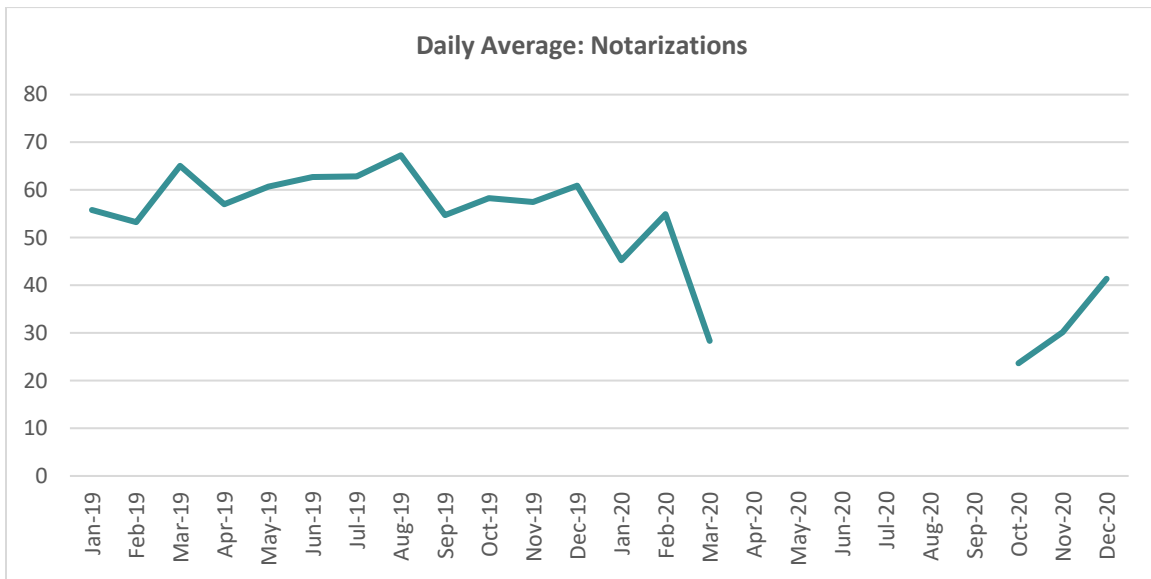


The graph above details the average wait time per call each month.



The graph above details the average time the First Impressions Ambassadors spent speaking to a caller each month. The metrics represented in the previous three graphs, and similar metrics available from the data, can help demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of the First Impressions Ambassadors. The first graph illustrates the high percentage of calls that the FIAs are able to respond to. The second and third graphs illustrate how quickly the FIAs are responding to calls and how efficiently they are able to respond to callers' needs.

In terms of notarization data, the Division tracks the number of notarizations by day, including who performed the notarization and information about the nature of the request. The following graph shows the daily average of notarizations by month in 2019 and 2020. Of note: notarizations were paused between March 16 and October 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



As shown in the graph above, the First Impressions Ambassadors were performing roughly 60 notarizations per day prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Division cannot control the number of notarization requests received, the Division could track busier times of the day, week, month, and year to determine staffing schedules and arrangements at the GJAC and Nash information desks.

While not available for this Assessment, the Division did start tracking in 2022 the number of times the First Impressions Ambassadors provided assistance in visitors' native languages each day. This data, coupled with data on those languages in which the staff could not provide assistance, could help guide the Division in determining an appropriate language solution.

The Division also compares the number of entrants into the GJAC and Nash buildings to the number of customer issues escalated beyond the First Impressions Ambassadors. For example, between October 2021 and January 2022, 237,353 people walked through the buildings' metal detectors. In the same timeframe, no complaints were made regarding the First Impressions Ambassadors. Between June 2021 and April 2022 (for which corresponding entrance data is not available), only three customer issues were escalated to Divisional or Departmental leadership. While this low number is undoubtedly excellent, the comparison can be misleading. The walkthrough counts do not consider repeat visitors, County employees, and other visitors who do not interact with the First Impressions Ambassadors. In order to better track performance data, the Division should consider tracking the number of interactions each First Impressions Ambassador has each day and comparing that data to customer issues (as well as to the notarization and language count data). The Division should also consider providing anonymous customer service surveys that can be taken online or mailed into the Department to ensure the Division is capturing all customer issues.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Communications Department's Administrative Assistant reports to the Department Director and has been responsible for HR functions within the Department. Recently, the formation and expansion of responsibilities for the Fiscal and Administration Division has resulted in the Division covering some HR functions with a lack in clarity regarding who in the Department is ultimately responsible for the Department's HR functions.

**Recommendation 1:** As the Fiscal and Administration Division more fully defines the administrative duties for which it is responsible, the Communications Department leadership should provide clear guidance on who is responsible for specific Department's HR functions.

**Observation 2:** Many visitors to the Gwinnett County Justice and Administration Center ("GJAC") and Charlotte J. Nash Court Building ("Nash") are unaware of the information desks' locations or existence due to limited signage identifying the desks.

**Recommendation 2:** The Fiscal and Administration Division should consider installing permanent signage for the information desks in order to direct GJAC and Nash building visitors to the desks.

**Observation 3:** Many visitors to the GJAC and Nash buildings speak limited to no English. While several of the First Impressions Ambassadors ("FIAs") are multilingual, they are unable to communicate with every visitor in their native language. Furthermore, while the County maintains a list of multilingual County employees, the list can quickly become out of date and the employees on the list are volunteers who cannot always be available to provide translation services.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider expanding the use of current language solutions, such as the Department of Water Resources' language line, Lionbridge.

**Observation 4:** The Division is often unaware of purchases being made by other divisions within the Communications Department, especially those for annually contracted services. The Division often discovers invoices by searching through the County-wide digital file system – many times only a few days before the payment deadline.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should ensure each division informs the Fiscal and Administration Division of all purchases and should establish a formal procedure for receipt and submission of invoices. The Department should consider replicating the Department of Transportation Financial Section’s model utilizing SharePoint for automated invoice approval workflow.

**Observation 5:** The Division currently collects and reports a series of data points, especially for the First Impressions Ambassadors. However, this data primarily represents output data, for which the Division has limited control, and is not used for making strategic decisions or evaluating performance.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as determining staff schedules at the information desks.



## 3.A.2 Communications Department – Public Relations and Marketing Division

The Public Relations (“PR”) and Marketing Division (“Division”) is responsible for developing external-facing marketing and communications pieces on behalf of the elected officials, appointed officials, and departments of the Gwinnett County government.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Developing Content and Collateral Pieces for Internal Clients
- Reviewing Collateral Pieces from Internal Clients
- Managing County’s Social Media Channels

### Developing Content and Collateral Pieces for Internal Clients

Though titled “PR Specialists,” the employees of the PR and Marketing Division function similar to account executives at a PR or advertising agency. Each PR Specialist liaises with one or more end-user departments, acting as their voice and strategic partner in the Communications Department. In this role, the PR Specialists receive content ideas or needs from their internal clients (the end-user departments) and work with the other divisions within the Communications Department to build out the content and collateral pieces – ranging from brochures, flyers, and booklets to videos, social media campaigns, and specialized webpages – to achieve the end-user department’s marketing and communications goals. When possible, the PR Specialists try to get initial content from the end-user departments and edit as necessary before submitting to the other divisions for production. Content pieces and channels include brochures, email newsletters, scripts for speeches, talking points for interviews, ceremonies and ribbon cuttings, podcasts, videos, website content, proclamations, and news releases (in collaboration with Media Relations) – essentially, anything with branding.

As the Division expands, two additional PR teams will join the current team, allowing each PR Specialist to provide expanded services to fewer internal clients. Each current PR Specialist has four to five assigned departments, with the exception of the Police Department-funded PR Specialist who focuses solely on the Police Department. As the teams are built out, each team will have a strategic focus:

- A public safety team with liaisons for Corrections, Sheriff’s Office, District Attorney’s Office, the Courts, and the Police Department- and Fire Department-funded positions
- An internal-facing team with liaisons for internal services departments, such as Human Resources, Information Technology Services, Support Services, and Finance
- A public-facing services team with liaisons for departments such as Transportation, Water Resources, and Community Services

The supervisors of each team (the PR Managers) will ideally be experts in their team's focus or a general specialty, such as marketing or internal communications. PR Managers will also continue take the lead on any requests coming from County leadership, such as the County Administrator's Office or the Board of Commissioners. Due to staff size limitations during the expansion process, the current PR Manager is less focused on supporting their team and more focused on serving as the Department liaison for those County leaders' marketing and communications needs.

Currently, the Division suffers from high expectations but has few filled positions, with only 40% of the Division's allocated positions filled. As a result, the PR Specialists focus less on creating content and strategic planning of campaigns and more on project, email, and expectations management. Without intake forms or streamlined processes for receiving requests, the Division receives all requests via email, many of which are last-minute requests. As the team expands and each PR Specialist focuses on fewer clients, the Division will ideally be able to help internal clients with proactive and strategic planning of campaigns and initiatives. However, as the Department does not provide internal clients with an established set of lead times (expectations of when requests of different types need to be received in order for on-time completion of a project), the Division will continue to struggle with last-minute requests and might cause tension with end-user departments when projects take longer to complete than the end-user department expects.

#### Reviewing Collateral Pieces from Internal Clients

In addition to developing content and collateral pieces for the end-user departments, the PR Specialists also review collateral pieces, such as flyers, developed by their internal clients. Certain County departments have access to branded templates for various marketing needs given those departments have staff with the necessary training and understanding of the brand and creative programs. PR Specialists consult with the Branding and Design Division to review the collateral pieces developed by internal clients and make suggestions on improving the design or wording of the content. Oftentimes, end-user departments design according to their personal preferences rather than the County's brand guidelines, resulting in the Communications Department needing to redesign the entire piece. In these instances of complete or near-complete redesigns, the PR Specialists have to manage timing expectations with the internal client, as well as explain why the collateral piece required a redesign. Oftentimes, these redesigns can be avoided by end-user departments providing content ideas or a general request to the PR Specialists and allowing the Communications Department to develop the piece from the outset in accordance with brand standards and usually requiring less time overall.

## Managing County's Social Media Channels

The final team in the Division manages the County's social media channels. Prior to 2019, County leadership preferred not to utilize social media as a communications channel. Communications established County-wide social media profiles in May 2019, per shifts in direction from County leadership, and started hiring staff to manage the County-wide accounts. As of our Assessment, the Communications Department manages County-wide profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The social media team either develops content or receives and edits content from end-user departments for specific campaigns or initiatives. The Division also oversees other departments' use of social media, as some departments had developed social media presences prior to the establishment of the County-wide profiles. Interactions on both the County-wide and departmental accounts are limited to those interactions necessitated by and permitted under the County's social media policy and guidelines.

As the social media team grows, the Division will hire a Social Media Manager and additional Social Media Coordinators. Similar to the PR Specialists, the Social Media Coordinators can focus on assigned internal clients under the direction and oversight of a Social Media Manager with external (preferably agency) experience.

The largest struggle for the County's addition of social media as a communications tool has been the challenge to integrate social media with the County's longer-established communications channels. When developing marketing and communications campaigns, the Department does not always consider the strategic uses of social media in promoting those campaigns. The Multimedia and Video Production Division does not consider social media needs when producing videos, so social media-appropriate cuts and orientations are not available. As detailed in Section 3.A.4 of this report, social media accounts for less than 2% of all traffic to the website, indexing above 1% for the first time in 2020. In a 2020 study of 3.25 billion website visits based on data from Similarweb (a digital intelligence provider), social media drives 7.19% of website traffic on average (Byers 2020). While this gap can be partially attributed to the newness of the County's social media profiles, this gap also points to a disconnect between social media and the website in terms of user experience and integration tools. Overall, the Department struggles to integrate social media into communications strategies and needs to better understand how to encourage cohesion between social media and the Department's other channels.

## Communications

The PR Specialists are the primary communication touchpoints between the Department and its internal clients (end-user departments). The bulk of this communication happens via email or phone which results in the PR Specialists serving as the middlemen between the other divisions in Communications and end-users. While the PR Specialists serving as the primary touchpoint is not inherently an issue, the lack of clearly defined and disseminated Departmental policies and procedures – such as established lead times for projects – adds extra stress and difficulty to the PR Specialists' jobs. The Division anecdotally functions as the bringers of “bad news” and as the nay-sayers to other departments when enforcing timelines and brand standards, and would benefit from Departmental and County leadership setting clearer policies and procedures and consistently enforcing these efforts with end-user departments.

## Strategic Initiatives

During conversations with our team, the Division stressed the importance of formalizing and standardizing procedures, including project intake, management, and approval. To this end, the Division intends to develop standard forms, documents, and standard operating procedures (“SOPs”), allowing for more consistency in the project management process. The Division takes pride in the professionalism of the pieces that come from their efforts and would like to further that professional output through SOPs.

In addition to utilizing more standardized processes, the Division also intends to better utilize data and performance metrics for strategic decision making. While the Division does not currently track a sizeable number of datapoints, the utilization of social media and website metrics, among other key performance indicators (“KPIs”), would allow the Division to provide strategic direction for campaigns and initiatives based upon past performance and lessons learned.

Ultimately, the Division would like to operate more like a public relations or advertising agency than a traditional governmental public information officer (“PIO”) function, which will help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the project management process as the Department continues to fill the newly allocated staff positions. By treating end-user departments as internal client accounts with service-level agreements, expectations understood by both parties, and staff serving in account manager functions, the Division can set itself up for successful service delivery and implement leading practices from the private sector. One such practice common among private sector agencies that the Division has expressed interest in implementing is more on-site interaction between internal clients and their liaisons. By having the PR Specialists attend on-site meetings with their clients and gain firsthand knowledge of their clients’ operations, the PR Specialists can address their clients’ needs more strategically and with better insight. Tactics like this help private sector agencies succeed, and through implementation, the Division can likewise respond to internal clients’ needs professionally and strategically.

## Systems and Applications

### Project Management

The Communications Department recently selected Hive as the Department’s primary project management system. Currently the Public Relations and Marketing Division does intake through email, requiring the Division’s PR Specialists to have extended email conversations with internal clients for each project. After the email conversations, the PR Specialists are manually entering every piece of collateral into Hive, as well as copying feedback from emails into Hive so management can see the Division provided feedback even though end-user departments chose not to make the recommended changes. The PR Specialists also currently copy client feedback on Communications Department-created pieces into Hive, as the system is not set up for client review and approval. The creation of intake forms in Hive, the establishment of automatic review/approval workflows in the system, the introduction of clients to Hive, and the formation of Departmental policies and procedures will help alleviate the manual processes being performed by the Division.

## Social Media

The Public Relations and Marketing Division manages the County-wide social media accounts across multiple platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Other departments across the County, such as the Fire Department, have their own communications personnel who post to their department's social media accounts with oversight from the social media team. The Division uses Buffer as its social media management tool. Buffer allows the Division to build out content and schedule posts in advance, establish approval requirements for posts, and collect analytics on specific posts and campaigns. The system will utilize analytics from posts and campaigns to make recommendations the Division can choose to implement or disregard.

The Division does not currently have a social media listening tool – a useful tool for monitoring community sentiment about a brand. A social media listening tool provides sentiment analysis, a leading practice in social media management that helps a social media team determine whether a brand is being mentioned in a positive, neutral, or negative light. Some social media listening tools are able to break down sentiment analysis based on audience demographics, helping a social media team understand the brand's audience. As the Communications Department works to promote the Gwinnett County brand, programs, and initiatives, a social media listening tool can help the Division determine where efforts are most needed in order to address those negatively viewed programs and initiatives. This tool would provide the County with additional insights and performance data, allowing the Division to develop content strategically and better utilize social media as a key communications resource.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Anecdotally, the Division reported tracking social media metrics on a monthly basis. The Department only utilizes social media metrics for reviewing whether certain tactics appeared to work on a small scale. Additionally, the Division receives news clippings and tracking of the County's stories being shared by media outlets – these clippings and numbers come from the Department's Administrative Assistant. During our Assessment, we were unable to gain access to these metrics in order to review the data being recorded.

The Division has several opportunities to track and gather data that speaks not just to outputs but also performance. For example, if project lead times are established by the Department, the Division can track on-time delivery of projects to identify bottlenecks and revise procedures as necessary. The Division can also partner with the Website Administration Division to monitor conversion data to see whether campaigns – social media or otherwise – are driving traffic to key online resources. Because the Department is still new and still developing strategic direction, the Division has the opportunity to avoid falling into the trap of reporting relatively meaningless metrics, such as impressions or followers. Between actual performance data and strong outputs metrics, such as campaign reach or interactions, the Division has the opportunity to utilize data for strategic decision making.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Public Relations (“PR”) and Marketing Division has a limited number of PR Specialists currently, most of whom are each assigned five to six end-user departments as internal clients. As a result, workloads are often too overwhelming for the Division to help end-user departments proactively and strategically plan campaigns and marketing initiatives.

**Recommendation 1:** As the Division continues to increase the number of PR Specialists and redistribute workloads, the Division should ensure the PR Specialists begin to proactively approach and engage their internal clients with strategic planning of campaigns. Leading practices include start-of-year planning meetings and regular status meetings with end-user departments to understand the internal client's strategic priorities, establishment of a content calendar to identify focus areas for different parts of the year, and a review of previous initiatives' performance to best understand the tactics and strategies that work for each internal client.

**Observation 2:** The Division is regularly inundated with last-minute review and content creation requests, adding to the Department's already heavy workload and forcing PR Specialists to rearrange project priorities, which delays some longer-term projects in favor of the last-minute projects. These delays in project completion have resulted in a degree of tension between the Division and end-user departments.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should establish service-level agreements ("SLAs"), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.

**Observation 3:** Social media is not currently seen by the Department, and many in County leadership, as a key communications tool. As a result, social media is more often than not an afterthought and there is limited inclusion of social media in campaign planning. Limited integration between the website and social media results in difficulty posting resources to social media platforms. The lack of planning for social media needs when developing videos prevents opportunities for leading practices in sharing videos on social media and gaining the desired viewership and traction for said videos.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should view social media as a key communications resource, similar to other media and channels. Social media should be considered as a possible tactic, similar to video or printed flyers, for all campaigns at the beginning of the campaign planning process. The social media team should be brought into conversations at the same time the Multimedia and Video Production or Branding and Design Divisions would. The Information Technology Services Department, in conjunction with the Website Administration Division, should consider social media when making functional changes to the website. The Multimedia and Video Production Division should be aware of social media video leading practices to ensure social media-friendly cuts are produced for many, if not all, videos. Overall, the Department should work to better integrate social media into Departmental strategy and should promote a wider understanding and appreciation of social media as an important communications tool.

**Observation 4:** The Division currently performs a significant number of manual processes, including project intake, collateral upload to the project management system (Hive), sharing feedback, and securing approvals. Coupled with lack of defined procedures and policies (especially around project lead times), these manual processes risk the Division continuing to increase its workload and perform inefficiently.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should prioritize developing intake forms and procedures, as well as fully implementing Hive as a project management tool. The Department should also clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for project intake and project management – as well as processes, practices, and policies for how end-user departments request projects and provide appropriate lead time – in order to ensure the Division performs as efficiently as possible. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies for project requests and lead time adherence.

**Observation 5:** The Division does not currently perform sentiment analysis in order to understand how the public views and speaks about the County’s programs and initiatives.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should consider subscribing to a social media listening tool in order to perform sentiment analysis and strategically address those County programs and initiatives members of the public view most negatively.

**Observation 6:** The Division currently collects a limited number of performance metrics, none of which are being utilized to help the Division strategically position itself or strategically plan marketing and communications campaigns.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as managing staff workloads and focusing on those communications tactics with the greatest amount of success.

## References

Byers, Kyle. 2020. *What 3.25 Billion Website Visits Tell Us About the Internet's Top Traffic Sources*. April 5. [growthbadger.com/traffic-study/](https://growthbadger.com/traffic-study/).

## 3.A.3 Communications Department – Multimedia and Video Production Division

The Multimedia and Video Production Division (“Division”) produces videos, podcasts, and livestreams for the County government, including both public- and internal-facing productions. This includes providing audio/visual (“A/V”) support for and recording public meetings. The Division also manages the governmental access cable television channel, TV Gwinnett, and the associated Public, Educational, and Governmental (“PEG”) funds budget.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Producing Videos for Internal Clients
- Producing Livestreams and Recordings of Public Meetings and Events
- Managing Programming for TV Gwinnett

### Producing Videos for Internal Clients

Gwinnett County has a more than 20-year history of producing videos in-house, a rare example of a government not only producing its own videos, but also a government with a long-standing history of producing its own videos. The Multimedia and Video Production Division manages all aspects of video production for many, though not all, end-user departments in the County, from scripting and storyboarding to shooting and editing. The Division stays busy, producing more than 200 videos in 2021. The Division does outsource some professional services on a per project basis to supplement currently vacant positions, however the vast majority of the work is completed in house. The Division produces videos covering everything from messaging about County services and programs to training materials for employees. All videos produced by the Division are hosted on Vimeo.

Most video projects are communicated to the Division by the PR Specialists who liaise with end-user departments, though others come either directly to the Division from other departments or are requested by County leadership. Due to the lack of Departmental service-level agreements (“SLAs”) and established policies and procedures, the Division receives numerous last-minute projects, meaning the Division operates reactively with limited opportunities to approach end-user departments with ideas for programming. Limited staff and production time also results in limited opportunities for the Division to innovate by exploring new tactics, new software, new techniques, etc. The Division’s mission to produce high-quality deliverables for every project means long hours for every employee. The Division does not cut corners and avoids less-than-ideal practices (such as shooting video for a non-social media production on a cellphone) resulting in high-quality professional productions. However, the anticipated growth in staff will take pressure off the current staff and allow Video Producers to focus on specific end-user departments rather than all internal clients.



One unique element of Gwinnett County’s video production capabilities is the studio space that exists in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. Within this sound stage, the Division produces videos with the same capabilities and opportunities as a private video production company – a full cyclorama (or “cyc wall”) and greenscreen allow for customizable backdrops, a multi-camera setup allows for dynamic productions with multiple angles, a switchboard setup allows for live views of all cameras and easy switching between views for any video being broadcast live, teleprompters assist on-screen talent, and a variety of lighting fixtures create the necessary ambiance and visibility. Much of the studio equipment can be packed out in about an hour for off-site video production (the subsequent setup usually requires about 45 minutes in addition to the time required for travel and troubleshooting).

### Producing Livestreams and Recordings of Public Meetings and Events

In addition to scripted video productions, the Division also produces livestreams and recordings of public meetings, public speeches, and events such as groundbreaking, ribbon cuttings, and holiday celebrations/commemorations. The Division televises the meetings of four Gwinnett County boards and authorities, as well as the occasional *ad hoc* committee, in order to increase public access to these sessions. Meetings are broadcast live through online streaming on the website and on Gwinnett County social media accounts. The meetings are also recorded in order to be rebroadcast on TV Gwinnett and for use as part of the official record of the public meetings. Division staff are on hand for every public meeting and event, including those after normal business hours. The Board of Commissioners auditorium is equipped with five pan, tilt, and zoom (“PTZ”) cameras that allow for multiple angles and visuals during meetings, including a wide shot of the dais, specific speakers, the podium, and the audience. The Division maintains a control room with all of the necessary equipment to control the PTZ cameras, ensure high quality livestreams, push livestreams directly to social media, and switch seamlessly between camera views and microphones. When public meetings are held in other spaces, the Division will set up a temporary control room with the necessary equipment closer to that meeting space.

Providing maintenance and repairs for major A/V systems in GJAC, including in the auditorium and courtrooms, generally falls to the members of the Multimedia and Video Production Division, as do repairs of the equipment. The Division will also step in and provide A/V services during events as added support.

The Division also provides livestreaming support for any internal County-wide staff meetings and trainings, broadcasting from the auditorium via Webex.

### Managing Programming for TV Gwinnett

TV Gwinnett is the County’s governmental access cable television channel. The channel is available to County viewers on the County website, through video on demand, and on the governmental access cable channel of three cable providers – AT&T U-verse, Charter, and Comcast. TV Gwinnett falls under the governmental category of Public, Educational, and Governmental (“PEG”) access channels. The County finances TV Gwinnett through negotiated cable franchise fees paid by AT&T U-verse, Charter, and Comcast for services such as the authorization to construct and operate facilities in public rights-of-way.

The Multimedia and Video Production Division manages these PEG funds, which have limits on permitted use. PEG funds can be used for any equipment or services utilized in the production of videos for broadcast on a PEG access channel. So while the Division staff is paid out of the general fund, all of Gwinnett County's videography equipment, software, and outsourced services are paid for by PEG funds and are not charged to the general fund or the end-user departments. The only videos which end-user departments must finance are those videos strictly for internal use, such as training videos. However, the Division makes a practice of working with end-user departments to find a way to film public-facing footage whenever working on an internal video, resulting in end-user departments needing to fund very few videos. In other words, the vast majority of videos produced by the Division are at little cost to the County beyond staff time and general Departmental resources.

The Division sets the daily programming for TV Gwinnett, including live broadcasts and reruns of public meetings and events, informational videos produced by the Division to showcase the County government's programs and services, regular podcasts or talk series hosted by commissioners, and a regular news-style program hosted by the Department's Media Relations Manager. The Division ensures all programming runs on-time and according to schedule and all broadcasts are the highest possible quality. Programming is currently broadcast in standard definition but will shift to high definition once the Division is able to replace the outdated cable headend that originates and communicates the TV Gwinnett broadcast to the cable television providers.

## Communications

The Division primarily receives projects through the Department's PR Specialists who liaise with end-user departments. However, some requests come directly to the Multimedia and Video Production Division – many of which are last-minute requests. As a result, the Division acts primarily reactively and risks the prioritization of projects and integration of projects into larger campaigns or initiatives. As with other divisions and the Department as a whole, Departmental and County leadership setting policies, procedures, and practices and communicating and enforcing those policies, procedures, and practices will allow for more effective communication and execution of projects for the Multimedia and Video Production Division. Additionally, by setting service level agreements ("SLAs") – such as lead times – at the Departmental level, the Division will be able to better communicate expectations on service delivery to end-user departments.

## Strategic Initiatives

Similar to the other divisions and the Department as a whole, the Multimedia and Video Production Division is in the process of staffing up – increasing the number of Video Producers and adding new supervisory responsibilities. The Division will need to determine how to align the new positions with current gaps in responsibilities and workloads, but currently plans to assign specific end-user departments to each Video Producer, modeled off of the system established by the Public Relations and Marketing Division.

The Division always works to ensure video projects meet or exceed the Gwinnett Standard. The team arrives early to live events (including those after working hours) to set up full production equipment including multiple cameras, lights, speakers, a switchboard, etc. and troubleshoots for the best quality video possible.

## Systems and Applications

### Video Production Systems and Technologies

The Multimedia and Video Production Division utilizes several systems for video production projects, such as Adobe Creative Suite. Due to the number of video project requests – especially last-minute requests – and the limited number of staff, the Division has fallen behind upgrading systems and software. Overall, the Division prioritizes saving the County money. In order to prioritize saving money, the Division has selected programs such as ProPresenter (which creates on-screen graphics for video displays) rather than higher-end programs, though the Division ensures every system works as necessary toward producing videos that meet or exceed the Gwinnett Standard. Also in order to save the County money, the Division performs most of its own equipment maintenance and repairs.

In terms of equipment, the Division does procure the best possible items and systems available within the PEG capital funds budget. Most equipment is well-maintained in order to be used well past the equipment's normal end of life. One piece of equipment that will need to be replaced shortly is the cable headend, which processes the videos intended for broadcast on TV Gwinnett and distributes the broadcast to the cable providers. With a new cable headend, the Division will need to look at upgrading the automated management system, Carousel from Tightrope Media Systems, to ensure all broadcasts are occurring in high definition, as opposed to the current standard definition broadcasts.

### Project Management

The Communications Department recently selected Hive as the Department's primary project management system. The Multimedia and Video Production Division does not currently use Hive for management of any of its projects – instead project management has been managed either through Google Docs or via pen and paper.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Currently, the Division is only recording the number of videos produced in a given year and will pull data on the number of views for specific videos when requested. In part due to a limited number of staff, the Division isn't utilizing this data for any determination of return on investment ("ROI") or the best models for resource allocation. The Division should consider selecting and analyzing key performance indicators ("KPIs") to help guide the County's strategic development of video. Some examples of leading video KPIs include:

- **Video Engagement** – The Division could look at whether or not users are engaging with videos by reacting to and leaving comments on videos on social media, sharing videos, and actually clicking on videos, either by playing videos on landing pages or clicking through to landing pages based on video viewership.
- **View-through and Bounce Rates** – The Division could review whether viewers are actually watching videos through to the end or if they are navigating away from the video within the first 10 seconds.

- **Conversation Rates** – Every video, like with every marketing campaign, should have a goal, most of which can be measured. Conversion rates are measurements used to suggest whether videos have achieved their goals. The goal of some videos may simply be to maintain a record of a meeting – these videos automatically achieve their goals. But other videos should have more active goals, such as increasing awareness of a service, which can be measured through reach metrics, click throughs to landing pages, or downloads of a brochure.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Multimedia and Video Production Division is regularly inundated with last-minute video production requests, adding to the Department’s already heavy workload and forcing an excessive number of overtime hours for Division staff.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.

**Observation 2:** While the Division receives the majority of requests through the Department’s designated liaisons with end-user departments, some requests do come directly from end-user departments, risking confusion and mis-prioritization of projects. The Department lacks formal policies and procedures governing project intake and lead times.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for project intake and project management – as well as processes, practices, and policies for how end-user departments request projects and provide appropriate lead time – in order to ensure the Division performs as efficiently as possible. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies for project requests and lead time adherence.

**Observation 3:** The Division operates a series of out-of-date systems and software as a result of heavy workloads and limited time to perform system upgrades.

**Recommendation 3:** In addition to prioritizing filling vacant positions and establishing lead time guidelines, the Department should consider providing the Division with adequate backup computers and equipment to ensure the Division has adequate time to run upgrades on software and systems. The Division should also prioritize running upgrades to software and systems, setting expectations with internal clients and the rest of the Department for appropriate delivery times when upgrades are required.

**Observation 4:** The Division does not currently use a project management system, such as the Department’s new system Hive. The Division currently schedules video projects in Google Docs or via pen and paper.

**Recommendation 4:** As the Department continues to roll out Hive for project management, the Division should work with the other divisions to best understand how to utilize the system for management of video projects and should begin to work within the system.

**Observation 5:** The Division currently collects a limited number of performance metrics, none of which are being utilized to help the Division perform proactively and strategically.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as on those video tactics with the greatest amount of success.

## 3.A.4 Communications Department – Website Administration Division

The Website Administration Division (“Division”) manages the content, organization, design, user experience (“UX”), search engine optimization (“SEO”), reporting, and Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliance for the County’s public website (GwinnettCounty.com) and intranet (GC Workplace).

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Updating and Structuring Content on Public Website
- Managing Intranet Content

### Updating and Structuring Content on Public Website

The Website Administration Division is responsible for overseeing the content on Gwinnett County’s public website, GwinnettCounty.com. In this capacity, the Division operates within the content management system (“CMS”) for the website, Liferay. The Division receives requests to change the content on the website, navigates to that content in Liferay, and makes the necessary changes, as appropriate. In addition to direct content changes (*i.e.*, changing the wording of a piece of website content), the Division also reorganizes content on webpages, updates downloadable documents and files, changes out graphics and photography, and makes necessary organizational changes to menus and overall website organization. In order to drive internet traffic to the relevant pages, the Division focuses on UX and SEO by adding and updating meta tags and meta descriptions to ensure search engines recognize keywords throughout the website. These regular updates to the website also include adding alt text and other ADA-compliant features, correcting misspellings and other erroneous content not previously fixed, and removing or updating broken hyperlinks. Additionally, the Division updates the branding and design of the website, as necessary, to ensure a seamless user experience between communications channels.

Within end-user departments, certain staff members can be identified as web publishers. The Division trains these web publishers to navigate the CMS and make content changes for their own departments’ webpages. The Division also trains these web publishers to be familiar with leading practices ensuring strong SEO and ADA compliance. Web publishers in end-user departments don’t publish directly to the live site – instead the Website Administration Division reviews all changes being made by the web publishers and approves said changes before they can be pushed live.

In addition to the primary public website, the Division also manages content for special project websites, such as the County’s bicentennial website. In total, the Division manages 159 domain names for County-owned websites. While not all domain names are separate websites, the Division ensures each contains the correct content and directs users to the correct website or webpage.

Primary management of the technical side of the website is handled by the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department. The Communications and ITS Departments coordinate on backend website structure and functionality, including the custom applications built by ITS. The ITS Department currently builds all online forms for the public website, however these forms do not generally maintain the same branding as the rest of the website. The Website Administration Division expressed interest in absorbing the responsibility for form creation as the Division expands to include multiple Website Administrators. Overall, the capabilities of the Division to fully administer the website are severely limited by tight access controls implemented by ITS. As the Division fills the newly allocated positions that are currently open, it is highly likely that the Division will push for more access and website administration capabilities from ITS, meaning Departmental and County leadership may need to determine clear delineation of duties, responsibilities, and user rights for management of the public website.

### Managing Intranet Content

In addition to the public-facing website, the Division also manages the County government’s SharePoint-based intranet, GC Workplace. A leading example of an internal staff resource, GC Workplace provides a repository of policies, handbooks and training catalogs, collaborative documents and spaces, internal news updates, calendars, webmail access, and additional forms and tools for County employees. The Division has a larger degree of access and control over the intranet than the public website, with the Division’s staff responsible for elements of security, structure, and form creation.

### Communications

As with most of the other divisions, the Website Administration Division often communicates with end-user departments through the PR Specialists. Requests for content changes are addressed to the PR Specialists who route the requests to the Website Administration Division. However, it is also common for direct communication between the Division and end-user departments, especially those with approved web publishers. As the Division begins to move forward with a series of strategic initiatives intended to implement major changes to the public website, the Division will need to ensure lines of communication stay open and the reasons behind specific changes are well communicated to end-user departments.

### Strategic Initiatives

With only two of the six allocated positions in the Website Administration Division filled, Divisional leadership still performs day-to-day activities rather than focusing on strategic and supervisory responsibilities. However, the Division has identified several strategic initiatives – the largest of which being a modernization and possible redesign of the public website. The County released a request for proposals (“RFP”) in March for technical consulting services to assist with a roadmap for reconstructing and modernizing the website. The proposed website roadmap will help determine whether ITS should perform any major structural and organizational changes recommended for the website or the County should release a subsequent RFP for the implementation of the recommended changes.

In the interim period prior to the reconstruction and modernization of the website, the Division has increased efforts to address user experience, user interface design (“UI”), and information architecture (“IA”). These efforts include restructuring of content on pages, introduction of metadata, removing broken links, and redesigning the visual elements of the website in order to enhance the website’s usability and ensure visitors are finding the resources they most need. With these enhancements, as with the eventual larger-scale changes expected for the website, the County government as a whole will need to embrace a shift in mindset about the website.

Leading practices in UX and IA recognize that visitors to websites want to find their desired resource as quickly as possible with as limited browsing as possible. Gwinnett County’s website is content heavy, resulting in potential difficulty identifying resources and services. As the Division, ITS, and external consultants work to modernize the website, end-user departments will need to set aside their hesitance to remove content from the website and trust the Website Administration Division as experts. But the shift in mindsets isn’t necessary for just the specifics of website design, but for the website as a whole. The Division recognizes the need for the County to fully embrace the website as one of the most important communications tools and visitor experiences. Just like the First Impressions Ambassadors, the website is one of the first points of entry for business customers and private citizens and can set the tone for all subsequent interactions between a citizen and the County. As such, the Division and the County should continue considering enhanced customer service capabilities – such as chatbot and other artificial intelligence (“AI”) innovations – and website functionality testing, such as usability studies and A/B testing.

## Systems and Applications

### Gwinnett County Website

The Website Administration Division manages many aspects of the Gwinnett County website, GwinnettCounty.com, including content and interface architecture. The Division utilizes Liferay as a content management system that enables other departments to provide content update changes for Communications Department approval. Much of the website’s backend infrastructure and functionality is managed by ITS, with limits placed on the level of access granted to the Communications Department.

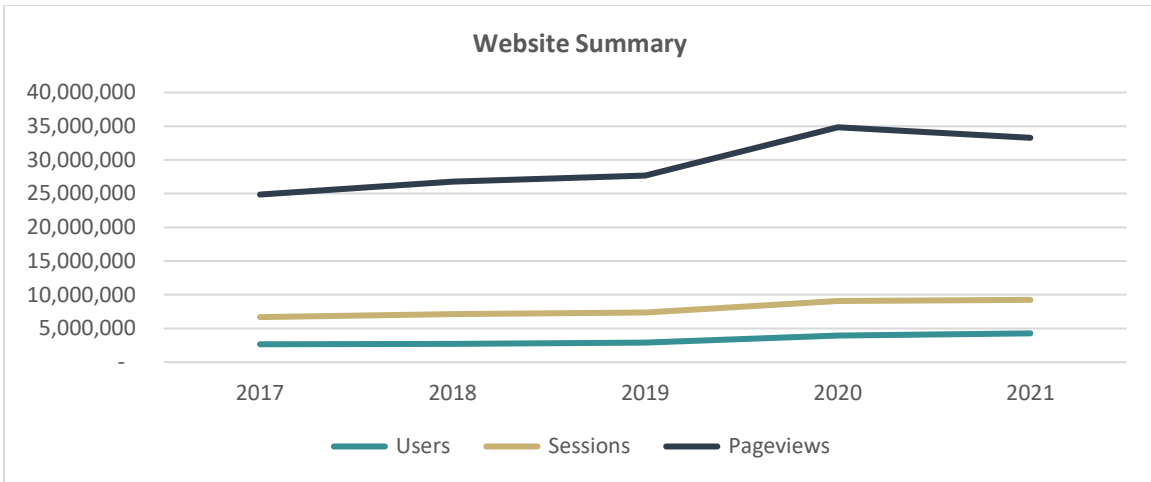
### Intranet

In addition to the public website, the Communications Department also manages many aspects of the Gwinnett County government’s intranet, GC Workplace. The Department utilizes SharePoint as a content management system, allowing each department to build out its own resources and directories, in addition to the Communications Department-managed County-wide resources and directories.

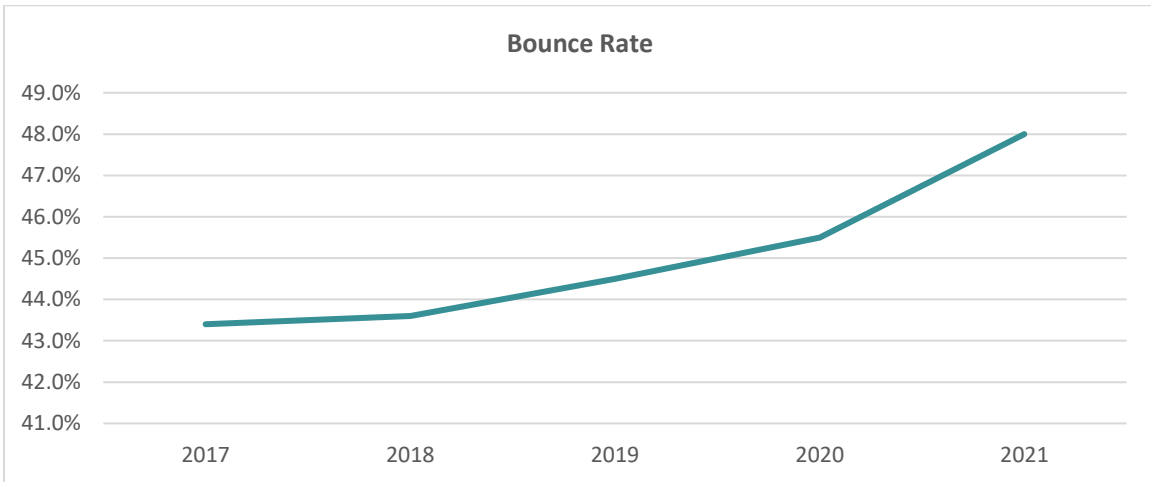
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Website Administration Division, in conjunction with ITS, tracks a series of data points regarding visitation to the website through Google Analytics. While many website analytics metrics don’t inherently speak to the performance of the website itself, together metrics begin to tell a story. The following graph explores the growth in users, sessions, and pageviews over the last five years.



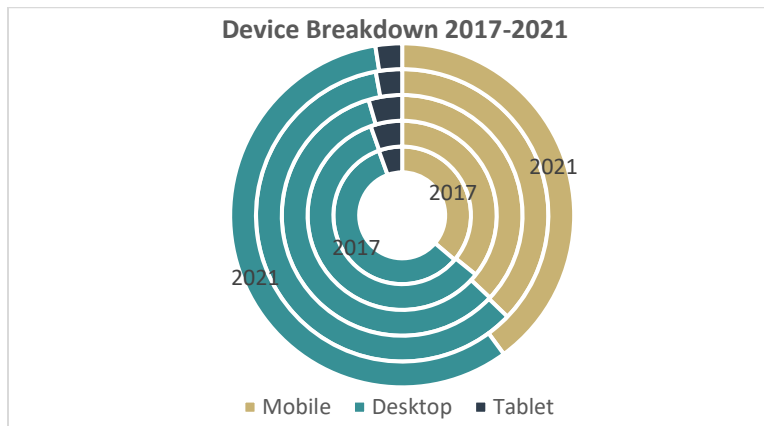


The graph above shows steady growth over the past five years with a spike in 2020, which is to be expected given the COVID-19 pandemic drove many services online. At first glance, the data in this graph represents an impressive number of users visiting the website. However, the data can be misleading: everyone who logs into the Gwinnett County government Wi-Fi network is automatically directed to the County’s homepage. As a result, many of the users, sessions, and pageviews captured in this data may be immediately navigating away, artificially increasing the website’s bounce rate. A bounce rate is the percentage of visits to a website or specific webpage that are terminated before the user executes an action, such as clicking through to a further page or completing a form. The following graph shows the public website’s average bounce rate over the last five years.



As can be seen in the graph above, the bounce rate has increased since 2017, which is not uncommon for websites over this period of time. According to Contentsquare, a digital analytics provider, the average bounce rate in 2021 was 47% (Test 2021), which puts Gwinnett County slightly above average. The Division should look at bounce rate alongside other metrics, such as conversion rate and session duration, for a fuller picture of user behavior on the website. By monitoring user behavior, the Division can work to enhance users’ experience and help end-user departments achieve their website goals.

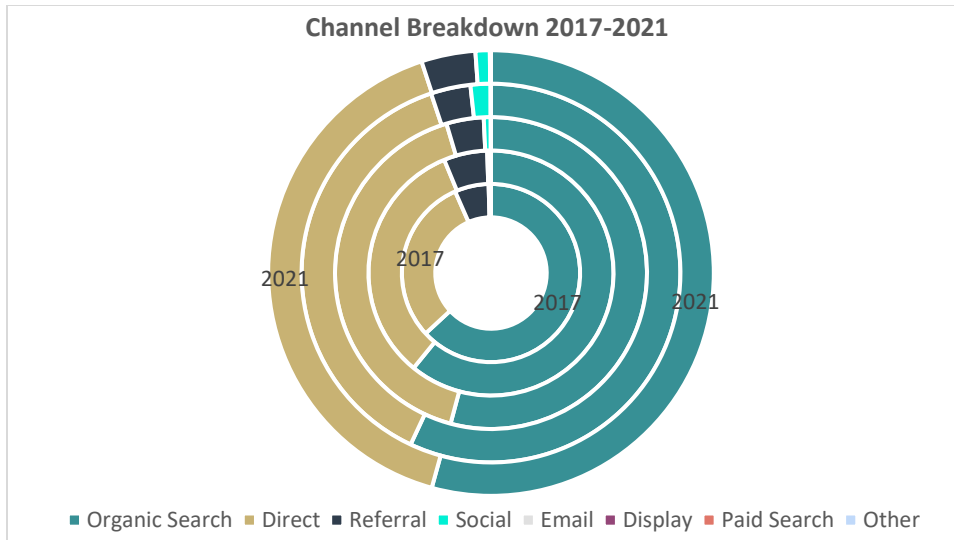
Another data point collected by ITS and the Communications Department is the breakdown of visitors to the website based on device. The following graph shows the percentage of desktop, tablet, and mobile visitors to the website from 2017 to 2021.



The graph shows that the percentage of visitors accessing the website from a mobile device has increased slightly over the last several years. According to Contentsquare, mobile traffic accounted for nearly 64% of all website traffic in 2021 (Test 2021) – greatly exceeding the mobile access to GwinnettCounty.com, which stood at 37%. This disparity may be due to the average visitor to the County’s website and their internet usage habits or it may be because visitors don’t find the mobile version of the website user-friendly. A usability study and an audience study could help the Division better understand the habits of the website’s visitors. The Division may also want to review bounce rates by device, as this could help identify whether one type of visitor is leaving the website without taking an action at a higher rate than other types of visitors.

A similar approach to understanding visitation to the website stems from a review of the channels driving traffic to the website. Over the last five years, eight channels drove traffic to the website:

- Organic Search – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from a search engine, such as Google or Bing
- Direct – Visitors typed GwinnettCounty.com or another County-owned URL into their internet browser, directly navigating to the Gwinnett County website
- Referral – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from another website, such as another government website or a company website
- Social – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from social media
- Email – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from an email newsletter
- Display – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from a display banner ad (only indexed in August 2020)
- Paid Search – Visitors clicked through to the Gwinnett County website from a text ad (a promoted result) in a search engine (only indexed since June 2021)
- Other – Miscellaneous or unknown sources that drive traffic to the website



The graph above shows the breakdown of traffic by channel from 2017 to 2021. Unsurprisingly, organic search indexed the highest each year – this is similar to industry trends. Direct traffic indexed significantly higher than industry average: 40% for Gwinnett County’s website compared to an industry average of 22% (Byers 2020). This high level of direct traffic could be due, once again, to the type of visitor to the County’s website, or it could be due to other factors, such as all connections to the County Wi-Fi automatically directing users to GwinnettCounty.com. Additional studies into audience and available visitation data may help explain whether this data is skewed or if the County’s branding is working well for marketing and communications efforts.

Also of note in the graph is traffic from social media and email. Social media did not index at or above 1% until 2020. As discussed in Section 3.A.2 of this report, this relatively low number (industry average is 7% [Byers 2020]) is most likely due in large part to the newness of the County’s social media presence. However, it could also suggest that public users have not been sharing content from the County’s website – or haven’t been able to share content due to poor integration between the website and social media. Similarly, traffic from emails has never indexed above 0.01% – and not since 2014. For those end-user departments and elected officials deploying email newsletters, one of the goals should be driving traffic to the website, however, email strategies don’t appear to be working with so few visitors clicking through emails to the website. While email usually indexes low – industry average is 1% (Byers 2020) – Gwinnett County’s email traffic is exceptionally low. The Communications Department should review strategies and objectives for both social media and email newsletters and observe traffic statistics on a regular basis to ensure those objectives are being met – if not, a change in strategy or user experience may be necessary.

An organization should always ensure each of its communications channels provides a similar user experience – branding and design should be the same, how a user interacts with content should be the same, etc. In November 2021, the Division hired a UX Content Coordinator who has been charged with managing all aspects of the user experience, including usability, SEO, and ADA compliance. The Division has historically tracked SEO metrics, including search users, search sessions, search pageviews, referral sessions, and landing page bounce rates. Because the UX Content Coordinator is still a relatively new position and set of responsibilities, changes in these metrics are relatively small. The Division should review year-over-year data to ensure the UX efforts are making a difference in driving quality traffic to the website, and should review metrics for specific target webpages in addition to the website as a whole.

The final set of data points tracked by the Website Administration Division is the number of content changes made to the public website and to GC Workplace. Using the most recent data, the Division either made or reviewed/approved 1,168 changes to the public website over the course of one month and 1,922 changes to the intranet over the course of two weeks. This data highlights the Division’s struggle to be proactive given the large amount of work the two current staff members are responsible for, including the Division Director.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Primary management of the technical side of the website is handled by the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department, including development of online forms and control over user access. Overall, the capabilities of the Division to fully administer the website are severely limited by tight access controls implemented by ITS. As the Division fills the newly allocated positions that are currently open, it is highly likely that the Division will push for more access and website administration capabilities from ITS.

**Recommendation 1:** County leadership should consider establishing clearer delineation of duties, responsibilities, and user rights for management of the public website, and communicate these expectations to both the Communications and ITS Departments. County leadership should enforce expectations regarding management of the public website and staff in both departments should have opportunities to freely express concerns regarding management of the public website to departmental and County leadership.

**Observation 2:** The ways in which internet users interact with websites has changed, with website users browsing through content less frequently and instead preferring to be directed immediately to the information or service they need. Gwinnett County’s public website contains an enormous amount of content and the Website Administration Division has employed a User Experience Content Coordinator to help the County better structure and promote its content. Changes recommended in order to enhance the user experience may include removing content from the website, a proposal which has received pushback from end-user departments previously. The request for proposals to contract with a technical consultant to develop a roadmap for reconstructing and modernizing the website may also lead to shifts in content infrastructure and overall website structure that end-user departments are hesitant to accept.

**Recommendation 2:** Departmental and County leadership will need to set an example for the rest of the County government in accepting the necessary shift in mindset on the website. As the website undergoes a modernization process, Departmental and County leadership should encourage end-user departments to look to the Website Administration Division as the experts in structuring and promoting website content and services.

**Observation 3:** The Division is currently reviewing enhanced customer service capabilities for the public website, including clearer user paths to popular services and technologies such as chatbots.

**Recommendation 3:** As the website undergoes the modernization process, the Division should continue to determine ways customer service capabilities can be enhanced on the website and how the website can become more user friendly.

**Observation 4:** The County has not recently conducted any website functionality testing to determine how visitors to the website are using the website, who the website's primary audience is, or whether or not visitors to the website consider the website to be user friendly.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider conducting website functionality testing – possibly through use of an independent third-party – to better understand the website's audience and that audience's user habits. The Division should consider a usability study, as well as conducting A/B testing to determine what content the audience is most likely to respond to.

**Observation 5:** The Division currently collects a large amount of website data, however performance metrics are limited. While the Division has begun to utilize some search engine optimization ("SEO") data for strategic direction on the website, these data-driven decisions represent a fraction of all website decisions.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as establishing user paths and how to use various channels to drive traffic to the website. The Division may need to work with ITS on collecting, analyzing, and implementing decisions based upon these performance metrics.

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Test, Lyssa. 2021. *2021 Digital Experience Benchmarks by Industry*. March 16. [contentsquare.com/blog/2021-digital-experience-benchmarks-by-industry](https://contentsquare.com/blog/2021-digital-experience-benchmarks-by-industry).

## 3.A.5 Communications Department – Branding and Design Division

The Branding and Design Division (“Division”) is responsible for oversight of Gwinnett County’s brand, as well as the production of any marketing materials. The Division reviews marketing materials produced by other departments and produces templates for use by employees of other departments who have graphic design experience.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Managing the Gwinnett County Brand
- Designing Collateral Pieces
- Capturing Event Photography

### Managing the Gwinnett County Brand

The Branding and Design Division is the ultimate authority on the Gwinnett County brand – the logos, seals, colors, fonts, graphic elements, imagery, and voice that clearly identifies the County on all materials. The Division develops numerous templates based on the brand, ranging from PowerPoint presentations to stationery, and provides guidance on best practices for media relations, report writing, social media writing, apparel, promotional items, web standards, and more. The Division reviews marketing and communications pieces developed by end-user departments for adherence to the brand standards. By ensuring all publicly and internally distributed materials are properly branded, the Division ensures the Gwinnett brand remains easily recognizable and consistent. By reviewing marketing and communications collateral for brand adherence, the Division also ensures designs aren’t based off personal preference – but rather a set of standards uniformly applied to all pieces.

The Division developed three levels of brand guide access for public and end-user guidance. The first level of the brand guide is available to all end-user departments, as well as the general public. This basic level access provides users with the County’s logos and guides explaining how to use the various elements of the County’s brand.

The second level of the brand guide – Brand Box Basic – provides access to some templates, such as envelopes, letterhead, PowerPoint presentations, and news releases. The Division grants Brand Box Basic access to those end-user departments with at least a basic understanding of how to use these templates and the brand. The templates download from Brand Box Basic as Microsoft Office files or as PDF files that all users should be familiar with using.

The third, and highest level of access is Brand Box Advanced. The Division grants access to Brand Box Advanced to those end-user departments with in-house marketing or communications staff who fully understand the brand and know how to use the relevant design software – primarily Adobe Creative Suite products, such as InDesign. Departments with access to Brand Box Advanced include Community Services, Human Resources, and Water Resources. These departments have access to native file templates in order to develop flyers, promotional materials, and other collateral pieces that require a more advanced understanding of design and branding. Because the departments with access to Brand Box Advanced have greater opportunities to change designs within templates and branded materials, the Division reviews these departments’ collateral pieces for adherence to the brand. End-user departments are expected to provide branded pieces to the Communications Department for review, but the County does not enforce any policies or procedures compelling end-user departments to submit their collateral. As a result, occasionally marketing pieces are published without review by the Branding and Design Division.

### Designing Collateral Pieces

Broadly defined, collateral is any material used to communicate or promote a brand. The Division is responsible for developing any collateral pieces not produced by end-user departments (and oftentimes recreating collateral pieces developed by end-user departments). The Division strives to develop visually appealing marketing and communications pieces that appropriately convey the message while remaining within the Gwinnett County brand. The Division designs a wide range of collateral pieces for the County ranging from one-page flyers and virtual backgrounds to video graphics and multimedia marketing campaigns. The Division produced almost all graphic design requests in-house, however certain production work, such as budget documents, is occasionally outsourced to professional services contractors.

### Capturing Event Photography

The Division is also responsible for capturing photography from Gwinnett County events for use in marketing and communications pieces. Each of the Division’s Senior Graphic Designers is trained to use the County’s photography equipment in order to attend events and capture any photography that might be required for news releases, social media, printed collateral, or other communications channels. Like with graphic design, most of the photography services are provided by in-house staff, however, the Division occasionally outsources photography to professional services contractors when the Division doesn’t have adequate staff or equipment. The Division would like to purchase additional photography equipment and eventually hire a full-time photographer if the need for photography continues to increase.

### Communications

The majority of requests for collateral development or review originate in end-user departments and are communicated to the Division through the PR Specialists, though some come directly to the Division from end-user departments. After PR Specialists help develop and wordsmith the content, they transmit the content and needs to the Branding and Design Division, who develops the collateral piece.

End-user departments have expressed some conflict between the necessity to maintain adherence to the brand and ensuring content remains correct after the Communications Department has designed a collateral piece. Because no one in the Communications Department – especially in the Branding and Design Division – is inherently an expert in end-user departments’ subject matter, changes made to content by the Communications Department can result in a modified or unintended message. The Department will need to learn to balance brand adherence with messaging fidelity – this balance might come from a combination of strategic initiatives from both the PR and Marketing Division and the Branding and Design Division, encouraging PR Specialists to spend more time onsite with internal clients to better understand their messaging and development of formalized intake forms and procedures to provide end-user departments more structure when submitting design requests. However, end-user departments will also need to better understand the necessity for the County to have one look and one voice.

### Strategic Initiatives

The most immediate strategic initiative for the Branding and Design Division is formalizing the project intake process through design request forms. Intake forms are a leading practice in the marketing and communications industry to fully understand the vision and goal behind a request, as well as all of the technical requirements (*e.g.*, partner logos, specific phrasing, legal requirements for text sizes, etc.). Intake forms would allow the Division to ask necessary questions about a request earlier in the process, encouraging end-user departments to be more forward thinking in terms of what they want and how they want to use it. The Division also wants to work with end-user departments on how to think strategically about how collateral pieces can become multi-purpose resources and envision all the ways a piece of content can be repurposed and visualized. The final element to helping end-user departments think about their needs and their opportunities proactively is the development of service-level agreements (“SLAs”) such as lead times. Lead time guidelines will help end-user departments understand how early they need to submit requests, encouraging end-user departments to think ahead in terms of marketing and communications initiatives.

The Division also expressed interest in hosting a County-wide roadshow, modeled on the Information Technology Services Department’s roadshow, to demonstrate the capabilities of the Division to end-user departments. The roadshow would ideally host both departmental leadership as well as those departmental employees liaising with the Communications Department and making requests of the Department so the messaging and takeaways are the same down the line. While the Division specifically introduced the roadshow as an opportunity for the Branding and Design Division, a larger Departmental roadshow could highlight the entire Communications Department as a key resource for other departments throughout the County.



## Systems and Applications

### Project Management

The Communications Department recently selected Hive as the Department's primary project management system. Hive allows staff to schedule actions and sub-actions, collaborate on documents while tracking changes, establish internal and external review and approval workflows, and schedule time for new staff in order to manage workload and training. The system will also allow for automatic intake of project requests through forms that automatically set up assignments and timelines. Because the Branding and Design Division Director is serving as project manager for the rollout of the system, the Division currently utilizes the system more than any of the other divisions in the Department.

### Design Software

The Branding and Design Division primarily uses Adobe Creative Cloud for design projects. The Adobe Creative Cloud (formerly Adobe Creative Suite) line of software has been considered the gold standard for creative software for nearly 20 years. While the software is appropriate for the work performed by the Division, the Division has struggled to consistently get laptops that are geared toward design work.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Currently, the Division is primarily tracking the number of design projects completed. As the Division fully introduces project management software to the design project process, the Division could consider tracking end-user departments' adherence to lead times or the amount of time Senior Graphic Designers are dedicating to specific departments. By tracking the amount of time Division staff spend on specific internal clients, Divisional leadership can better manage staff workloads and client assignments.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** As the leading experts on the Gwinnett County brand, the Branding and Design Division is responsible for reviewing every piece of collateral produced within the County government. Not all end-user departments, however, share every piece of collateral with the Communications Department for review, resulting in the publication of marketing and communications materials that don't adhere to the brand.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for brand management and requirements for end-user departments submission of collateral pieces for review. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies to ensure brand management.

**Observation 2:** End-user departments have expressed some conflict between the necessity to maintain adherence to the brand and ensuring content remains correct after the Communications Department has made changes to or has completely designed a collateral piece.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department will need to learn to balance brand adherence with messaging fidelity – this balance might come from a combination of strategic initiatives from both the PR and Marketing Division and the Branding and Design Division, encouraging PR Specialists to spend more time onsite with internal clients to better understand their messaging and development of formalized intake forms and procedures to provide end-user departments more structure when submitting design requests. Departmental and County leadership will also need to reiterate to end-user departments the necessity for the County to have one look and one voice, stressing that design isn't about personal preference.

**Observation 3:** The Department does not currently have formal procedures for intake of projects, resulting in manual processes and additional workload for staff. The project management system, Hive, contains functionality for intake forms which automatically create staff assignments and timelines. The Branding and Design Division is currently in charge of project managing the roll out of Hive as the Department's project management system.

**Recommendation 3:** While the Division needs to balance managing the roll out of Hive as the Department's project management system with the rest of the Division's responsibilities, the Division should prioritize the establishment of formal project intake procedures and forms. Departmental leadership should develop policies, procedures, and practices around project intake and Departmental and County leadership should communicate and enforce expectations around these policies, procedures, and practices to end-user departments.

**Observation 4:** The Division has struggled to consistently have access to laptops which are geared for design and are able to run the software required for the work done by the Division.

**Recommendation 4:** Divisional and Departmental leadership should work with the Information Technology Services Department to determine a list of requirements for the laptops used by the Division, and should ensure the Division has enough laptops meeting these requirements for consistent use by current and future employees.

## 3.A.6 Communications Department – Media Relations

The Media Relations Manager reports directly to the Department Director and is responsible for all interactions between the County government and members of the media. As spokesperson for the County government, the Media Relations Manager is also responsible for media training.

### Key Functions

Key team functions include the following:

- Managing Media Relations
- Providing Media Training

### Media Relations

The Media Relations Manager serves as the spokesperson for the Gwinnett County government, responding to all requests for quotes or interviews that come from the media. Additionally, the Media Relations Manager pitches news stories about Gwinnett County to the media, trying to ensure the Board of Commissioners and Gwinnett County are viewed in the best possible light. The Media Relations Manager works to get accurate messaging about the County into the news, even though not all stories will be positive – ultimately the goal is to promote transparency in the County. To this end, the Media Relations Manager crafts press releases about County programs and initiatives which are shared with local, state, and national media outlets as appropriate. The Media Relations Manager cold calls specific media outlets when relevant for a story the County wants to promote. These cold calls are often part of specific media strategies developed by the Media Relations Manager for major initiatives, such as elections.

### Providing Media Training

In addition to being interviewed, the Media Relations Manager also trains County staff to speak to the media. The Media Relations Manager offers three tiers of media training for any end-user department requesting assistance:

- Tier I – The basic training provides general knowledge of how to speak to media
- Tier II – Intermediate training covers the general knowledge topics, as well as introduces key public relations terminology and strategies
- Tier III – The advanced training covers the basic and intermediate levels, as well as introduces staff to on-camera speaking; the Media Relations Manager records trainees during mock interviews and provides feedback as trainees watch the replay

The Media Relations Manager also oversees contractor-provided comprehensive media training for the Board of Commissioners.

## Communications

The Media Relations Manager maintains a close working relationship with the public information officer (“PIO”) or other communications personnel in each of the end-user departments with in-house communications staff. Additionally, the Media Relations Manager works with department directors or other personnel assigned to liaise with the Communications Department. These relationships are crucial when working with end-user departments on press releases and story pitches focused on departmental programs, initiatives, events, and successes. However, tension can grow between end-user departments and the Communications Department when disagreements arise over whether or not a story the end-user department wants to share is newsworthy. The Department should consider providing a masterclass, white paper, or other training opportunity on leading practices for determining whether a story is newsworthy or not.

## Strategic Initiatives

The establishment of the Media Relations Manager position was a Board of Commissioners initiative, emphasizing the Board’s commitment to communications and media relations as important tools. This is further emphasized by the regular podcasts, newsletter, and media events hosted by Commissioners, generally with the assistance of the Media Relations Manager and Communications Department. The Board’s support for the Department and the Media Relations Manager position help the Media Relations Manager strategically position the role as the primary contact for all news media. As a result, end-user departments have begun redirecting media inquiries to the Communications Department rather than immediately responding, showing end-user departments are starting to understand the importance of utilizing the Department as a strategic resource.

In addition to stressing the importance of media inquiries being directed to the Communications Department, the Media Relations Manager has also stressed the importance of sharing the County’s stories publicly, even when not picked up by the media. To this goal, the Media Relations Manager hosts a regular news-style segment on TV Gwinnett called “Eye on Gwinnett” and an interview-based segment called “Go Gwinnett” which puts Gwinnett County officials and community partners on screen to share community stories.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Media Relations Manager provides a weekly summary of all media contacts. The Department should ensure these media contact summaries are coupled with data on stories picked up by media and the reach of these stories to ensure media outreach is strategic, efficient, and effective. The Department can also look into some share of voice metrics to observe how Gwinnett County’s mentions in the media compares to comparable or neighboring counties’ mentions, especially in terms of the County’s strategic communication priorities.

## Observations/Recommendations

**Observation 1:** End-user departments are not always familiar with what stories are newsworthy, resulting in pushback from said end-user departments when the Media Relations Manager does not recommend a story for media distribution.

**Recommendation 1:** The Media Relations Manager should consider developing a set of guidelines explaining what makes a story newsworthy and likely to be published by news outlets. Departmental leadership should share these guidelines with end-user departments as part of the Communications Department's established policies, procedures, and practices. The Department should consider whether recommending social media promotion of stories is appropriate in those cases when a press release may not be the best way to publicize a story.

## 3.A.7 Communications Department – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Communications Department to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Observations

#### Lack of Cohesion

- The lack of cohesion between divisions in the Communications Department and with end-user departments is an issue.
- The divisions stated a challenge managing current project and last-minute requests from County leadership that cannot be turned down. There is a need for a system to handle requests that provide staff with enough time to account for *ad hoc* requests.
- The lack of a cohesive and fully utilized request management system creates time-consuming and unnecessary work for the Department, including a series of manual processes.
- There is an expressed need for a strategic communications plan that also provides guidelines and lays out all County processes and resources. In addition to creating a strategic communications plan, support is needed to execute the plan effectively throughout the County.

#### Lack of Resources

- A lack of resources results in the Department not covering critical areas of work or staff covering greater workloads than they can effectively manage.
- The Department has struggled to keep equipment and systems up to date and ensure all employees have adequate equipment to perform the functions of their job.

#### Data Analytics

- The Department is currently hiring a Marketing Analytics Manager, who will provide the Department with more data on the effectiveness of communications methods and campaigns.
- Currently, there is a lack of performance tracking within the Department and its divisions.

## Summary Recommendations

There are multiple systems within the Communications Department, and the Assessment revealed several improvement opportunities. Although individual recommendations could be made for each observation, we recommend taking a strategic approach and looking at each system holistically to develop a system improvement plan for each application and incorporating the individual system plans into a detailed technology plan for the Department. Our summary recommendations are as follows:

1. **Increase Resources:** Ensure newly hired staff for content management, project management, and coordination utilize systems to the fullest and ensure other staff and end-user departments utilize systems.
2. **Increase Resources:** Ensure the Department regularly upgrades software and systems and each employee is provided with adequate equipment to fulfill the responsibilities of their position.
3. **Develop Processes and Procedures:** Define the process and response times for different types of communication requests. Follow industry-recognized standards and practices, such as Agile or ITIL, to process work orders and requests and track performance based on the criteria these guidelines provide. Communicate the request process and service level response times to the end-user departments.
4. **Improve Request Management Process and Tracking:** Evaluate the functionality of Hive to determine if it can be configured to meet the Department's requirements for a Request Management and Tracking System. If not, continue to use Hive while working with IT to define the requirements for a comprehensive Request Management and Tracking that provides greater collaboration, file storage, and project management functionality.
5. **Increase Data Analytics:** Hire a data analytics manager, or similar individual, who can implement and utilize a comprehensive data analytics system for increased visibility and tracking. If adding a position is not possible, leverage ITS or the County's Office of Strategic Excellence for assistance in developing Departmental metrics and analytics. Implement a data analytics and visualization system such as Tableau or Microsoft Power BI for better tracking and visibility.

## 3.A.8 Communications Department – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1A:** The Communications Department was established in response to the priorities set by the Board of Commissioners. In doing so, the County government doubled the number of positions allocated to Communications, most of which remain unfilled. Simultaneously, the expectations for the Communications Department increased exponentially, forcing the Department to accept heavier-than-usual workloads and focus on turning around a bevy of last-minute requests from end-user departments and County leadership. As a result, the Communications Department operates in a more reactive than proactive fashion, missing opportunities for strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts. While there are ideas for strategic priorities and longer-term planning and vision, the current staff focus limits the available staff and resources to support the implementation of these ideas.

**Observation 1B:** The Department currently collects a limited number of performance metrics, even in those few divisions which do regularly collect and report on data. The current process for identifying performance indicators is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department – as a result, the Department is not utilizing data analytics to perform proactively and strategically.

**Observation 1C:** A content calendar, or editorial calendar, is a proactive tool for scheduling the publication of collateral pieces, themed campaigns, planned events, etc. The Department does not currently establish a content calendar on any sort of regular basis, either for overall management of editorial scheduling or for individual campaigns.

**Recommendation 1:** As the Department fills the newly allocated positions and begins to balance workloads, the Department should embrace its position as the County’s center for marketing and communications expertise. The Department should collect and analyze available performance metrics that align with Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities and make data-driven decisions, proactively sharing with end-user departments leading-practice and data-proven strategies for developing marketing and communications campaigns and initiatives. The Department should also consider building out an annual content calendar with each division working together to promote similar topics, events, programs, and initiatives across all channels at relevant times of the year, and to ensure all Departmental employees are aware of those expected projects that will require heavier use of Departmental resources. Overall, the Department should identify and take advantage of opportunities to operate in a more proactive manner, providing strategic direction for the entire County’s communications efforts. In the meantime, the Department should manage expectations with internal clients, including County leadership, as the Department builds out its staff, ensuring internal clients understand the limitations the Department has while it is understaffed.



**Observation 2:** The Communications Department was established as a standalone department with added positions, roles, and responsibilities in response to the Board of Commissioners’ priorities. As many other departments have their own public information officers (“PIOs”) or other marketing/communications personnel, both the Communications Department and end-user departments are trying to understand the newly established department’s role in the County.

**Recommendation 2:** County and Departmental leadership should collaborate to fully establish a vision and mission for the Communications Department. Especially important is the need to determine the Department’s degree of authority over and interaction with other departments’ communications personnel and initiatives. County leadership should clearly communicate the duties, responsibilities, and objectives of the Communications Department to all members of the County government.

**Observation 3:** Successful organizations commonly utilize a comprehensive communications plan to clearly detail the strategies and tactics employed for all internal, external, and emergency communications. A communications plan establishes communications-related goals, defines key audiences, provides key messaging, determines chains of command, lays out standard operating procedures, recommends tactics and strategies, and sets policies for use of the organization’s communications channels. In short, a communications plan establishes the policies, procedures, and practices for all internal, external, and emergency communications performed by an organization. Currently, the Department does not have a comprehensive communications plan, though elements of such a plan exist, including emergency communications strategies.

**Recommendation 3:** Department leadership should lead the effort to establish a comprehensive communications plan, establishing the policies, procedures, and practices that will govern the Gwinnett County government’s internal, external, and emergency communications. Departmental leadership should communicate and consistently enforce these policies, procedures, and practices with County leadership and end-user departments.

**Observation 4:** As a department of marketing and communications professionals with a degree of governance over the County’s communications channels and initiatives, the Communications Department should be seen as the expert in marketing/communications and should be utilized as a resource by the other departments in the County government. Currently, many end-user departments prefer to develop their own collateral and content pieces and establish their own communications strategies. Designs by end-user departments are often based on personal preference, rather than brand standards, and reviews by the Communications Department are viewed more as roadblocks than as a resource.

**Recommendation 4:** As Communications continues to hire for newly allocated positions, the Department needs to position itself more as a resource for end-user departments. The Department should consider conducting a roadshow once staff are in place and forms and processes have been developed, inviting other County departments to come learn the capabilities of the Department and understand the advantages of working with the Department. County leadership should encourage end-user departments to view the Communications Department as a resource and utilize the Department for campaign planning and collateral design. While the County will undoubtedly go through growing pains as end-user departments lose a degree of autonomy, the County should set a goal of establishing a common practice of including the Department in all communications efforts, thereby building a more unified brand and voice.

**Observation 5:** The Department is regularly inundated with last-minute requests, adding to the Department's already heavy workload and forcing staff to rearrange project priorities, which delays some longer-term projects in favor of the last-minute projects. These delays in project completion have resulted in a degree of tension between the Department and internal clients.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should establish service-level agreements ("SLAs"), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.

**Observation 6:** As the Department staffs up, Departmental leadership has expressed the desire to function more like a private public relations ("PR") agency as opposed to a traditional government PIO function. The Department would act as a true internal services department, treating end-user departments as internal clients and producing high-quality content and collateral pieces for said internal clients. Once projects are submitted, the account manager for the internal client (right now the PR Specialists) would manage the project from initiation to final delivery. The Department would also assist end-user departments build their communications and marketing strategies, proposing campaigns, methods, and analyzing data to identify leading practices for those departments' specific initiatives.

**Recommendation 6:** As the Department shifts to function similarly to a private PR or advertising agency, the Department should consider seeking managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff with private PR or advertising agency experience. Bringing in managers and supervisors with private sector experience will help the Department stay current on leading practices in private industry.

**Observation 7:** The Department has selected Hive as its project management system. When fully implemented, the system will allow for automatic intake of project, automatic setup of assignments and timelines, management of staff time, and establishment of review and approval workflows. Many of these functionalities have not yet been implemented, and utilization of the system across the divisions is inconsistent.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should prioritize implementing Hive as a fully functional project management system, creating the necessary forms and workflows that will help with staff efficiency. The Department should ensure all divisions understand how to utilize the system and actually do use the system for management of projects.

**Observation 8:** The Department plans to hire a Project Manager, though has yet to fully determine this position's duties and responsibilities.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should consider establishing the Project Manager as the role responsible for implementation and governance of the Department's systems, such as Hive. The role could also serve as a "traffic manager," helping oversee the project management process and help balance workloads within the Department.

# 3.B Department of Water Resources

## Water Resources at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Provide safe, reliable drinking water to homes, businesses, and other facilities
- 2 | Deliver wastewater along more than 3,000 miles of sewer pipeline to three wastewater treatment facilities where water is treated above industry standards
- 3 | Manage more than 1,400 miles of stormwater drainage pipes to safely convey stormwater runoff to streams, rivers, and lakes
- 4 | Update and maintain the County's water, stormwater, and sewer infrastructure through predictive, preventative, and corrective maintenance
- 5 | Partner with local universities, national research organizations, and experts from around the world to conduct research, guide policy makers, and situate Gwinnett County as an international innovation hub for water research

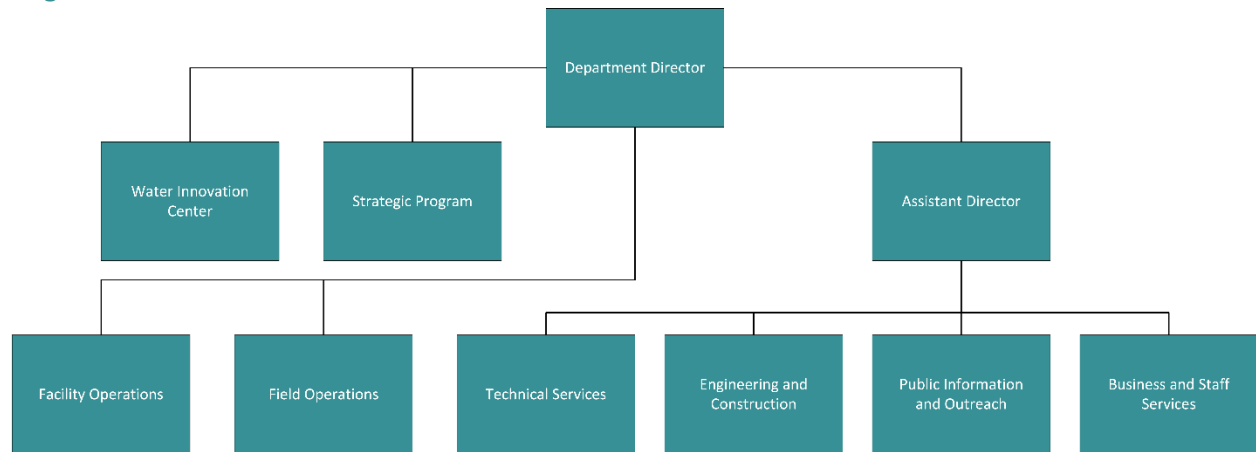
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$396,618,534</b>	<b>\$220,509,305</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	*through December 2021	Water Resources
	Filled	
Allocated		649

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### GAWP Plant of the Year



For each of the last five years, one of Gwinnett County's water plants has been named Plant of the Year by the Georgia Association of Water Professionals. The award recognizes facilities based on bacteriological monitoring, flow volumes, and overall operations. Lanier Filter Plant is GAWP's 2022 Plant of the Year.

### Uptime Awards



The Department received an Uptime Award from Reliabilityweb.com in 2016 and 2020. The 2016 Special Recognition Award celebrated the County's precision alignment, while the 2020 Best Asset Condition Management Program Award celebrated the County's precision, predictive, and condition-based monitoring.

### GAWP Best Tasting Water in Georgia



Gwinnett County won the Georgia Association of Water Professional's regional Water Taste Test Competition in 2022, going on to subsequently win the statewide "taste-off."

### Highly Decorated Department



The Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources has received more than 45 statewide and national awards in the last five years.

### Employee Skills Development Program



The Department introduced a program to automatically promote staff while encouraging continual job and personal growth. As members of the Department achieve new skills important for the functioning of the Department, those staff receive automatic promotions to the next job level. The program began in the Field Operations and Technical Services Division, and expanded to include the members of the Facility Operations and Engineering & Construction Divisions.

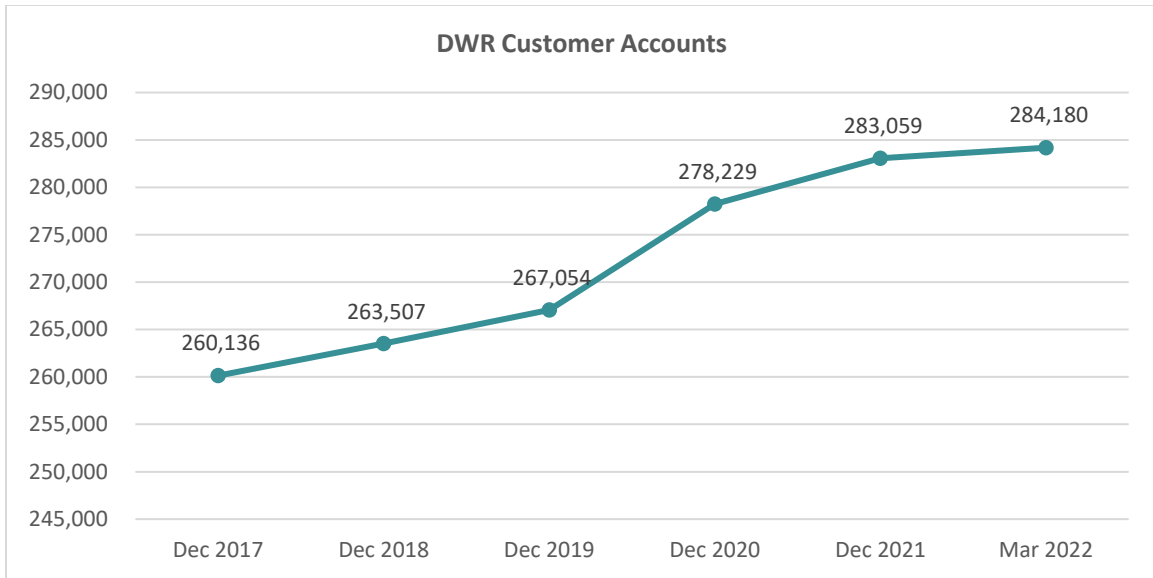
### Technical Staff with Industry Experience



Many Department professionals are former consultants who have significant industry experience serving other utility organizations, bringing industry leading practices and lessons to Gwinnett County.

## Introduction

Gwinnett County's Department of Water Resources ("DWR") is responsible for providing drinking water and treating wastewater in Gwinnett County. As of March 2022, DWR reported more than 284,000 water accounts, representing single family homes, office parks, schools, industry, and multi-unit residential units. As shown in the following table, customer accounts have risen approximately 9% over the past four years.



There are 14 different classifications for customer type. For 2022, Residential Single Unit accounts made up 77.9% of all accounts. Rental Properties accounted for 14.8% of all accounts, with Commercial accounts constituting another 5.2%. The other 11 account types accounted for the remaining 2.1%.

## Organization

The Department of Water Resources is led by a Department Director who is supported by an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director oversees three divisions and one section, with two other Deputy Directors reporting directly to the Department Director. Department staff are organized into five divisions, plus one section:

- Business and Staff Services
- Engineering and Facility Construction
- Facility Operations
- Field Operations
- Technical Services
- Public Information and Outreach Section

Our discussion of divisions, sections, and units all reflect the approved titles and position counts as of the beginning of our fieldwork. As noted in other sections, DWR has noted some issues with turnover and retention in a number of divisions, with multiple changes in staff during the course of our fieldwork. Many of the positions we've noted were vacant for some or all of our fieldwork; in some instances, entire crews that are approved were vacant, which impacts not only workload but on-call schedules for staff as well.

Many of the Divisions also have staff have titles with level modifiers between level I and level V within the same title, such as Trades Technician I, II, III, or IV. For many positions, the Department has discretion in hiring employees based on the selected applicant's skills level and experience, so a position could be filled using any of these levels dependent on the selected applicant.

Additionally, employees are eligible for promotion within title based on several factors. The Department has developed a robust internal training program, and is working on implementing the Employee Skills Development (“ESD”) program that allows for advancement and promotion based on demonstration of competency in necessary job skills in addition to tenure or educational achievements. The ESD program allows employees to advance to higher levels based on demonstration of skills and competency in the field, as well as classroom training completion, so vacant positions may be reflected at one level, but could be hired at a different level based on initial experience, or could have been changed during our fieldwork based on someone successfully demonstrating skills competency and receiving a level promotion. Based on these two programs, our descriptions of positions are not noting specific positions in certain divisions.

### Business and Staff Services

Business and Staff Services provide many of the support and administrative functions for the rest of the Department. Business and Staff Services is divided into five divisions:

- Customer Service
- Systems and Technology
- Finance
- HR
- Safety and Training

### Customer Service

The Customer Service Division, also known as the Customer Care Division, is responsible for all billing and account-related interactions with customers. The Division is led by a Division Director and Section Manager, who are supported by an Administrative Associate II and a Program Analyst II who helps with data review and analysis.

There are six units within the Division. There are two Residential/Commercial units, each with a Customer Service Supervisor. These units are responsible for all customer calls and can assist with account status research, new service or service termination, payment acceptance, and assisting with other account-related issues. One Customer Service Supervisor oversees eight Customer Services Associates (“CSAs”) and two temporary CSAs, with the other Customer Service Supervisor overseeing seven CSAs and one temporary CSA. The Division has been using temp-to-hire for filling vacant CSA positions, with mixed results.

The Quality and Training Unit is responsible for training all newly hired Division staff, as well as performing QA/QC reviews for Division staff interactions with customers. The Customer Service Supervisor – Quality and Training has a staff of four CSA IIIs, although only one position was filled during our fieldwork.

The Billing Unit is overseen by a Customer Service Supervisor and supported by a staff of seven CSAs. The Billing Unit is responsible for generating approximately 12,000 invoices daily to DWR’s water and sewer customers. This includes reviewing readings for potential outliers, providing proactive notifications to customers, and assisting with leak adjustments and communicating with meter reading contractors.

The Cash Management Unit is responsible for reconciling and ensuring that all payments have been processed. This Unit processes check and cash payments made at the front lobby or the drive-thru window. This Unit is led by a Customer Service Supervisor, and has nine CSA positions, and one Administrative Services Associate (“ASA”) position.

The Customer Service Division recently added a Customer Service Advocate position, focused on ensuring all processes are considerate of the customer experience, and considering changes in process, service, or offerings in pursuit of better customer service. Once fully staffed, this Unit will have two Customer Service Advocates and a part-time analyst.

Within Customer Service, there are minimal opportunities for advancement within the CSA role. CSA IIIs are considered lead workers, with CSA II positions serving as entry-level. Outside of advancement to Customer Service Supervisor, there are minimal additional opportunities for advancement within the Department.

### *Systems and Technology*

The Systems and Technology Division serves as IT support for the Department, and also serves as liaison with the County’s Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department. The Division is led by a Division Director, and includes six additional positions. The Planning Manager over software acquisition supports all technology budgets, contract oversight and licensure assignment, and assists in software acquisition, including liaising for procurement processes where needed.

The Division also has an IT Associate III who supports user testing specifically for the Customer Service Division, and can assist in creating and analyzing test environments prior to rolling out upgrades or new systems. The Unit also has a Business Analyst, Tech Support who supports some generalized applications for the Department, such as WebEx, as well as provides vendor management and initial break-fix and helpdesk support. The Systems and Technology also has a part-time clerk, a part-time tech assistant, and an intern position.

There are also two SAP consultants assigned specifically to support DWR.

### *Finance*

The Finance Division provides all payment processing and non-utility bill revenue recognition for the Department, as well as support in data collection and some mandatory reporting. The Division is organized into four units:

- Capital Unit
- Operating Unit
- Revenue and Reporting Unit
- Project Controls Unit

The Capital Unit is responsible for processing all payments associated with capital projects and budgets. This includes review and approval of all P-Card purchases. The Capital Unit is led by a Business Manager and supported by a Program Analyst II and Financial Analyst II.

The Operating Unit is responsible for processing all payments associated with operating budgets, including P-Card purchases. The Operating Unit is led by a Business Manager, with four supporting positions. There is a Business Services Associate (“BSA”) III, two BSA IIs, and a part-time BSA.

Revenue and Reporting is responsible for accounting functions associated with DWR revenue, including all reconciliations and ensuring the different interfaces are communicating correctly. This includes special revenue, such as funds received from system development charges and other intergovernmental revenue, as well as collecting and preparing consumption data for reporting as well as non-revenue water reporting. This unit also serves in an internal audit type capacity, auditing warehouse cycle counts, P-Card utilization and reconciliation, and other internal function. Revenue and Reporting is led by a Program Analyst, with a full-time Financial Analyst II and a part-time Financial Analyst to complete the team.

The Project Controls Unit is led by a Program Analyst, with four supporting positions. The team is comprised of a Financial Analyst II, Business Officer, BSA II, and a part-time project controls position. This Unit is responsible for managing the on-call and demand service contracts for the Department, as well as providing secondary invoice review for those services and supporting project management. This Unit also coordinates with the County's Law Department and Real Estate Section of Support Services in obtaining and managing easements.

#### *HR*

The HR Unit is comprised of three full-time employees as well as an intern position. The Unit is led by a Project Coordinator, with two Administrative Associate Support. This Unit is responsible for liaising with Gwinnett County HR on all HR transactions and supporting internal employee morale initiatives. The Unit also assists internal end-user divisions with all the necessary HR paperwork, including justification memos.

#### *Safety and Training*

The Safety and Training Unit is responsible for all safety and security coordination for DWR. This includes facility and field worksite safety efforts, including overseeing contractor safety. The Unit also maintains security for the facilities, including administering badge access, security gates, and security cameras. The Safety Section is led by a Section Manager, with four additional full-time employees. There is a Safety Officer, Construction Manager II over Safety, an Emergency Services Coordinator over Safety, and an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Training Section within the Safety and Training Unit is responsible for working with end-user divisions to develop, design, and provide training to all DWR employees. The Section is led by a Training Coordinator and is comprised of two Training Associates, an Administrative Support Associate II, and two interns.

#### *Engineering and Construction*

Engineering and Construction ("E&C") manages the design and construction of capital improvements to the County's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems as well as water production and water reclamation facilities. E&C inspects the construction of water, sewer, and stormwater systems for capital projects and new development. The Division is led by a Deputy Director, and is divided between Linear and Vertical assets for project design and construction. E&C consists of two divisions – Linear (pipe) and Vertical (facilities).



The Linear Division consists of a Division Director and three Section Managers supporting linear assets, stormwater, and construction. The Linear Assets Section is supported by multiple Engineer and Construction Manager positions. The Stormwater Section is supported by multiple Engineer positions. The Construction Section is supported by Construction Manager and Contract Inspection positions.

The Vertical Division is supported by a Vertical Assets Section Manager and multiple Engineer, Construction Manager, and Business Manager positions.

Based on the type of asset classification (linear or vertical) for the proposed capital project, the E&C divisions oversee the final design of capital projects by leveraging on-call external consultants, and provide project management support overseeing external construction contractors construct the capital project to specification.

### Facility Operations

Facility Operations is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the water production and wastewater facilities throughout the County, including maintenance of these assets. Facility Operations is organized in three divisions:

- Operations
- Plant Engineering
- Maintenance

### Operations

The Operations Division manages operations for the five County facilities. These facilities operate 24/7. There are two water production facilities: Lanier Filter Plant and Shoal Creek Filter Plant. There are three wastewater facilities: Crooked Creek, F. Wayne Hill, and Yellow River.

The Division is led by a Division Director, with two Section Managers – one responsible for Water Production and one responsible for Water Reclamation, or wastewater.

The Water Production Section Manager is supported by a Business Services Associate, and has an Operations Superintendent for each plant. Each plant also has a Plant Manager over operations.

At Lanier, there are two night shifts and two day shifts, for a total of four operating crews. Each crew is led by a working Water Shift Supervisor and has two Water Technicians, who can vary in position level from I to IV based on current licensure level and experience. Lanier also has two floating Water Technician positions who can fill in on shifts that may be short a Water Technician due to absence or vacancy. Lanier Filter Plant also has an intern position.

Shoal Creek Filter Plant also has four shifts, each led by a Shift Supervisor with two Water Technicians per shift. Shoal Creek Filter Plant has one floating Water Technician and an intern.

The Water Reclamation Section is led by a Section Manager, with Plant Superintendents located at each of the three plants.

Yellow River and Crooked Creek share an Administrative Associate II, who splits time between the plants. Each plant has an intern position, and operations are split between four shifts, with two day and two night shifts. Each shift is led by a Wastewater Shift Supervisor and has two Wastewater Technicians, varying in level between I and IV based on licensure and experience.

Additionally, Yellow River has an additional Water Reclamation Trades Associate who serves in a maintenance and operational managerial support capacity for the plant.

F. Wayne Hill Plant has a dedicated Administrative Associate II, as well as an intern position. F. Wayne Hill has two Wastewater Managers, with one primarily overseeing liquids handling and the other Wastewater Manager responsible for solids handling.

Like the other two wastewater plants, F. Wayne Hill has two day and two night shifts, each led by a Wastewater Shift Supervisor. Night shifts at F. Wayne Hill have three Wastewater Technicians, with day shifts assigned to either five or six Technicians.

### *Plant Engineering*

The Plant Engineering Division is responsible for supporting the operations and maintenance of all of the DWR facilities. Plant Engineering is organized into four sections currently:

- Asset Management and Reliability
- Contracts
- SCADA Projects
- Information Systems

Plant Engineering has been approved for positions to create a fifth section, Plant Engineering. The Division Director is working to develop the full responsibilities for this new section and will begin hiring soon.

Asset Management and Reliability is led by a Section Manager and divided into two units: Planning/Scheduling and Asset Reliability. Planning/Scheduling is responsible for developing the schedule and creating the work orders for the facilities maintenance staff. This Unit is also responsible for creating the preventive maintenance schedules in Maximo that allows for auto-generated work orders for certain types of preventive maintenance. Planner/Schedulers can also assist with coordinating the timing and materials needed to perform the work or coordinating with vendors needed to support or perform some maintenance functions. This Unit is led by a Trades Coordinator and has five Planner/Scheduler positions, with Planner/Schedulers assigned to specific facilities or types of facilities.

The Asset Reliability Unit is responsible for analyzing issues and failures with assets throughout the facilities and determining root causes for failures, or making recommendations about rotation strategies to improve asset lifespan and reliability.

The Contracts Sections is responsible for tracking and managing contracts, including coordinating purchasing and procurement needs. This Unit also works to confirm completion of all contract deliverables, and reviews invoices for compliance with contract specifications and approved pricing. The Contracts Section has a Section Manager who oversees a Construction Manager II and a Program Analyst III. The Construction Manager II oversees a Construction Manager I, with the Program Analyst III overseeing a Program Analyst II.

The SCADA Projects Section serves as the SCADA system support unit, supporting engineering and process design as well as overseeing the current SCADA vendor transition. This Section is also responsible for ensuring cybersecurity standards are met in SCADA system management. The SCADA Projects Section is led by a Section Manager and includes two Engineer IVs, an Engineer V, and an intern.

The Information Systems Section serves as initial technical support for many of the information systems in the facilities. This includes Maximo, as well as other operations and lab software systems. This Section can provide initial onsite troubleshooting and escalate issues to the vendor, the Systems and Technology Section, or Gwinnett County ITS, as needed. This Section also manages Jira for DWR. This section is comprised of five full-time Program Analysts at either the Program Analyst II or III level, plus an IT Associate IV, an intern, and a part-time analyst who are all led by a Section Manager.

### *Maintenance*

The Maintenance Division is led by a Division Director, and is responsible for maintaining the plants, along with the pump stations, tanks, and booster stations throughout the County. The Division is organized into five sections:

- Water Production
- Pump Stations
- Predictive Maintenance
- Water Reclamation
- Building and Grounds

The Water Production Section is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and reliability of the water production plants as well as the associated tanks and boosters that assist with distributing the water throughout the County. The Section is led by a Section Manager. There are two Trades Coordinators that oversee crews of Trades Technicians that are assigned to each of the water production facilities. A third crew is overseen by a Trades Supervisor and is responsible for the tanks and boosters in the water distribution system.

Trades Technicians range from level I to level IV based on experience and licensure. Some Trades Technicians are electrical specialists, other are mechanical specialists, and some are more generalized in their skillsets.

There are two Process Control Associates who each report to the Section Manager and are responsible for instrumentation and telemetry across the water production assets and equipment. Each Process Control Associate is supported by a Trades Technician.

The Pump Stations Section is responsible for the maintenance and operations of the wastewater collection pump stations that assist in ensuring wastewater is returned to the water reclamation plants for treatment. This Section is organized into five units that are supervised by a Section Manager. Four of the units are led by a Trades Coordinator, with the fifth unit led by a Process Control Associate who is responsible for instrumentation and telemetry at the pump stations. The instrumentation and telemetry crew is comprised of three Trades Technicians.

The other four Pump Stations Section units each have specialized areas of focus. One unit is responsible for odor control and ARVs, one oversees large repair jobs and coordinates with contractors. The other two units are geographically assigned to perform regular inspections on all of the pump stations, providing preventive maintenance and identifying any issues that may require additional coordination to address. Each one of these units has between six and eight Trades Technician positions assigned to the unit.

The Predictive Maintenance Section is responsible for monitoring the assets at the plants and assessing the data to identify and mitigate potential issues before they cause equipment failure or shutdowns. This Section utilizes a variety of data collection and analysis methods, include vibration testing, infrared thermography, ultrasound, and the use of UAVs, or drones, for visual inspections of the facilities. This Section is led by a Trades Manager and has six Trades Technicians to perform much of the testing and data collection, along with two Program Analyst IIs who are responsible for analyzing the data and reporting the results.

The Water Reclamation Section is responsible for maintenance and asset reliability at the three water reclamation plants in the County. This Section is led by a Section Manager and organized into six crews. These crews are led by Trades Coordinators and assigned to each of the water reclamation plants, with two crews assigned to F. Wayne Hill. One crew is led by a Process Control Associate and staff assigned to F. Wayne Hill, with Crooked Creek and Yellow River splitting another Process Control Associate and crew.

The maintenance crews are responsible for mechanical and electrical maintenance at the plants, with the Process Control Associate and crews responsible for instrumentation and SCADA support.

When there are staff shortages on crews, Technicians may volunteer to work on crews at other facilities. This can be challenging as each plant operates differently and has different equipment and processes.

The Building and Grounds Section is responsible for non-asset related operations maintenance, such as general facilities maintenance and repairs. This Section is also responsible for non-process and operational facility support. The Section Manager oversees an Operations Maintenance Unit, a Grounds Unit, and a Contract Inspection Associate II who oversees contractor compliance for the Section and also serves as project management for larger projects that may require coordination of several contractors or trades.

The Operations Maintenance Unit within the Building and Grounds Section is responsible for non-process maintenance and is overseen by an Operations Maintenance Manager, supported by a Building Services Coordinator and a Trades Associate II. Responsibilities include coordinating and performing non-process electrical, HVAC, paint, plumbing, and other facilities maintenance.

The Grounds Section is responsible for landscaping outside all of the facilities, including DWR Central Facility, as well as providing supporting in transporting equipment to Support Services Fleet Management Division for servicing, as well as coordinating with landscaping contractors. The Grounds Section is led by a Trades Supervisor who oversees a staff of five Trades Technicians.

## Field Operations

Field Operations is responsible for overseeing all of the pipes, manholes, valves, and other assets in the ground to support the efficient flow of clean water and wastewater. Field Operations is organized into two divisions:

- Field Operations
- Maintenance

### *Field Operations*

The Field Operations Division is organized into two sections: Materials/Warehouse and Contracts.

The Materials/Warehouse Section is responsible for managing warehouses at DWR Central Facility as well as four facilities, plus a warehouse for pumpstations. The Section has a Section Manager, with a Warehouse Manager over the plant warehouses and a separate Warehouse Manager over the Central Facility Warehouse. There is also a Program Analyst II who serves as a liaison with Support Services Department's Fleet Management Division as well as a liaison for purchasing and warehouse contract support.

Central Facility Warehouse has an Administrative Support Associate III, a Business Services Associate III, a Warehouse Supervisor, and four Warehouse Technicians.

The Plants Warehouse Manager has five direct reports: Warehouse Supervisors at Lanier Filter Plant and F. Wayne Hill Water Reclamation Plant, and Warehouse Techs for pump stations, Yellow River, and Crooked Creek. Lanier Filter Plant has an additional Warehouse Technician and F. Wayne Hill has two Warehouse Technicians, with one who is designed to serve in a floater role should any of the other plants need additional support due to workload or staffing absences.

The other Section within the Field Operations Division is the Contracts Section. This Section has a variety of responsibilities that aren't all contract related. This Section, led by a Section Manager, has six units:

- Meters
- Meters and Backflow Prevention
- Investigations
- Annual Contracts
- Stormwater Maintenance and Repair
- Data

Each unit's leader has a different title, and there are certain teams where the section leader's title is the same as someone lower on the organization chart in another section or unit.

The Meters Unit is led by a Trades Coordinator who oversees two Trade Supervisors. Each Trade Supervisor has a team of five Trades Associates. This Unit is responsible for meter replacement and repair throughout the County.

The Meters and Backflow Prevention Unit is led by a Construction Manager I and supports larger and commercial meter installation and repair, or oversees contractors tasked with this work. This Unit is also responsible for overseeing backflow device installation and testing compliance, to ensure that contaminated water doesn't infiltrate the clean water supply. This Unit has two Contract Inspection Associates and an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Investigations Unit is led by a Construction Manager II and houses the Dispatch Team and the Investigations Team. The Dispatch Team is a 24/7 emergency call center that takes calls about water outages, leaks, or spills. This Team also monitors the SCADA system for alarms related to the pump stations and reports alarms to the Facility Maintenance Section responsible for pump station maintenance. This Team is led by a Water Reclamation Services Supervisor and is staffed with seven Water Services Associates.

The Investigations Team is responsible for investigating the complaints and issues reported to the Dispatch Team. This Team has three Water Trades Supervisors who each oversee a crew of two Water Trades Associates. The Unit is also supported by an Administrative Support Associate II. This Unit works seven days a week to investigate and resolve potential leaks, spills, breaks, or other outages.

The Annual Contracts Unit is responsible for overseeing the work of annual contractors for water and sewer line assessment, rehabilitation, and repair. This includes site inspections and project management, as appropriate. This Unit is led by a Construction Manager II. There are four Construction Manager I positions each assigned a specific contract or type of contract, such as meter reading. Each Construction Manager I oversees a Contract Inspection Associate, and the unit is supported by an Administrative Support Associate II.

The Stormwater Maintenance and Repair Unit is overseen by a Construction Manager II and is responsible for stormwater system maintenance and repair, as well as overseeing contractors tasked with initial system condition assessments as well as relining and replacement.

The Section also has a Data Unit, which administers Lucity for the Division and ensures that work order data is entered accurately. This Section also helps prepare monthly outcome and performance reports and helps coordinate audit responses for the Division. The Data Unit is led by a Program Analyst III who is supported by two Program Analyst I positions.

### *Maintenance*

The Maintenance Division is divided into two sections: Preventive Maintenance and Corrective Maintenance.

The Preventive Maintenance Section is responsible for proactive condition assessments and initial service support for the water and sewer lines throughout the County. The Section Manager is supported by a Preventive Maintenance Planner/Scheduler position, and oversees two Trades Coordinators: one over water preventive maintenance, and one over sewer preventive maintenance.

The Water Trades Coordinator oversees three Trades Supervisors, with each over a specific subset of water line preventive maintenance: valves, flushing, and leak detection. Each Trades Supervisor oversees a team of Trades Associates. The Valve Trade Supervisor has five positions assigned, with the other two Supervisors each overseeing two Trades Associates.

The Sewer Trades Coordinator also oversees three Trades Supervisors who oversees between four and six Trades Associates. Crews are assigned based on the type of equipment they primarily use: either SL-RAT, CCTV, or Hydrojet.

In the Corrective Maintenance Section, the Section Manager oversees two Trades Managers: one over stormwater, sewer, and wastewater collections, and one supervising clean water, landscaping, and restoration. The Section Manager is also supported by an Administrative Support Associate II. This Section is responsible for larger scale corrective maintenance, or repair and replacement work on the water, sewer, and stormwater lines throughout the County.

Each Trades Manager oversees two Trades Coordinators. The Trades Coordinator over stormwater corrective maintenance oversees five Trades Supervisors, who each supervisor two Trades Associates.

The Trades Coordinator over sewer and wastewater collections oversees four Trades Supervisors, who are assigned functional areas such as pipe repair and manhole repair. Each sewer and wastewater collections Trades Supervisor oversees two Trades Associates, with two additional vacant Trades Associate positions not currently assigned to a crew.

The Trades Coordinator over Clean Water Distribution oversees seven Trades Supervisors, all assigned specific functional areas such as pipe repair or hydrant repair. Each Trades Supervisor has a crew of two Trades Associates.

The Trades Coordinator over Landscaping and Restoration oversees one Trades Supervisor, with a crew of seven Trades Associates split between restoration work and the dump trucks. There is also a Maintenance Technician III providing basic maintenance and support to the dump trucks.

### Technical Services

The Technical Services Division (“Technical Services”) supports, improves, and optimizes the operation and maintenance of DWR’s assets. The Division provides permitting, regulatory compliance, planning, and operational assessment services related to the County’s water, sewer, and stormwater program delivery. This includes the prioritization, planning, and preliminary design of projects based on long-range planning, capacity, risks, and needs.

Technical Services is led by a Deputy Director and the organization consists of the following four sections:

- Permit and Regulatory Services
- Stormwater Services
- Water and Sewer Technical Services
- Infrastructure Support

### *Permit and Regulatory Services*

The Permit and Regulator Services Section is responsible for maintaining compliance with state issued Environmental Protection Authority (“EPA”) permits and for issuing and monitoring County Industrial Pretreatment Permits. The Section consists of two units – Water Quality and Industrial Pretreatment.

The Water Quality Unit is led by a Water Quality Superintendent and supported by numerous Environmental Scientist and Water Quality positions that sample and test water and wastewater on a daily basis throughout the County to ensure compliance with multiple EPA permits. The County has received multiple EPA water and wastewater permits to provide drinking water and treat wastewater for County users that require a great deal of compliance with federal and state requirements. The EPA permit requirements necessitate regular water and wastewater sampling and testing.

The Industrial Pretreatment Unit is led by a Water Quality Coordinator and supported by multiple Water Quality positions. The Unit issues and monitors compliance for Industrial Pretreatment Permits. Industrial Pretreatment Permits are issued by the Unit to various commercial/private sector organizations for wastewater discharge into the County system related to the organization's business (laundromats, manufacturing plants, etc.). Industrial Pretreatment Permits are designed to protect the County's water system and reduce conventional and toxic pollutant levels discharged into the environment by industries.

#### *Stormwater Services*

Stormwater Services provides active monitoring and reporting for the County's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems ("MS4") Permit, monitoring other stormwater related strategic initiatives, and supports capital projects related to stormwater.

The Division is led by a Division Director and supported by multiple Planning, Engineer, Construction Manager, Water Quality, and Contract Inspection positions.

#### *Water and Sewer Technical Services*

The Water and Sewer Technical Division is responsible for the capital planning and preliminary design of water and wastewater projects before the Engineering and Construction Division constructs the projects. The Division is divided into two primary asset classifications – linear (pipe) and vertical (plants/facilities). The Division is also responsible for asset management and leverages Lucity for managing linear assets and leverages Maximo for managing vertical assets.

The Division is led by a Division Director and supported by a Linear Assets Section Manager and a Vertical Assets Section Manager. The Linear Assets Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer positions. The Vertical Assets Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer and Scientist positions.

#### *Infrastructure Support*

The Infrastructure Support Division is responsible for assisting developers with new construction development projects and for maintaining asset and GIS information for the Department. The Division is led by a Division Director and is supported by a Development Section Manager and a Data Management section Manager.

The Development Section Manager is supported by multiple Engineer positions and is responsible for assisting developers in the construction planning phase to support capital investment and the related economic benefits to the County.



The Data Management Section Manager is supported by multiple Planning Manager, GIS Associate, and Program Analyst positions. The Data Management Section is responsible for managing the CMMS which oversees service requests, inspections, and work orders; and also is responsible for the Department's GIS database.

### Public Information and Outreach

The Public Information and Outreach Section is responsible for developing and overseeing internal and external communication strategies for the Department. Public Information and Outreach is led by a Section Manager. The Section Manager has primary responsibility for emergency communications management, responding to media inquiries, drafting press releases, and other strategic communication efforts.

The Section has a Water Resources Outreach Manager who is responsible for public outreach through a variety of events, such as workshops, festivals, clean-up days, and career fairs. The Water Resources Outreach Manager, along with a Resources and Marketing Specialist, an intern, and a part-time Analyst may schedule, promote, and host events as well as attend events hosted by other County Departments or organizations.

The Water Resource Program Coordinator is responsible for all K-12 school education outreach, including conducting programs within classrooms as well as afterschool clubs and activities. The Water Resource Program Coordinator is also responsible for water conservation programs throughout the County. The Water Resource Program Coordinator is supported by two interns.

The Section's Project Coordinator is responsible for construction communications. Construction communications includes proactive engagement with residents and stakeholders who may be impacted by Department construction projects.

The Section has two contractors to support its functions.

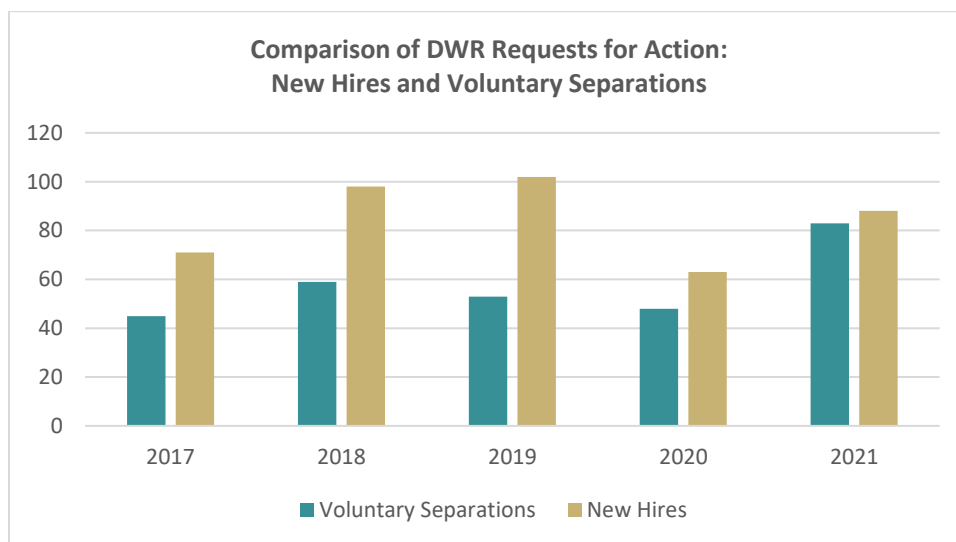
### Additional Department Staff

In addition to the divisions and sections, the Department also has a Strategic Program Manager and team. The Strategic Program Manager, along with one full-time and one part-time staff member, are responsible for managing the Department's capital improvement bonds, including coordinating with the Engineering and Construction team on project updates for the Department Director, County Administrator, and County Commissioners. They are also responsible for overseeing all of the inter-governmental agreements ("IGAs") and developer participation agreements where costs may be shared between the County and a developer for extension system upgrades, renovation, or construction. They draft the agreements, liaise with the Law Department for finalization, then ensure that all agreements are presented to both the Water and Sewer Authority and the Board of Commissioners. They will also coordinate with the County Planning and Development Department to ensure that developers are in compliance with the agreement's terms and conditions, and then coordinate with Finance to issue invoices once work is completed.

The Department also houses two employees who staff the Water Innovation Center. The Water Innovation Center, also known as the “Water Tower” opened to the public in Spring 2022. The Water Tower serves as a public-private partnership empowered to advocate for and support water utilities throughout the United States by leveraging Gwinnett as an innovation hub. The Water Tower is supported by a 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4); the 501(c)(4) has an agreement with the County for Water Tower operations and location, and is designed to support the development and infrastructure of the Water Tower site. The Water Tower will focus on both public engagement, outreach, and education, and as well as support water industry research and workforce development. As the Water Tower grows and expands, it provides a promising opportunity for the Department to leverage this resource for workforce development, training, and innovation that may require private support and resources to succeed.

### Overall Hiring and Retention Challenges

As demonstrated in the following table, the Department is seeing a lot of new hires as well as voluntary separations each year.



The Department feels that there has been a lot of turnover and are struggling to maintain employees in many technician and operator roles, especially those that require specific skill sets. In 2021 alone, the Department lost approximately 13% of its total workforce to voluntary separation. This figure does not include retirements, transfers to other Departments within Gwinnett County, or involuntary separations. The Department is losing approximately 3% of its workforce to retirement every year.

Hiring is complicated by the limited set of available titles in use throughout the Department. This can create some confusion in understanding the differences in how titles are used in different divisions. The use of fairly generic titles may also cause issues in the hiring process, as the titles and general descriptions may not accurately describe the role to be performed, or the skill sets that may be necessary. Additionally, the use of a consolidated list of titles has resulted in the inclusion of skill requirements that may not always be applicable. For example, the job description for Trades Technician I notes that some positions require a CDL. Many of the Technicians work on crews, so having each crew member hold a CDL is redundant, and may discourage talented applicants who are otherwise not interested in holding a CDL.

The use of a limited set of titles also poorly reflects the differences in skillsets and experience required to hold different roles. Within the Customer Service Division, the use of CSA interchangeably across all of the teams fails to highlight the additional skills necessary to be a successful performer in cash management or billing roles.

The broad application of titles may also impact the use of one of DWR's strongest programs: ESD. As some positions have licensure requirements and others do not, the ESD program is not available to all employees, and due to the limited number of titles available within the Department, may inhibit ESD from being applied to all groups who may benefit, due to discrepancies in the requirements between different units of employees who hold same or similar titles.

The Department and the County have made some efforts to correct some of the low pay issues noted throughout the Department. These efforts have not been consistently applied – increased wages for new hires may mean that inexperienced new hires may be earning the same, and sometimes more than, experienced staff. Additionally, there are disincentives to promote from staff to coordinator level positions, since the coordinator level positions do not always qualify for on-call and overtime pay. This could result in an employee taking a functional pay cut to take on more responsibilities. We noted several voluntary demotions on the HR Requests for Action report for 2017 – 2021; anecdotally we were told that some of those voluntary demotions were the result of employees deciding to take the demotion to increase their chances of better pay through on-call and overtime eligibility.

As DWR's mission directly relates to public health and can impact public safety, the 180-day hold period that is automatically applied to most positions after separation can also hinder hiring, along with the length of the County hiring process.

Many divisions, sections, and units have just enough staff to perform all of the work if all employees are working full-time and there are minimal absences. We also noted, on average, approximately 40 employees who were either on FMLA or short-term disability each of the last five years. While this is a normal part of operations, the combination of positions that are filled but not actively staffed and working can further contribute to workload issues.

The Department is also seeing several separated employees returning. Over the past five years, the Department has processed 56 rehires of employees who previously worked for the County, suggesting that the current work environment is not a significant decision-maker for those choosing to leave the County, and may be an incentive for employees to return. Anecdotally, we spoke with several employees who left the County and then returned, citing DWR's work environment as a positive factor in choosing to return.

## Strategic Priorities

DWR has invested in customer service as a priority. DWR has prioritized investing in innovation, efficiency, and asset maintenance to manage costs and provide timely and responsive services and quality drinking water at a reasonable price, while still ensuring adequate revenue to support operating costs. DWR has made long-term investments in ensuring that the facilities, technology, and equipment are all innovative and forward-thinking, and is committed to focusing on asset management and efficient use to ensure asset longevity and reliability.

Most initiatives focus on ensuring the business need, cost, and return on investment are all aligned before moving forward with new initiatives. The Department includes staff from a variety of divisions in planning discussions.

DWR consistently sets standards that are well above industry norms, which is reflected in the accolades and commendations the Department has received.

For the HR Unit, additional guidance and decision-making is needed at the Department level to support strategic planning and efforts around recruitment, retention goals, and succession planning. The Department has significant vacancies in several divisions, which may be compounded over the coming years by the retirement-eligibility of many of the experienced staff. The Department may need to revise its goals for retention within roles, promotion timelines, succession planning, and develop a revised recruitment and retention strategy that better reflects the current state of hiring, longevity, and loyalty among workers.

The Department is also working to increase and improve communications efforts. Many of the Department's employees don't report to DWR Central Facility, or do not perform the majority of their work there, and many do not work a traditional business day due to the nature of operations. This can make it challenging to consistently and timely communicate with employees. The Department has made progress that is acknowledged by the employees, such as Tyler Talks, weekly division and section newsletters, etc. This still feels asynchronous to many staff, who noted an interest in seeing leadership out in the facilities and the field, with more visibility outside of when there are issues, or where there is additional public interest in a facility or function.

We discussed many initiatives either in planning or in progress with DWR employees. For several of the initiatives mentioned during our fieldwork, it was noted that there were planned County-wide initiatives that the Departmental initiatives were either modifying or delaying kickoffs due to request to align with County timelines.

The Department has also invested a lot of time and effort into developing a broad-based training initiative in house that focuses both on coursework and demonstrated skill competency in the field. The ESD program has made significant changes in many divisions, although there will need to be continued effort to ensure that staff don't become complacent in their positions and disinterested in additional promotional opportunities. Focus is balanced on both technical skillsets as well as emotional intelligence, soft skills such as leadership and communications, etc. The Training Unit has worked with other divisions and Department leadership to develop or source programs that develop employees in a comprehensive way. The Department has also ensured early engagement, rather than waiting until staff are promoted into leadership positions to provide leadership or supervisory training. Many of the Trades Technicians in level III or IV positions have received supervisory training as part of their advancement, and are able to see and apply the learned theories on-the-job, which serves as excellent succession planning for coordinator/supervisor/manager-type positions.

The one training blind spot is in ensuring adequate and consistent institutional knowledge transfer. Given hiring challenges and current crew size issues, this has been a challenge. The Department will need to continue to work to ensure that they are prepared for the retirement timelines of many groups of employees.

Overall, the Department has been strategic and innovative in thinking about advancing water operations. There are some less innovative and forward-thinking practices in office environment considerations, particularly around work flexibility to encourage retention. The Department should consider expanding work from home to all roles that include contract oversight or QA/QC that is often performed on a computer. The Department should also open communications with employees about the potential for introducing more shift flexibility, such as four ten-hour days for certain crews or shifts.

## Leadership and Management

Senior Leadership in the Department has done a lot to change operations as well as perceptions within the Department, undergoing a significant organizational realignment in the past three years. Time has also been invested in ensuring that staff understand the vision for the Department and are bought in to the strategic direction and priorities of the Department.

Employees in several divisions, all independent of each other, cited that the Department was focused on doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason, suggesting that the mission is being consistently shared and adopted throughout the Department. Staff are interested in opportunities for more organic interactions and visibility of Senior Leadership outside of Central Facility, to encourage more buy-in and opportunity for staff input across all levels of the Department.

The opportunities for buy-in and engagement are somewhat complicated by the depth of the organizational chart and the number of management positions that some staff may need to work through to have their ideas shared or concerns heard. Corrective Maintenance Trades Technicians of the staff in Field Operations, for example, have to go through five levels of management before reaching the Deputy Director over Field Operations. Water Technicians or Wastewater Technicians in Facility Operations would also need to go through five levels of management. There is a perception that recommendations and input often get lost in all of the middle management levels, either due to lack of interest or lack of prioritization.

The Department has also done a lot to facilitate leadership growth and promotion from within. There are broad-based opportunities for leadership and supervisory training through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's "Succeeding as a Supervisor" course and the Gwinnett Tech Leadership Academy, which DWR is continually assessing to ensure the right mix of courses for the workplace. Employees across the Department noted that having Coordinators, Managers, and Supervisors who were promoted from within helped with understanding their concerns and helping advocate for their needs.

There were noted gaps in the training or initial support provided for newly promoted managerial or leadership positions, especially around administrative functions, such as finance, purchasing and P-Cards, and HR transaction requirements. Many staff noted that the support from those units is great, but there was minimal initial discussion around processes, expectations, etc. so everything was learned as mistakes were made.

Many large decisions, such as capital planning or introduction of new processes or programs are often being made by a collective of divisions. Much of the decision-making focuses on including the units directly responsible for implementation and the divisions responsible for initial analysis. Many discussions fail to proactively include or incorporate consideration of impact on support functions, such as reporting, customer care, etc. These units feel that they are the last to know, and often find out informally rather than being included in process design and decision-making.

DWR has won a variety of awards for its customer service, operations, and maintenance uptime. Some staff feel that the appreciation/acknowledgement of the work it takes to earn these awards doesn't always trickle down to appreciation of individual employees. Staff expressed interest in internal programs and acknowledgements that highlight individual employees of the month/year/etc. – both to provide more visibility into what these different teams do to support overall award-winning operations, but also to consistently highlight good work.

Due to perceived imbalanced workloads and overworked staff in certain areas, the Department has focused on the creation of additional middle management roles to manage workload and ensure more equitable distribution of work. These new roles do not always feel strategic, and may have been introduced without a proper evaluation of workload, workflow, and the opportunity for more efficient processes rather than additional levels of management. There is a general sense that many middle management roles were not defined prior to creation, and significant authority has been given to higher-level managers in determining what should be assigned to the newly created roles, rather than strategically assigning work in an intentional and structured way. The independent assigning of work and responsibilities has created some inconsistency in how titling is used throughout the Department, and some disparities in roles and responsibilities within the same title band. Additionally, not all managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, so there is a perception that some of these managers are micromanaging lower-level staff to fill their days, as some of the current managers do not relinquish their responsibilities and fail to delegate managerial and decision-making authority down the line. The multiple levels of management also means that a lot of time is spent in meetings, so many middle managers also cited a struggle to find balance in attending meetings and keeping staff updated, while also getting the work done and overseeing and supporting their downline staff.

## Technology

The Department of Water Resources utilizes the following systems. More detailed descriptions of unique operating systems in found in the division sections.

System	Function
Lucity	Work order management
SCADA	Maintenance management
Maximo	Asset management
GIS	Geospatial data management
Jira	Contract management, Performance tracking
Hach WIMS	Water information management
Excel	Contract management
SAP	Billing management, Customer relationship management
Tableau	Data visualization
Centralpoint	Documentation management
eLogger	Logbook management
CIP Tracker	Project tracking
LIMS	Laboratory information management
Email	Communication
Cisco	Phone/VoIP

## Customer Service

The Department takes a lot of pride in being a customer service-oriented organization, infusing consideration of customer service throughout all levels of operations, maintenance, and internal functions. As noted in many of the following division sections, DWR is collecting a lot of data around customer service that should be leveraged to tell a broader story of the Department's commitment to customer service. Data points on quality standards, number and length of service outages, impacted customers, and public outreach and education efforts should all be leveraged to depict the full story of customer service more accurately for the Department.

The Department provides a lot of methods for customers to contact the Department and receive support and assistance. Customer Care provides support for billing, leak adjustments, service set up or transfer, and other services as well as offering courtesy adjustments for one pool fill-up every five years, as well as coordinating with Planning and Development in the support of permit and new meter issuance, as well as supporting fire hydrant rentals. The introduction of the Five9 system will provide customers with more options to obtain information and support, although text-based interactions are still a need for the Division.

The Dispatch and Investigations Units within the Field Operations Division also provide customer service, through 24/7 lines to report concerns about leaks, spills, or other system issues. Dispatchers also provide general support in leak detection, and investigators and other field staff go above and beyond in working with customers to assess and understand issues, even if the issues aren't on the County's side of the water line. Technicians may assist in turning off water at the meter, or stopping by to assist contractors at commercial sites if there are issues with vaults or large meters.

The Department is also committed to providing a high-quality product at a competitive rate. The Department consistently holds itself to standards that are higher than state or federal regulatory requirements, which is reflected through many of the awards earned by the Department. The Department strives to find balance in investing in innovative technologies in operations, maintenance, and support functions while maintaining affordable prices for all customers.

The Department also provides a variety of customer engagement, education, and outreach opportunities. The school-based education program is frequently scheduled out for the entire school year by September or October, and the Public Information Office provides monthly workshops on a variety of topics tailored to a variety of interested civic groups, as well as providing education and outreach to improve system operations and minimize emergencies or service interruption.

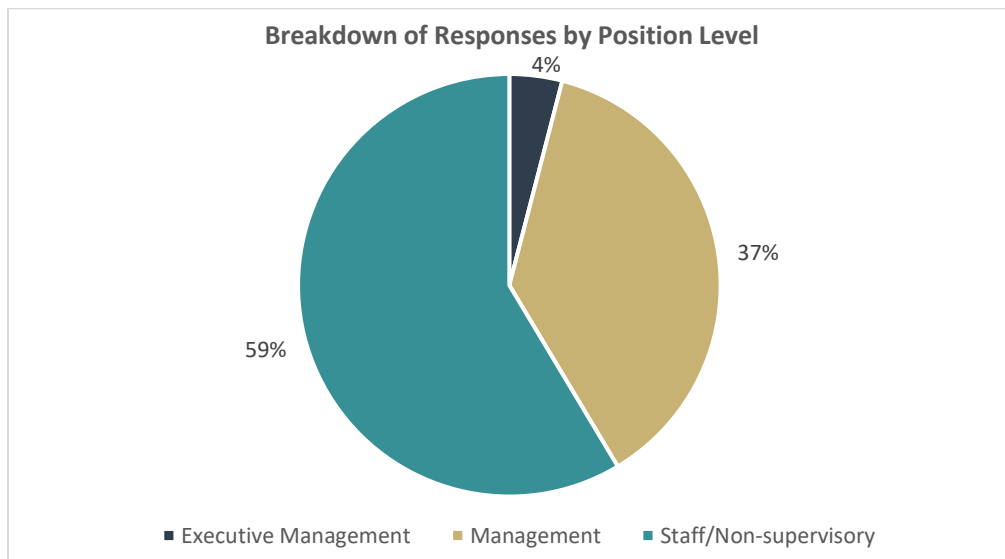
Staff have a lot of pride in the work that they do and are committed to going above and beyond to ensure that they are providing the highest quality services to customers with minimal disruption or impacts. With some of the challenges in hiring and retaining quality staff, and some of the staffing levels, many of the Facility Maintenance and Field Operations staff are working a lot of overtime and serving in frequent on-call rotations. These crews may work an emergency during an on-call shift, and then turn around and come back to work during regularly scheduled hours. These employees take pride in what they do, and want to represent the County well.

Within the County, DWR is also a fairly large customer for many of the County’s internal service departments, such as IT, Finance, and HR. DWR feels stymied in its ability to provide quality customer service based on some of the interactions with these departments. As a utility, DWR is charged with a significant public health mission, in providing clean drinking water and effectively treating wastewater. Time is of the essence within DWR, and delays in hiring, procurement, access to parts or supplies, etc. all have a material impact on DWR’s ability to meet its mission and protect public health. Many staff in the Department feel that the County doesn’t fully appreciate the weight of this mission, and how important timely responses are to achieving this mission. Staff described the relationship with internal services as bureaucratic and reactive, where DWR, as a utility, must be proactive and solution-oriented.

### Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

One hundred and ninety-eight responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 29%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level.



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

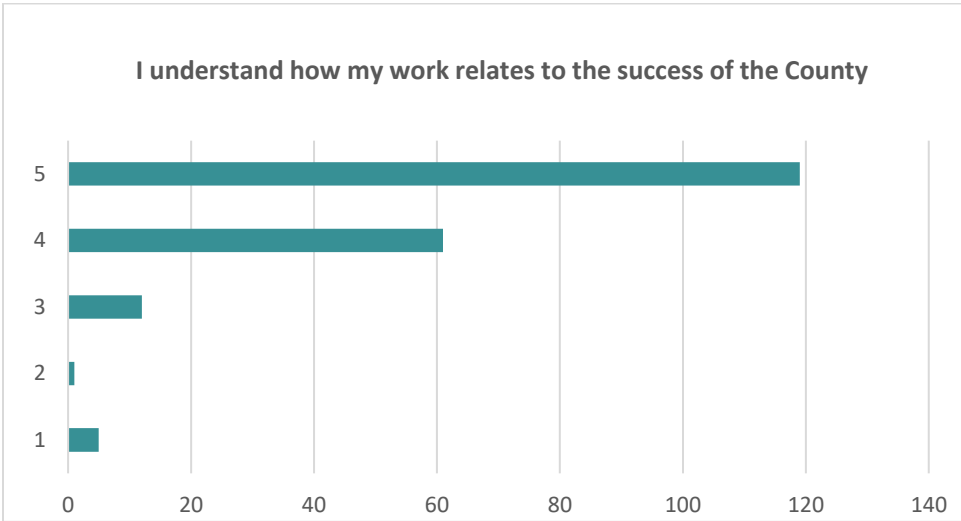
The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

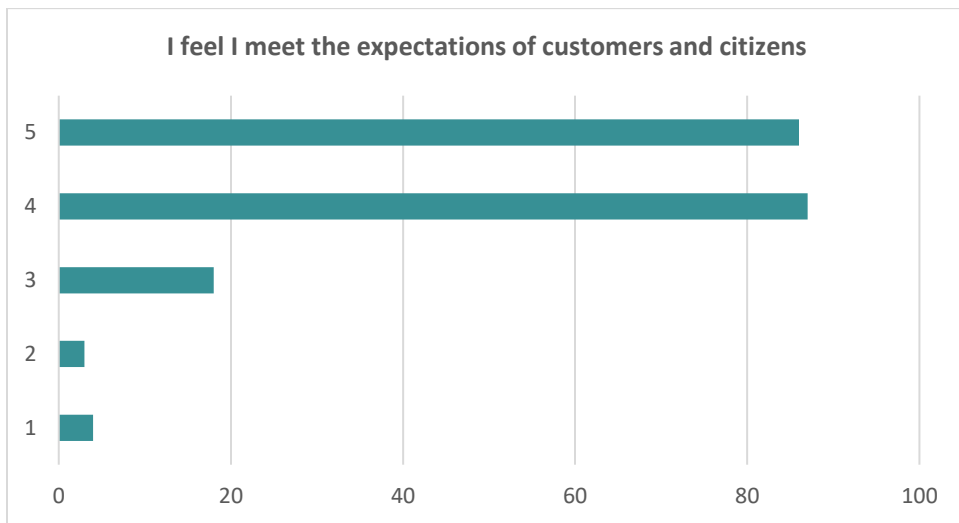
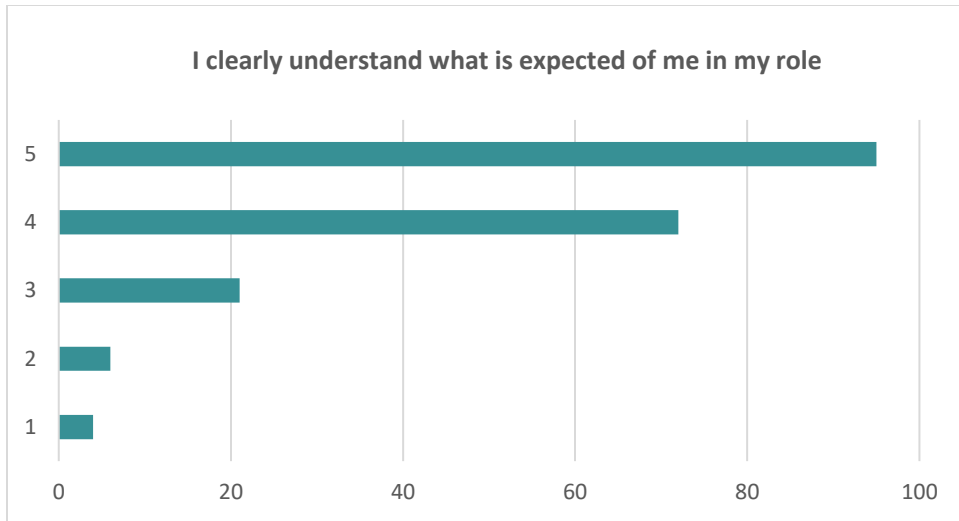
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**



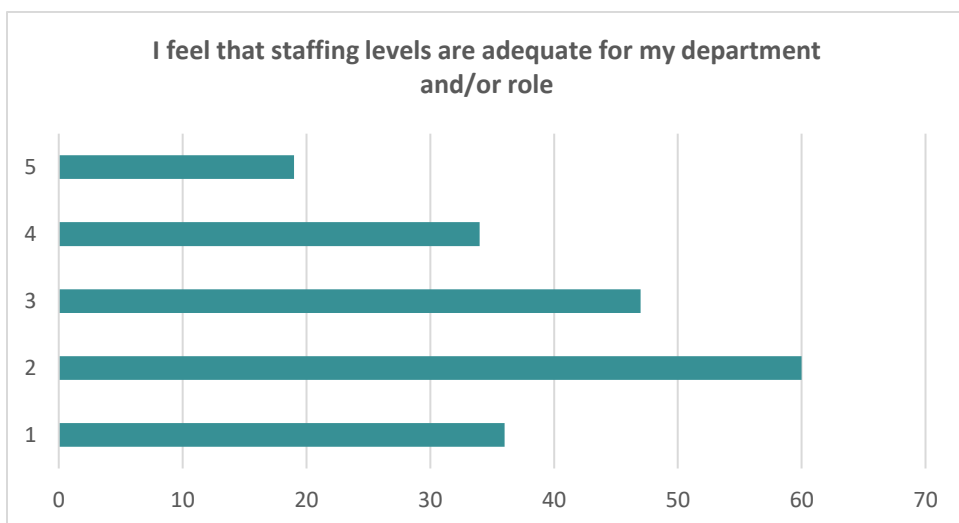
Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.8
I understand my mission and vision of my department	4.2
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.5
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.3
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	4.0
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.5
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.3
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.7
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.9
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.6
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.6
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.2
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.8
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.0
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.7
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.5
I am proud to work for the County	4.2
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.0

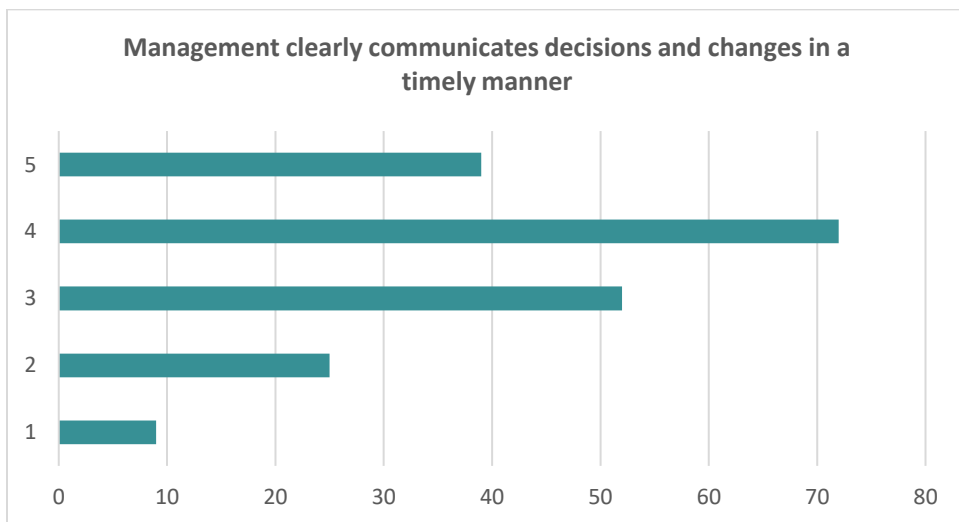
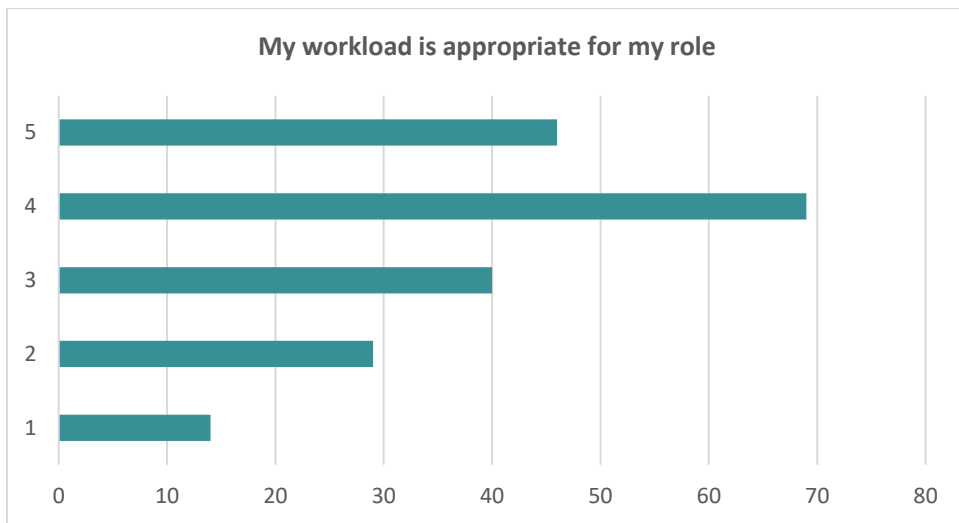
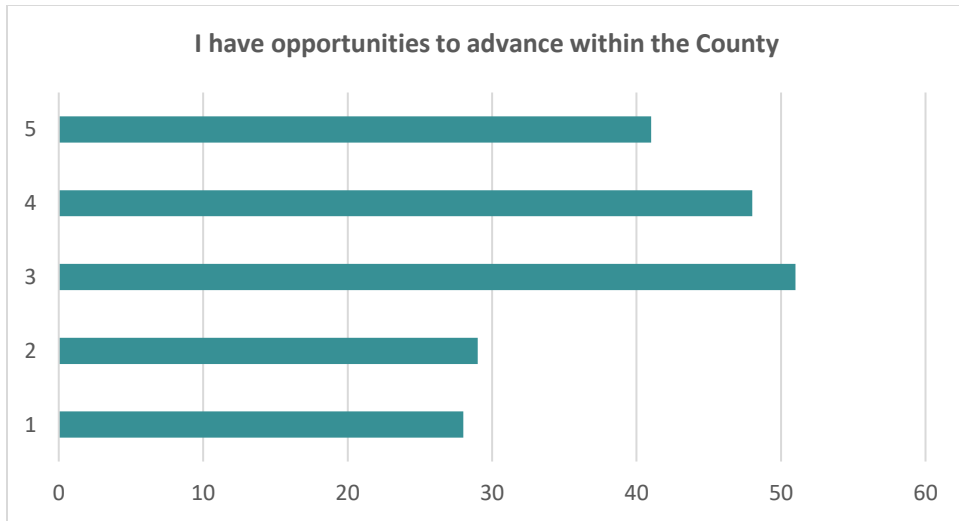
The average score for all the survey statements is 3.8. The lowest score is 2.7 and the highest score is 4.5. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs, with two sets of responses tied for third-lowest score:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified a collaborative, dedicated workforce as the Department's greatest strength. Employees indicated collective and individual pride in providing high-quality services to Gwinnett County residents.
- The respondents indicated three communications concerns within the Department. First, respondents suggested not all messages trickle down successfully from Departmental leadership to all employees at every level and location. While some respondents acknowledged an improvement in top-down communications, inconsistencies due to schedules, locations, and middle management still exist.

The second communications concern stemmed from the belief that issues, ideas, and messages are not being communicated by entry-level staff all the way up to Departmental leadership. Respondents suggested management does not consistently convey communications up the chain.

The third communications concern related to communications among the divisions. Respondents cautioned that processes, activities, and projects relevant to multiple divisions within the Department are not accurately communicated among divisions with consistency or timeliness.

- Respondents cited concerns with staffing levels due to vacancy issues. Due in part to the fact that compensation is not competitive with the private sector, respondents felt the Department struggles to fill vacant positions, resulting in uneven workloads for current staff.
- In addition to vacancy issues, respondents also saw allocation of positions by employee level as a cause for uneven workloads. Respondents believed the Department has a disproportional number of middle management positions in comparison to frontline positions.
- According to respondents, some areas of the Department lack adequate buy-in for change within the Department. Respondents suggested the lack of buy-in stems from a combination of resistance to change and inadequate explanation of why changes are necessary or beneficial.
- As previously mentioned, respondents noted pride in the Department's high-quality services. However, respondents also noted recognition exists primarily at the Department-level, while the individuals of the Department are not recognized for their efforts and dedication.
- Respondents recommended better utilization of data. The Department tracks numerous data points and metrics, according to respondents, but either does not fully utilize these data assets or is unable to effectively utilize these data assets due to the aforementioned staffing levels.

## 3.B.1 Department of Water Resources – Business and Staff Services

Business and Staff Services provides many of the support and administrative functions for the rest of the Department of Water Resources.

### Key Functions

The Business and Staff Services Division is responsible for the following key functions:

- Customer Billing and Payment Processing
- Financial and Budget Management
- IT Support – Systems and Technology
- Safety and Security Management
- Employee Training
- Human Resources
- Contract Support

DWR also processes a large volume of Open Records Requests – predominantly related to liens, etc. associated with delinquent water accounts. Customer Care estimates that, in 2021, they averaged more than 100 requests a day.

### Customer Billing and Payment Processing:

Nearly all initial customer billing, payment processing, and customer service support is provided by the Customer Care Division. This Division is housed at the Central Facility and does not currently offer any work-from-home or flexible shift opportunities.

The Billing Unit within the Customer Care Division is responsible for issuing approximately 12,000 invoices each day across 20 different billing portions, or billing cycles. Invoices are processed for all commercial, residential, rental customers, as well as long-term fire hydrant rental customers. Currently, customers' bills are generated based on reading the total water consumption tracked on the water meter, and then determining the most recent period's usage. For all but a small handful of commercial customers, meters are physically read by a contractor, Bermex, who enters the meter reading on a handheld device. Nightly, meter reads are uploaded into SAP in a file for bill generation.

Daily, a report is generated with potential meter reading exceptions, including zero reads and exceptionally high reads relative to the most recent read. Customer Service Associate IIIs (CSA IIIs) in the Billing Unit proactively review these reports for completeness, accuracy, and any potential misreads or high reads. The CSA IIIs can request meter re-reads if necessary, but many of the Bermex meter reading staff will upload pictures of the outlier reading to document the correctness of the reading. This Unit uploads the files for final billing and transmission to customer. Customers may elect to receive either physical or electronic bills.

CSA IIIs will also proactively reach out to customers who have exceptionally high bills to provide them notice about the upcoming bill, and to provide information about potential issues that may be causing the usage increase. The staff are not technically trained to provide support in diagnosing leaks, and may need to refer the customers to have technicians come provide assistance if the customer cannot determine if the leak is on the customer or County's side of the meter. The CSA IIIs will also make notes in the CRM about the potentially high bill, in case a customer reaches out to the Customer Service units.

Once bills have been processed, the Billing Unit also has a technical team that reviews invoices that have been generated and transmitted to customers and reviews the invoices against the pending auto-payment amount to confirm that there are no issues with the files and that there have not been issues with meters being crossed between addresses. The technical team also serves as a liaison between the Field Operations Division crews and Bermex, as well as liaising with Residential and Commercial Customer Service CSAs in support of move outs or new customer requests that require meter locks, one-off meter reads to set new usage baselines, or other similar coordinated requests.

Customers can elect to pay via ACH edraft, send in check payments, call the CSAs on the Customer Service Unit, or pay in-person in the Department lobby or through the drive-thru window.

Customer Service Unit CSAs are typically assigned as either commercial or residential/rental representatives, providing response to phone and email-based customer requests. The Customer Care Division currently uses Cisco Finesse as the phone system. Cisco Finesse does not offer many automated service offerings to callers, meaning that all calls are directed to a CSA in one of the Units for resolution. The Customer Care Division will be implementing Five9, a cloud-based contact center software that will provide more automated options and allow customers to look up owed amounts and pay bills through the automated prompts, rather than requiring them to speak with a CSA if they don't want or need that level of support.

Customer Service Unit CSAs provide a variety of services including processing bill payments over the phone, looking up service issues, processing move-in/move-out requests, etc. To process payments received over the phone, the CSAs use iNovah to capture the payment information. The Customer Service Unit can also assist with certain one-time bill adjustments, requests for re-reads that are associated with leaks or other high reads with documented resolution. The Division has a formula for determining the adjustment amount the customer is eligible to receive. DWR currently allows up to two months of adjustment within a twelve-month period.

The Customer Service Unit spends a lot of time on courtesy calls to remind customers of upcoming deadlines where meters may be locked due to non-payment. Currently this is all phone-based, and many customers do not answer the phone, requiring voicemails and/or callbacks to be scheduled. The Department does not currently offer app-based or text-based communications.

The Cash Management Unit staffs the front lobby and the drive-thru, as well as processing all mail payments, permit requests, and issuing all commercial meters. Currently there is only one employee assigned to coordinate with Planning and Development for permit issuance and commercial meter purchases.

The Cash Management Unit may need to coordinate with the Customer Service Unit representatives for certain research and account inquiries, especially for commercial accounts.

The Cash Management Unit is also responsible for balancing daily all water bill, hydrant rental, permit-related purchase, and other Customer Case payments. This includes cash reconciliation, check reconciliation, autodrafts, ebill payments, and other payments. The Cash Management Unit is the only unit that can accept cash or check payments. There is a physical safe in the cash area where the Unit stores petty cash to make change as well as all front counter staff cash drawers at the end of each day. Cash drawers are randomly assigned daily to ensure that no CSA receives the same drawer each day. All cash drawers must be balanced three times a day.

Customer Care has recently introduced a Customer Service Advocate position, to provide more support for customers and provide a better customer experience through a customer experience workgroup.

To ensure quality customer service and support, the Customer Care Division also has a Quality and Training Unit. Due to the turnover across the department, as well as staffing turnover within that Unit, the focus has primarily been on training for new hires, with minimal time for refresher or other continuing training.

Quality Assurance (“QA”) includes live listening and recorded call reviews. The Unit’s CSAs have a set of standard criteria/behaviors to evaluate the call against, to ensure that customer service quality is consistent and information provided is accurate. There are specific quality forms for calls, the front counter, and the drive-thru window, lead agents, or managers. Currently, the cameras focused on the front counter and the drive-thru do not capture audio, so evaluation of CSAs working in these areas is solely based on live listening.

The Quality and Training Unit’s goal is to assess eight calls per agent per month, when staffing allows. Currently, there is no agent survey that allows the CSAs to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and support provided to them.

As staff become more settled and tenured, the Unit hopes to include more continuing education opportunities, such as more empathy training. The County also makes LinkedIn Learning available to all employees. The QA and Training team will also be responsible for developing and administering training for system updates and new technologies and these technologies are rolled out.

### Financial and Budget Management

The Finance Division is divided into four teams that provide financial and budget management and support for end-user divisions.

The Operating Unit oversees P-Cards, shopping cart confirmations, etc. for non-capital budgets within the Department. Each end-user division has administrative staff that are responsible for creating the shopping carts, then the Operations Unit BSAs review and approve the shopping carts. All carts under \$3,000 are approved by the Unit’s Business Manager. If the purchase is over \$3,000 it must also be approved by the Division Director.

For invoice approvals and payment processing, the Unit uses Lucity for invoice review, approval, and routing for payment. Initial requests are submitted by the end-user division with the appropriate signatures and supporting documentation. The end-user division is also responsible for uploading the invoice into FileNet. Unit staff review and confirm for payment or send back in Lucity if there are missing or inadequate details. If the invoice payment request is complete and accurate, then go to FileNet and approve it for payment.

The Capital Unit is responsible for managing the capital budgets (including bond budgets) and all capital expenditures. They approve all capital shopping carts, manage the budgets and initial any capital budget transfers, process all capital invoices, and settle and track all assets. This team coordinates agenda items related to capital budgets. This Unit is also responsible for coordinating all capital budget tracking in Management Framework.

The Revenue and Reporting Unit coordinates reporting around consumption as well as data and reconciliation for the state annual report. The Revenue and Reporting Unit also coordinates and compiles the data from other end-user divisions for the non-revenue water reporting. This Unit is also the final review and reconciliation point for revenue coming into the Department, including revenue from System Development Charges, revenue due from intergovernmental agreements, and other special revenues.

Most of the reporting duties require significant reliance on other internal divisions as well as other Gwinnett County departments to ensure consistent, timely, accurate reporting. For internal reporting, there are no formal workflows for submission and validation of data – much of it is shared via email or physically brought to the Unit. Unit members may query SAP for much of the data, but also have to access other Gwinnett County Department systems, such as Accela in Planning and Development or Aumentum in the Tax Commissioner’s Office, to aggregate all required data.

The Revenue and Reporting Unit also serves in an internal audit type role, performing cycle count audits for warehouse inventory, and P-Card audits for end-user divisions to ensure that all processes are being performed as designed.

#### IT Support – Systems and Technology

The Systems and Technology Unit serves as an internal IT support function for DWR. The Unit liaises with Gwinnett County’s Information Technology Systems (“ITS”) Department as needed, and work orders for Systems and Technology flow through Remedyforce, the County’s IT work order system. Systems and Technology Unit staff serve as initial troubleshooting and break-fix supporting, escalating to ITS as needed. There is also a User Tester in the Unit that specifically supports Customer Care on the CRM and SAP side. This Unit also has several contractors who support SAP.

The Unit also coordinates with ITS around change management and rolling out system upgrades, transitions, and migrations, as appropriate. ITS holds change management meetings every Tuesday, with decision-making usually completed by the end of the day Wednesday, allowing minimal time for the Systems and Technology Unit to engage the end-users and review the proposed change management documentation. Currently, there is also not a consistent assessment of proposed change impact.

The Systems and Technology Unit also serves on an internal DWR committee to review any proposed new technology, application, or system before it is submitted to ITS or the County’s Office of Strategic Excellence (“OSE”) for review and recommendation to fund. This committee reviews the proposal to ensure that the business case and need are well-documented and justify the request, and that DWR doesn’t already have any software or applications that may meet the needs of the requesting group.

The Unit provides vendor management and vendor liaison for IT software or application contracts managed by the department.



The Planning Manager oversees all software acquisition, ensuring that the appropriate procurement processes are followed, and managing licenses and renewal timelines.

End-user divisions and units are responsible for designating internal product owners who typically support the day-to-day functions of the software, such as the Plant Engineering Division within Facility Operations and the Programs Analyst III within the Field Operations Division. There are not always formal documented guidelines for what each Unit will be responsible for, which may cause some confusion for staff around which team should be engaged to assist with an issue, as well as inconsistencies for which types of issues generate Systems and Technology work orders, versus those resolved by the internal product owners.

The Systems and Technology Unit may also be responsible for deploying and administering certain department-wide applications and systems, such as Webex, as well as some small, user-limited applications, such as PCSWMM, a stormwater modeling software.

### Safety and Security Management

The Safety Officers are responsible for overseeing safety and assessing the facilities across DWR including the plants, pump stations, booster stations, etc. The Safety Officers coordinate with field services, facilities, project managers for construction projects, and contractor project management to ensure a safe working environment through regular assessments of facilities, worksites, data, and standard operating procedures.

The Safety Officers currently uses the IAuditor reporting system to document facility condition and other safety assessments. Safety Officers can also do pop-in reports for field technician and contractor safety on worksites. The Safety Officers assess each site's compliance with all OSHA and Gwinnett County workplace safety standards. There are annual assessments as well as randomized assessments throughout the year. The annual assessments also include a security review component.

Annual assessments begin with a meeting with the section or division manager, as appropriate, to outline the plan and the process for conducting the assessment. Once the assessment is complete, the Safety Officer follows up with the manager to discuss the results and offer recommendations and assistance for resolving any concerns or issues.

Staff in the Plant Engineering Division of Facility Operations send weekly reports with contractor project updates. They may also provide project plans that are reviewed to determine if there are specific safety areas of concern that need to be addressed in the planning process. These typically include the use of scaffolding, lifts, tie-offs, respiratory systems, etc. Contractor project management staff have also started to provide regular updates about job status and job hazard analysis plans to the Safety Unit. The Safety Officers review the plan of approach, proposed equipment, and asks other questions about the process to ensure it is a fully documented and planned out prior to work initiation.

The Construction Manager II – Safety, oversees Security for the Department and is responsible for managing the security systems and facility badge access and overseeing all facility security cameras, including troubleshooting and problem resolution. The Construction Manager II – Safety is also responsible for gate management. Gates are typically on a set schedule that can be modified as needed. Facility staff are typically responsible for gate entry.

The camera software currently utilized has an embedded player in all downloaded files, which means that camera footage can be shared with all relevant individuals, rather than limiting it to those who have the playback software. Currently the Department has a standard retention policy of approximately two months, although the system allows for specific periods or footage to be extracted and stored separately to avoid loss.

Currently, all workplace incidents and occupational injuries are reported through paper-based forms. The Department also has a Safety Committee with representation from each Department area. The Safety Committee hosts monthly meetings that include a “Safety Minute” reminder or discussion around a safety topic that may be timely or relevant to recent trends, reports from the Safety Officers, and discussion of any incidents to determine if there are policy, people, culture, or standard operating procedure changes that need to be considered. There is also a separate formal Review Board for incident review and determination of any potential discipline. To ensure a neutral and consistent assessment process, this Review Board has developed a matrix to assign points to each incident to each incident to assist in determining the appropriate disciplinary response.

### Employee Training

The Training Unit is responsible for developing and administering most of the training for Department employees, including both mandatory and optional training, as well as forklift and flagger training through leadership and safety training. The Unit has developed more than 60 programs internally, many with both live and on-demand components. For other training, the Unit partners with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and Gwinnett Technical College to provide leadership and supervisory training.

The Training Unit works with end-user divisions to understand their training needs and identifies or develops appropriate training curriculum in collaboration with division-level subject matter experts. The Unit is leveraging in-house photography and videography to develop many courses, and leverages external expertise for animation and voice-over work. All newly developed content must be reviewed and approved by the Communications Department to ensure consistency with branding standards.

All training is hosted and tracked through an LMS that has been designed to work with SAP, to ensure that trainings are tracked through Employee Self-Service and that all employees are aware of their required training and any upcoming deadlines. The Unit is responsible for coordinating with other divisions in the tracking of more than 55 types of licenses required throughout the Department. The Unit can enter training classes and create libraries within SAP of all available training courses or units. For positions with required coursework or licensure, their required coursework is attached to the position number in SAP, to ensure that the correct licenses and training are associated with each unique position. The Unit uses uPerform to host all trainings, which is a proprietary system that does not consistently coordinate with SAP. uPerform also has limitations on file types, which prevents the unit from developing more versatile, interactive courses.

## Human Resources

Business and Staff Services also has an internal Human Resource (HR) Unit to support recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts throughout the Department. The Unit consists of three full-time permanent staff, including the Project Coordinator who oversees the Unit. There is not a dedicated recruiter within the Unit. Each of the two Administrative Support Associate IIIs (internally referred to as HR Liaisons) is assigned certain end-user divisions or facilities to assist in processing all HR transactions, including requests to hire, coordinating candidate interviews, drafting the offer documents, promotions, transfers, and separations. Liaisons are also responsible for assisting in drafting the justification memos that are required to support many HR functions. These memos are required by the Gwinnett County Human Resources Department to accompany many requests, including requests to promote and requests to transfer. Given the current workload and movement of staff within DWR, the Project Coordinator is heavily supporting this function, instead of serving in a strategic oversight role. This Unit is also responsible for ensuring the completeness and accuracy of position control, which reflects which divisions, sections, units, and teams have vacancies, and ensuring that the vacancies reflect the correct position level.

This Unit is also responsible for coordinating the internal onboarding and offboarding process, including ensuring the new hires are enrolled in the appropriate new hire training and ensuring the correct workspace, equipment and supplies are available on their first day.

The Unit has also worked to ensure a more proactive employee engagement and relations function, including both employee morale events as well as support and guidance to managers and supervisors. Much of this role has fallen to the Project Coordinator due to lack of staff time to support these functions elsewhere within the Unit.

## Contract Support

The Financial Division includes the Project Controls Unit, which is responsible for administering the Department's two largest contracts: the on-call contract for emergency and emergent work, and the demand services contract for engineering, inspections, and project management. This Unit coordinates rebidding this work as contracts end and supports the engineers and project managers by coordinating collection and review of all contractor paperwork, coordinating with other County Departments, such as Support Services, Planning and Development, and Law, as well as Atlas – the County vendor that supports easements. This group also reviews all easements in-progress to ensure that the effort is on schedule and that the County is not overpaying for the access.

## Communications

Overall, the Divisions and Units within Business and Staff Services has strong internal communications; many units are holding weekly or monthly team meetings, as appropriate for their key business functions and processes, and are using email and Teams for updates, quick meetings, and general conversation about work product and workload.

The Customer Care Division Supervisors also have daily standup meetings to discuss themes, trends, or other timely issues.

Weekly, the Billing Unit meets to discuss process and any potential changes, and to incorporate their concerns, recommendations and feedback into the change management process.

Several of the divisions and units noted some challenges in engaging with other divisions within DWR, or receiving timely updates or information. Some of this may be attributed to the lack of systems or workflows to encourage inter-divisional collaboration, as well as manual workflows that may not always be timely. There is a perception within the Business and Staff Services Division that as they are not directly engaged in service delivery, they are often an afterthought in discussions around business process improvement or change management within some of the other operational divisions.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Customer Care Division is working to provide a broad variety of ways to interact with customers – including phone, email, and in-person customer service. The Division also uses Lionbridge, a live translation service, as well as having employees who speak a variety of languages common within Gwinnett County.

Many groups within the Business and Staff Services Division have worked to create full standard operational guidance at the division, unit, and individual role level. Divisions with staff available are working towards more cross-training, although these efforts are currently limited due to staffing issues and high turnover in several of the units.

These staffing limitations are also impacting the ability of Division and Unit management to act in a strategic manner. Many supervisors, section managers, and division directors are also required to perform in day-to-day functions to ensure all key business processes are completed, so while there are strategic ideas, there isn't the time or staffing available to support implementation.

HR hopes to implement a succession planning initiative, but has not had the staff to move forward. Additionally, the County plans to implement a succession planning tool, so the HR Unit is waiting for additional guidance from the County to ensure that efforts coincide with the County tool rollout.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the County's ERP. It is used for a variety of financial functions, including the modules used for purchasing and P-Card reconciliation. Meter reads are uploaded into SAP to generate customer bills.

### CRM

The CRM, or customer relationship management system associated with SAP, is used by the Customer Care Division to track customer accounts, including payment status. It integrates with iNovah to accept card payments made over the phone.

### Lucity

The Customer Care Division uses Lucity for certain customer requests, such as dye tests or meter repairs. Finance uses Lucity for invoice processing.

### Remedyforce

Remedyforce is the County ITS Department's helpdesk management system. End-users can submit tickets through Remedyforce that will be forwarded to members of the System and Technology Group to provide initial support to DWR employees.

## LMS

To distribute and track employee training, the County uses a custom Learning Management System (“LMS”) integrated with SAP. Training staff can assign training courses to position numbers in SAP to assign and track employee training requirements. The Training Unit included their LMS requirements in the vendor specifications for the new ERP and are hopeful that they will be able to replace their current LMS with the County’s new ERP system.

## uPerform

uPerform is a digital learning and support platform for content creation and storage. The Training Group has developed over 60 training programs. uPerform is used for content creation. It was reported that UPerform is difficult and is limited in its ability to develop multi-course programs that auto-advance and track progress within the lesson sequence.

## Data and Performance Analysis

As each of the divisions within the Business and Staff Services Division have different functional responsibilities, it is challenging to analyze data at the Business and Staff Services Division level. Overall, much of the collected data is focused more on workload and outputs currently.

## Customer Care

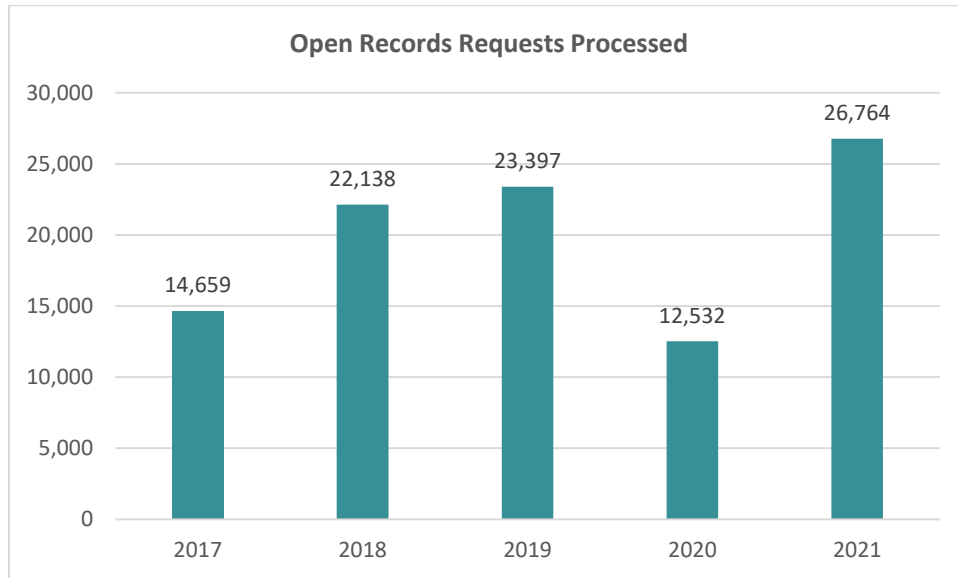
Cash Management tracks a number of data points, with each employee tracking weekly data points and submitting them to the Unit’s CSA III for monitoring.

Cash Management data points are customized by employee to ensure an accurate depiction of the workload for each employee. Some of the data points captured include:

- Leak adjustments processed by type (residential or rental)
  - Tracked by in-person customer service or email-based service
- New service
- Payment research
- Open records requests
- Fire hydrant rental requests
- Permits processed by permit type (building, one-stop, fire hydrant, etc.)
- Liens filed
- Refunds processed
- Chargebacks
- Bankruptcies
- Credit card expiration contact
- High bill questions/customer assistance

This data is incredibly detailed and should continue to be leveraged to ensure that the Five9 system prompts continue to reflect the most in-demand service requests that can be assisted without a representative’s support. This data may also be valuable in ensuring that staff are receiving the correct training based on the high volume of types of work performed. It may also be valuable in ensuring the right allocation of staff amongst all the tasks.

One of the Cash Management data points being tracked is number of open records requests processed. Over the past five years, the number of requests processed annually has nearly doubled. Given the increase in demand, the team has shifted one employee to primarily processing these requests.



Cisco Finesse also collects large volumes of data on each CSA, including time spent on calls, abandonment rates, and speed of answer.

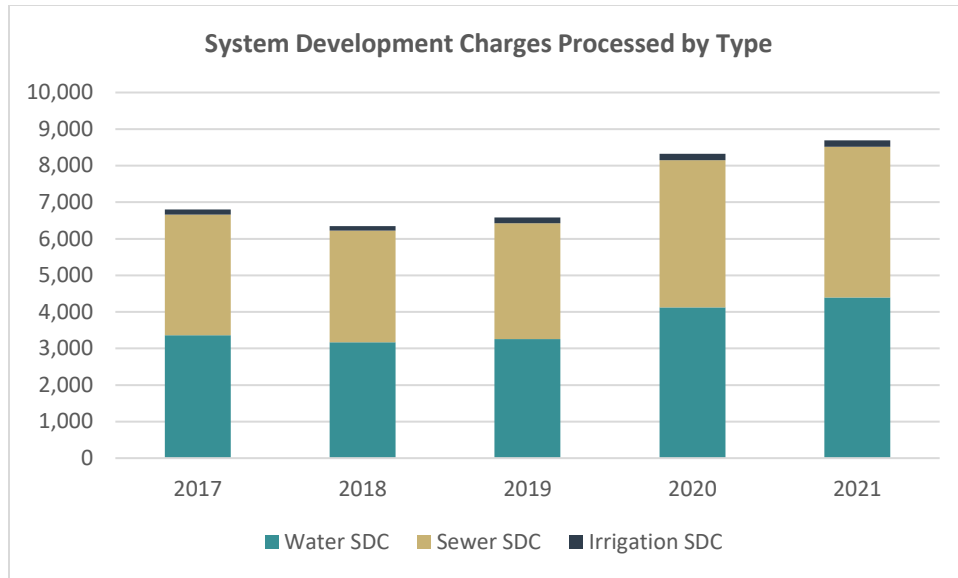
As the Customer Care Division moves to Five9, they should continue to capture data on the calls that come in based on call type, time of day, length of call, etc. If the Division does move towards alternate shift schedules or telework, this data should be leveraged to ensure coverage matches peak demand periods.

### Finance

For the Financial Division, a variety of data measures are tracked to understand workload and outputs.

For the Capital and Operating units, invoices processed in 30 days or less is an indicator of efficiency. For the last five years, these units, combined, processed approximately 83% of all invoices in one month or less.

For the Revenue and Reporting Unit, the number of System Development Charges, or SDCs, processed annually has risen nearly 28% over the past five years, as noted in the following chart.



### Safety and Security

Safety data tracking can be a challenge, as successful safety programs often result in reduced data points. The Safety Unit does not currently consistently analyze the effectiveness of their efforts, including reporting decreased incidents over time or other impacts. Much of this data is being maintained by the Department, but staff do not have the time available to consistently analyze the data for impact of training and awareness efforts.

### Systems and Technology

The Systems and Technology Division is utilizing Jira for internal tracking of time and work effort, and provides some data on work effort and the proactive maintenance and management efforts of the Division. It can also be used by the contractors in the Division, allowing for broader insight into time and effort tracking.

The Division uses Remedy Force, the County’s IT helpdesk system. This system is owned and maintained by ITS, so the Division doesn’t really utilize it to track metrics or response rates. Additionally, many Department staff traditionally called or stopped by the Division’s space in the Central Facility to request help, instead of submitting help desk tickets. While the Division has recently moved to a sign-in process to ensure they can capture all of the assistance and support provided, this is a newer initiative so previous data that is available doesn’t provide a complete picture.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Customer Care Division does not offer telework or alternative shift assignments, such as four 10-hour days. Many of the staff are primarily providing phone-based customer service and support.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider expanding the current telework policy to allow CSAs with strong quality assurance scores and adequate tenure to telework. The Division should also consider offering flexible shifts, such as four 10-hour days, to incentivize retention and assist in recruitment. This shift to 10-hour days may also provide additional customer flexibility to receive assistance outside of traditional business hours.

**Observation 2:** The Department does not currently have web-based account access for water customers, nor does the Customer Care Division have the capability to send customers text-based updates on account status or payment deadlines.

**Recommendation 2:** The County is currently procuring a new ERP, which is the system responsible for many of the water billing and payment process functionalities. As the County works towards implementing the new ERP, it should coordinate with the Department of Water Resources to make available web-based account queries and other more modern options. If the ERP does not offer these functionalities, the Department should consider conducting a feasibility study to determine if there are bolt-on or other products that may provide these customer-focused options in conjunction with the new ERP.

**Observation 3:** The Quality and Training Unit within the Customer Care Division has been unable to do much continuing education and refresher training due in part to staffing limitations as well as the need to ensure newly hired CSAs receive appropriate initial training. Additionally, the Quality and Training Unit has been unable to develop more customized assessment tools for the front counter, team leads, or the drive-thru.

**Recommendation 3:** The Quality and Training Unit should work with the Safety and Training Division to develop and record trainings that could be made available on-demand to provide reminder or refresher training to CSAs.

**Observation 4:** The drive-thru window and front counter areas have cameras that capture all activity in those two areas, but these cameras do not have audio feeds, which may create issues if customers and CSAs provide varying versions of interactions.

Additionally, the lack of video feed means that quality reviews of staff assigned to those areas are live listening, which may impact how the CSA handles the customer interaction.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider replacing the cameras in the front counter and drive-thru areas with cameras that also record audio. These camera feeds can also be used to conduct quality assurance reviews of staff in these areas.

**Observation 5:** Much of the data that the Revenue and Reporting Unit compiles for reporting is submitted informally, through either email or physical submission to the Unit. Additionally, the information may not always be timely or complete, requiring back-and-forth interactions between the Unit and the end-user division or other Gwinnett County Departments responsible for the data.

**Recommendation 5:** The Unit should organize a workgroup to develop more automated data capture and submission processes. This workgroup should include the end-users responsible for submitting the data as well as product owners for the systems that generate the data, to determine if there are more automated processes for generating the needed data. The Facility Operations Division is working to fully utilize Centralpoint. As Facility Operations expands its utilization, this may be a potential solution that could be expanded to collect more of the needed data, and serve as a workflow tool that assists in automating and tracking all data points in a single space. If Centralpoint doesn't provide the needed functionality, SharePoint may also provide some automated workflows, with messages generated each reporting period nudging end-users to upload and submit the requested data.



**Observation 6:** Currently, all workplace incidents and occupational injuries are recorded on paper forms so that the Department can maintain a copy of the reported incident, as the information submitted through HR forms are not made available to the Department.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should work with HR to receive copies (redacted, as appropriate) of all workplace incidents and occupational injuries reported. This information should be standardized and also used to assess the effectiveness of workplace safety training and other initiatives implemented by the Safety Officers.

**Observation 7:** The Human Resources Unit does not have a dedicated recruiter to support hiring efforts throughout the Department. Given the current workload of the Unit, the staff do not have the time to act strategically towards recruitment and retention efforts.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should consider adding a recruiting-focused position to the Unit. This position should spend time with all divisions to fully understand the vacant positions to ensure qualified candidates are applying to open positions. Once the Department's vacancies stabilize, this position can be shifted towards more retention and employee-moral efforts.

## 3.B.2 Department of Water Resources – Engineering and Construction

The Engineering and Construction Division (“E&C” or “Division”) manages the design and construction of capital improvements to the County’s water, wastewater, and stormwater systems as well as water production and water reclamation facilities. E&C inspects the construction of water, sewer, and stormwater systems for capital projects and new development. The Division is divided between the Linear and Vertical assets for design and construction management.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Project Design Management
- Project Construction Management

### Project Design Management

DWR’s “Emerging CIP” is a process in which all the relevant domains with the Water Resources Department gathers monthly to discuss new capital projects with each group providing domain-specific expertise. E&C is actively involved in the Emerging CIP process to provide design and construction insight and considerations for each new potential capital project. As projects move forward from the Emerging CIP meetings, the Technical Services Division creates “Project Scoping Reports” which provides approximately 30% project design for projects approved to move forward in the process. E&C is responsible for reviewing and approving the Project Scoping Reports and then (if approved) the coordination and management of the design process through final design before construction can begin. Projects are assigned to either the E&C Linear Division or the Vertical Division based on the asset classification for each project.

E&C maintains a list of prequalified engineering firms that were selected to be “on-call” engineers through a competitive procurement process. The contract allows for the “on-call” engineers to be prequalified in different domain areas relevant to DWR. Either E&C Linear or Vertical Division leadership assigns new project work to one of the “on-call” engineering firms based on current workload of other assignments and relevant experience/qualifications. Current assigned design work is tracked through the use of a spreadsheet and is used to help assess workload.

After selecting/assigning an engineering consultant for design work, E&C staff hold meetings with the consultant to review the Project Scoping Report, visit and walk the future construction site, and locate existing utilities – all information that assists the consultant in designing the project with hopefully minimal changes during design and construction. E&C staff also conduct regular “Plan Reviews” with the consultant to discuss the design work completed to-date at approximately 30-60%, 90%, and 100% design completion. E&C also involves the Field Operations Division in meetings to seek insight from an operational perspective.

The consultants end work product is a final design which consists of detailed documentation with all requirements and specifications needed for construction vendors to construct the project. E&C reviews and approves (if satisfied) the final design documentation.

E&C leverages its Engineer positions to manage the consultants and to provide continuous review and feedback throughout the design process. The engineering firms provide varying quality of work and there is not a formal mechanism for E&C staff to provide formal feedback and evaluation that results in impacting the project assignment process.

Once the final design work is approved and the project is approved for construction, the procurement process begins to procure a contractor.

### Project Construction Management

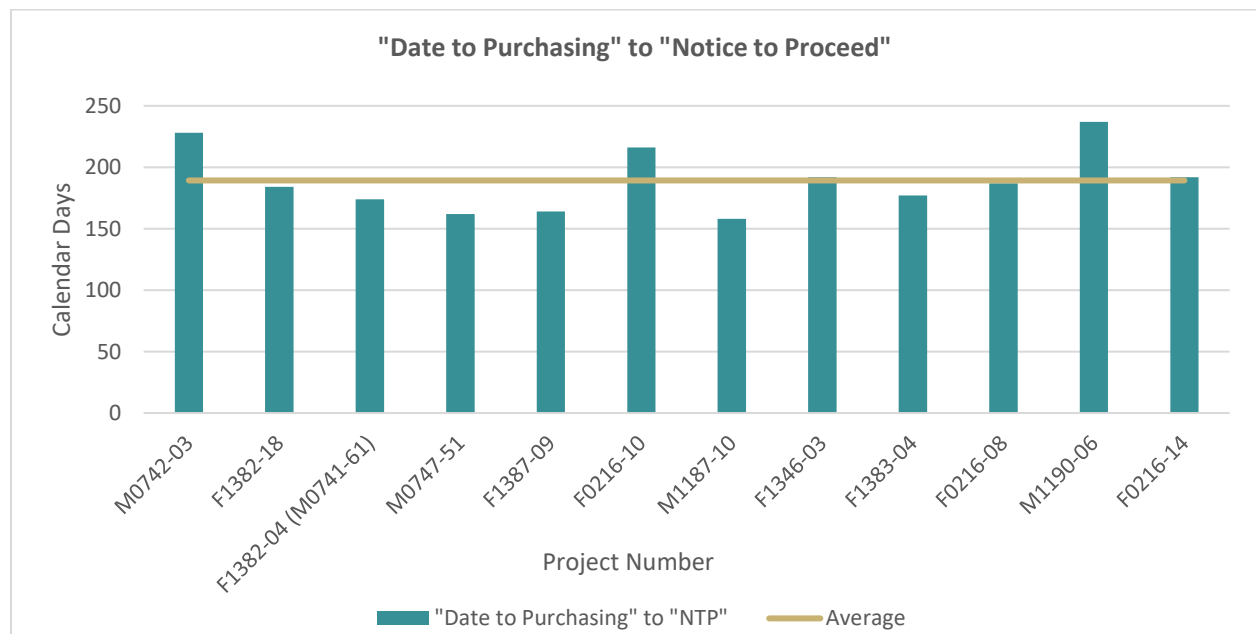
E&C is involved in initiating the construction procurement and managing the selected contractor through project completion.

#### Procurement

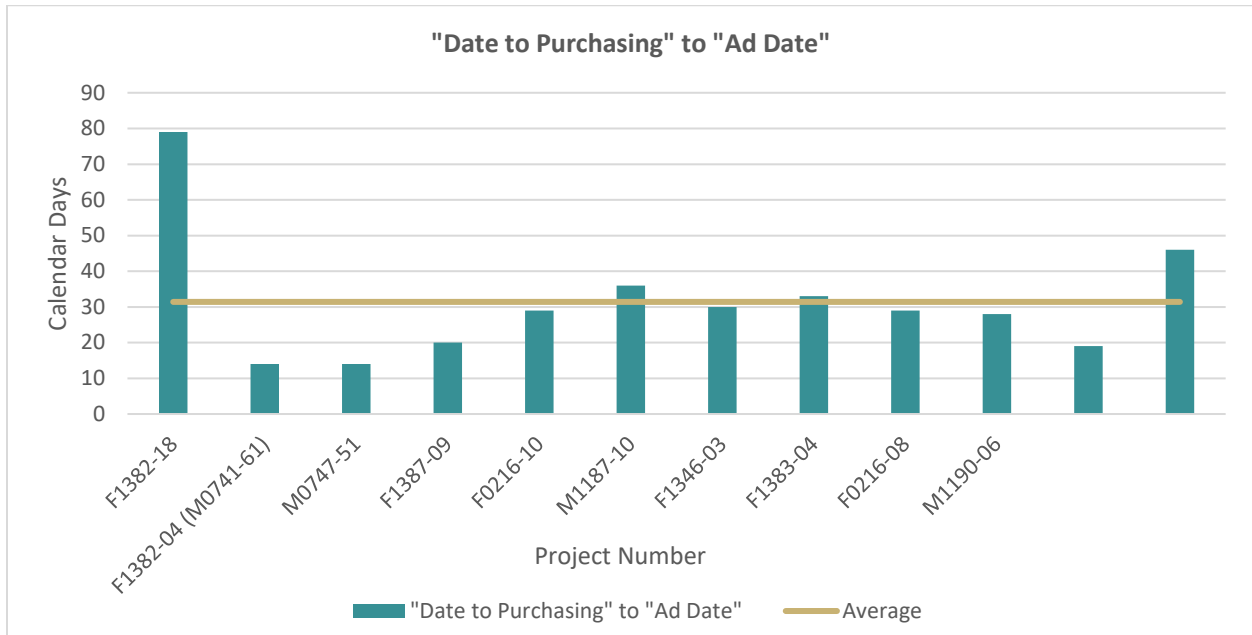
Once the project’s final design is complete, E&C leverages the final design documents to solicit construction vendors. E&C provides all the final design documents to the County’s Purchasing Division for managing the procurement process. Contractor solicitations are evaluated by the County Purchasing Division for completeness and the lowest responsive contractor is awarded the work.

It was noted during multiple interviews that the County’s Purchasing Division is not timely with its process for managing E&C’s capital procurements. The following charts show various data points (based on data provided by E&C for project procurements completed between April 2021 and April 2022) for various lengths of various stages in the procurement lifecycle.

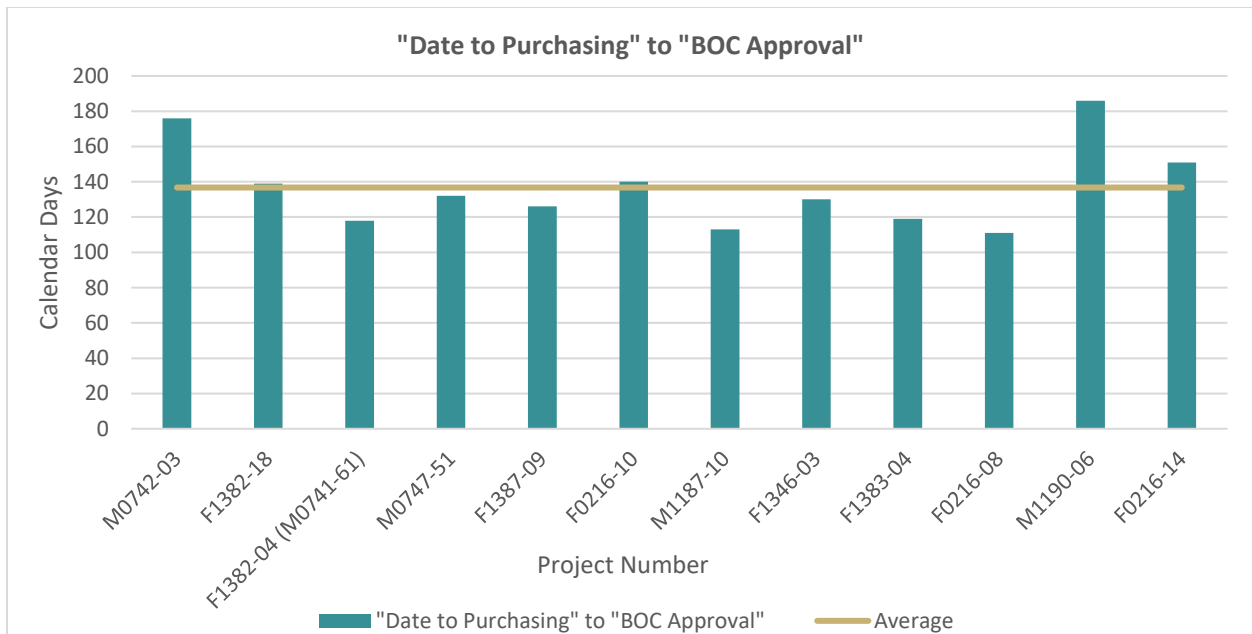
The following chart shows the number of calendar days from “Date to Purchasing” to “Notice to Proceed.” The “Date to Purchasing” is the date when E&C provided the capital project documentation to the County’s Purchasing Division. The average number of days is 189.25 days. The shortest length is 158 days, and the longest length is 237 days.



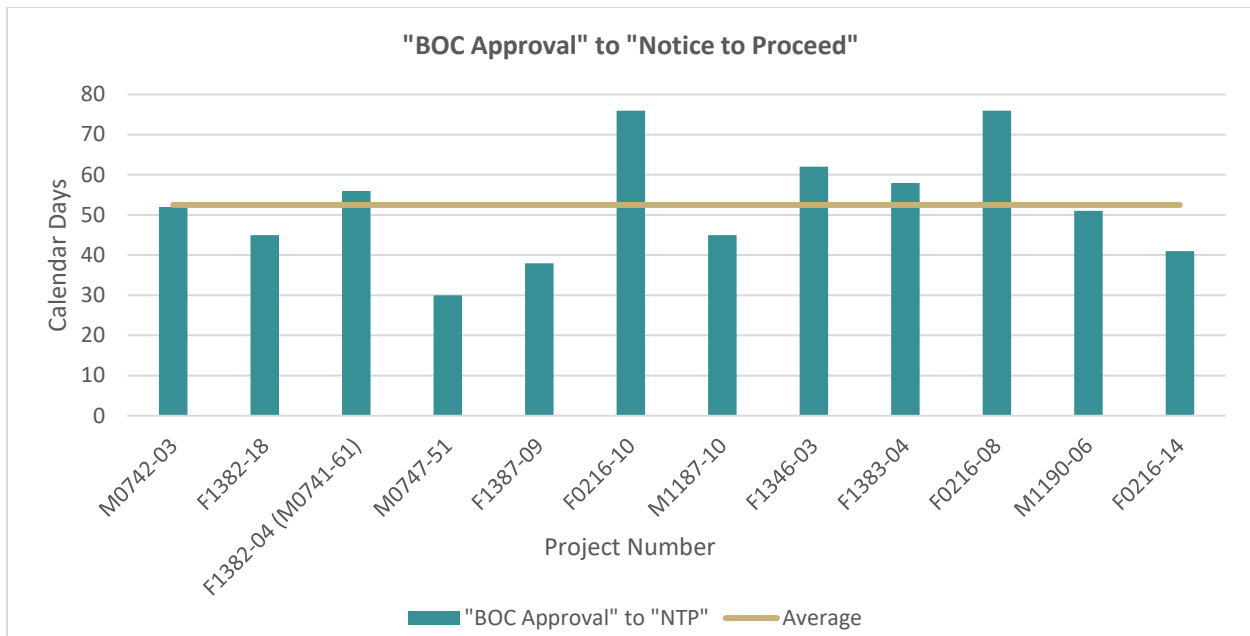
Breaking down various stages of the procurement lifecycle, the following chart shows the days from “Date to Purchasing” to “Ad Date” which is the date of the procurement advertisement. The average number of days is 31.42. The shortest length is 14 days, and the longest length is 79 days.



The following chart shows the days from “Date to Purchasing” to “BOC Approval.” The average number of days is 136.75 days. The shortest length is 111 days, and the longest length is 186 days.



The following chart shows the days from “BOC Approval” to “Notice to Proceed.” The average number of days is 52.5 days. The shortest length is 30 days, and the longest length is 76 days.



### Project Management

Once a contractor is awarded the work (based on the lowest responsive response) and a NTP is issued, E&C staff begin providing contractor oversight and project management. Projects are added to the Division’s “CIP Tracker.” The CIP Tracker is a Microsoft Project tool used by E&C to manage capital construction project funding and is housed on the Department’s sharepoint portal. Scheduling and milestones are not tracked in the CIP Tracker. The Division is currently engaged with an engineering consultant to enhance the capabilities and scope of the CIP Tracker.

E&C Construction Manager and Contract Inspector positions provide project construction management/oversight. Each construction manager is responsible for approximately three to five active construction projects at a given time. There is not a formal project management system used by the Division, so each construction manager leverages excel to manage the construction lifecycle.

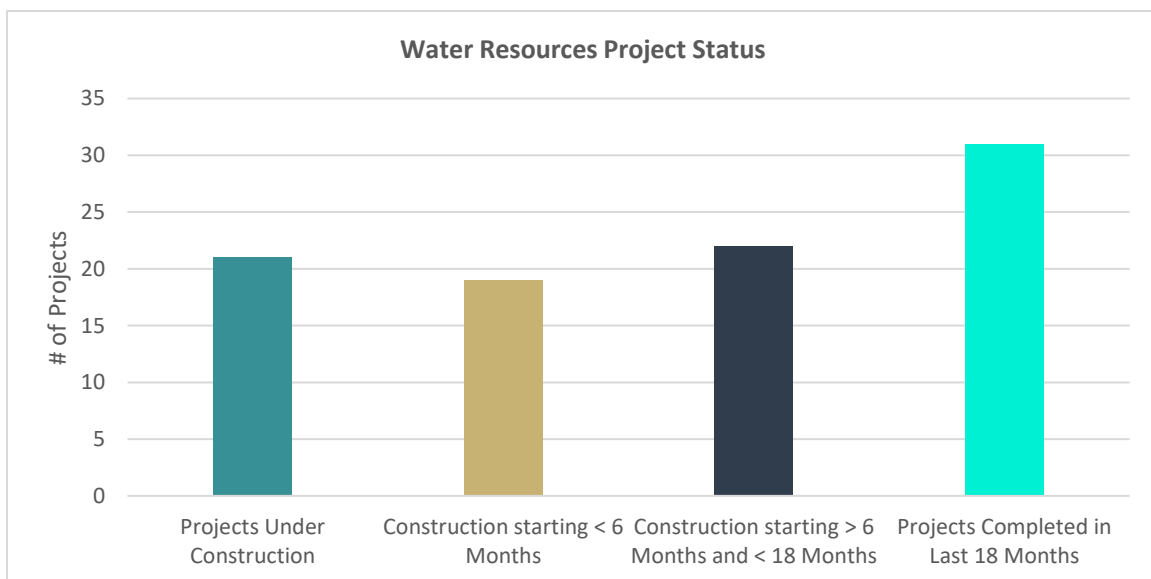
Lucity is used for managing periodic inspections and other work for active construction projects, and Accela is used to manage the passing of inspections. Accela is the County’s permit management system and is heavily used by the County Planning and Development Department. E&C staff enter inspection information into Accela and manage the process for permit inspections. Lucity and Accela are not integrated and there is duplicate manual entry being performed by E&C staff.

E&C Construction Manager and Contract Inspector positions typically come into the office early in the morning to obtain job assignments for the day and to pick up issued County vehicles. Current policy does not allow the Construction Manager and Contract Inspector positions to take vehicles home. While in the field, HP tablets are used for accessing the necessary management systems and tools to perform fieldwork.

During fieldwork, the Construction Manager and Contract Inspector positions are performing site visits, reviewing plans, assessing completion to-date, and assessing the work for quality and regulatory compliance. Work progress is noted in Lucity and any noted issues are discussed with the construction contractor.

E&C manages the capital construction projects through completion of the project which includes passing all required inspections and obtaining all required permits, testing the performance of the new assets, and obtaining the formal operating manuals. E&C then turns over the new asset to the applicable DWR division for operations and ongoing maintenance.

E&C does a good job in providing the public with timely capital project information related to current, upcoming, and recently completed DWR capital projects through the Department's internet pages. Each project within the previously mentioned categories is shown with interactive GIS viewing and project details. For active projects and upcoming projects, the scope, expected benefit, estimated construction dates, and impacts to the citizens/stakeholders are provided (road closures). For completed projects, the scope, benefit/outcome, and completed construction dates are provided. As shown in the following chart, the Department has 21 capital projects currently under construction, 19 projects set to begin construction in six months or less, 22 projects set to begin construction between six and 18 months, and 31 projects completed within the past 18 months.



## Communications

The Division demonstrates good communications and collaboration with other divisions within DWR in terms of project design. During various Departmental interviews, it was noted that at times certain individuals act more like an additional layer of bureaucracy when managing construction projects and are just passing information along from contractors as opposed to proactively managing the projects and predicting risks with relevant mitigation strategies. E&C should develop an internal scorecard specific to project management attributes (not just project attributes) that demonstrate the value of the E&C project management function in both quantitative and qualitative forms. This information should be communicated internally and to the public to further demonstrate the value of the E&C project management function and to provide a measurement tool to assess effectiveness among E&C project management professionals.

The Division should be commended for its transparency and usefulness to the public regarding current, planned, and completed capital construction projects.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Engineering and Construction Division is currently leveraging an engineering consultant to enhance the usefulness and effectiveness of the CIP Tracker. The Division also has done a good job in providing information to the public regarding current, planned, and completed capital construction projects.

## Systems and Applications

- Lucy is used for managing periodic inspections and other work for active construction projects
- Accela is used to manage the permit process
- CIP Tracker is a Microsoft Project tool used to track capital project funding

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Formal forms exist for E&C staff to provide feedback on the on-call engineering firms for design work, however, there is a perception that the feedback is not considered much when assigning new design work.

**Recommendation 1:** Formal feedback regarding the performance of engineering design consultants should be discussed among the Division's leadership, and if agreed to in consensus, discussions with the engineering consultant and future work assignment implications should occur and be documented.

**Observation 2:** The procurement lifecycle is lengthy and time traditionally equals money when procuring the construction of large capital projects.

**Recommendation 2:** Standard procurement service level agreements ("SLAs") should be considered by County leadership for the County's Purchasing Department (and other internal service functions) to ensure procurement lifecycle expectations are consistent. Procurement policies and procedures may need to be evaluated and adjusted. Additional resources may also be needed.

**Observation 3:** Construction firms provide varying quality of work and County policy dictates that the selected construction vendor is based on responding to the County's requested items/requirements in the RFP, and lowest bid (price).

**Recommendation 3:** The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the "Gwinnett Standard" and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a "successful project."

**Observation 4A:** The CIP Tracker manages capital project funding and not scheduling.

**Observation 4B:** Project Managers do not use a formal and consistent system/tool for project management.

**Recommendation 4:** As the Division is currently in the process of enhancing the CIP Tracker, it should be enhanced to wholistically provide necessary and consistent project management tools for all the Division's capital construction projects. If the CIP Tracker cannot be leveraged as a formal project management tool, the updates to the CIP Tracker should continue, and the Division should explore purchasing a formal project management system.

**Observation 5:** Current policy prohibits the Construction Manager and Contract Inspection positions from taking home County-issued vehicles. Staff travel to the office to obtain work assignments and vehicles for the day. Depending on the work/route assignments, much time can be wasted traveling through the County while starting each day and returning to the office at the end of the day.

**Recommendation 5:** County leadership should further evaluate the current policy not allowing Construction Manager and Contract Inspection positions to take home County-issued vehicles. If all variables are considered and it is decided to allow certain E&C positions to take home County-issued vehicles, the process for assigning work/routes should be primarily performed late in the day for the next day's work.



## 3.B.3 Department of Water Resources – Facility Operations

Facility Operations is responsible for maintaining all of the vertical assets within the County – which includes the water production facilities, including tanks and boosters, as well as the water reclamation facilities, which include pumpstations.

Almost all of the staff working in the facilities and supporting assets are exposed to hazards on a regular basis. All of the plants use chemicals on a daily basis, and wastewater poses additional health exposure concerns, such as splash risks and exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Pumpstation maintenance is often performed solo, and can include interacting with high voltage electricity to troubleshoot problems. The Department has implemented a lot of safety standards well above OSHA and EPA industry expectations, but these efforts only mitigate and do not eliminate the risks that these employees face on a daily basis.

### Key Functions

Facility Operations is responsible for the following key functions:

- Water Production Facility Operations
- Water Reclamation Facility Operations
- Maintenance Planning and Scheduling
- Predictive Maintenance
- Water Production Asset Maintenance
- Water Reclamation Asset Maintenance
- Pump Station Operations and Maintenance
- Asset and Information System Support
- Contract Management and Oversight
- General Facility and Grounds Maintenance

### Water Production Facility Operations

The water production facilities are responsible for producing all of the potable water distributed to customers throughout Gwinnett County. There are two water production plants: Shoal Creek and Lanier. Both plants are situated on fairly high elevations to leverage gravity to distribute the water, with the use of tanks and boosters for additional distribution support. Tanks are organized into subzones, and each subzone must be maintained to a certain fill level at all times to ensure water is available on demand for all customers. The Department is considering a move to DMAs, or district metered areas, which would increase the number of zones throughout the County and increase the monitoring requirements to ensure all tanks are maintaining appropriate fill levels.

Water Technicians, also known as Operators, and Shift Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the consistent operations of the system, including monitoring and managing system pressure levels. All Operators must have Water Treatment Plant Operator licenses. There are several levels of licensure. Shift Supervisors are working members of the shift, sharing equally in the workload.

Operators' responsibilities include water quality monitoring, walk-throughs of operations, monitoring pressure and flows throughout the system, taking samples to test for clarity, turbidity, and phosphate and fluoride levels, among others, every hour on the hour. If there are asset issues noted, Operators may create Maximo work orders to notify maintenance of the need for corrective maintenance.

Operators also coordinate between the two plants to ensure that someone is always monitoring SCADA data on the tanks and boosters and coordinating with maintenance staff, as needed for any process adjustments or maintenance needs. Operators may also be tasked with monitoring the facility security gate and communicate with visitors, vendors, and contractors requesting access.

The Lanier Filter Plant also has onsite facility responsible for residual, or waste processing. This facility processes the waste and residuals that are filtered out during the cleaning and disinfecting process. Currently there is only one staff permanently assigned to this role. The plant is using staff leadership to support and provide safety supervision when available, but the operator is often left alone in the residuals processing building.

Operators are organized into crews of three, with two day shifts and two night shifts rotating every four days. Operators use eLogger to document operations conditions during the shift, including changes made during shifts, such as revisions in process control or chemical levels. There are also changeover meetings to discuss any information of note, or any major changes made during the most recent shift.

The Water Production Facility operations shifts are staffed to perfection, leaving minimal room for more proactive and preventive inspections. Three is the minimum that can perform all of the required processes each shift, and can create problems if there are issues that require an all hands on deck response, as the SCADA system must be monitored at all times. This can also create challenges in ensuring that adequate time is available to support staff development and training needs.

The water plants have "floater" Operator positions to assist in supporting absences on shifts, but position vacancies and extended leave periods for some positions have resulted in the floater Operators used in semi-permanent capacities.

Each plant also has a Plant Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the plant. Plant Managers are also responsible for coordinating production between the two plants to ensure the production and distribution of water meets the County's needs. Gwinnett County has the capacity to produce well above current demand levels, which means that a facility can be taken offline temporarily for maintenance needs without impacting customer service.

Plant Managers are also responsible for ordering and stocking chemicals and serving as shift and Operator oversight, including approving time and leave requests as well as employee evaluations.

Plant Managers can also create cleaning-related preventive maintenance work orders in Maximo and may observe Operators in the performance of duties and ensure that processes are operating as designed.

Plant Superintendents typically serve as the official Operator in Charge, a designation required by the State of Georgia and requires certain licensure levels. All monthly reporting is submitted to Georgia EPD in the Operator in Charge's name.

Due to lack of onsite representation from Engineering and Construction's project management staff, Plant Superintendents and Plant Managers often serve in informal onsite project management capacities, overseeing contractors and providing support and assistance as needed.

### Water Reclamation Facility Operations

Gwinnett County's water reclamation facilities are responsible for treating wastewater to state and federal standards for cleanliness, and releasing the treated water in compliance with authorized release schedules and locations. There are three wastewater plants in the County: F Wayne Hill, Yellow River, and Crooked Creek. Wastewater is sent to the facilities using a blend of gravity and force main lines, which are maintained by Field Operations. Pump Stations help pump the wastewater through those lines and back to the facilities.

Wastewater Technicians, also known as Operators, and Shift Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the consistent operations of the system, including monitoring and managing system pressure levels. All Operators must have Water Treatment Plant Operator licenses. There are several levels of licensure. Shift Supervisors are working members of each shift, responsible for an equal share of the workload.

Training to become fully functional in all of the different buildings and steps in the wastewater treatment process takes time. Staff estimate it can take more than six months for staff to become familiar with all of the steps, processes, and assets involved in the process, and may take up to two years to become proficient in the full process. As each one of the three plants operates differently and has different levels of technology and process, this proficiency doesn't always translate from one plant to another.

Operators' responsibilities include water quality monitoring, walk-throughs of operations, monitoring pressure and flows throughout the system, taking samples to test the treated water, and adjusting processes based on data. Operators typically are assigned a portion of the overall operations and can rotate through the assignments. Typically splits of roles can include geographic splits, role-based splits (*e.g.*, samples and PLC efforts in the lab) or other divisions based on available staff and shift-specific needs or concerns. If there are asset issues noted, Operators may create Maximo work orders to notify maintenance of the need for corrective maintenance.

Operators are organized into crews of three, with two day shifts and two night shifts rotating every four days. F. Wayne Hill Plant's two day shifts have five and six operators, respectively. Operators use logbooks, either physical or electronic to document changes made during shifts, such as revisions in process control or chemical levels, so that the Superintendent, Plant Manager, and Shift Supervisor all have that information going into the next shift. Most of this information is also captured in Maximo as notes, when relevant, with the work order number referenced in the logbooks.

Water treatment facility operations shifts are staffed to perfection, leaving minimal room for more proactive and preventive inspections. Three is the minimum that can perform all of the required processes each shift, and can create problems if there are issues that require an all hands on deck response, as the SCADA system should be monitored at all times. This can also create challenges in ensuring that adequate time is available to support staff development and training needs, as it may be challenging for staff to not only provide training support and meet all of the needed tasks and monitoring for each shift. Currently, the wastewater plants do not have floater Operator positions to supplement short-staffed shifts.

Each plant also has a Plant Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the plant. F. Wayne Hill has two Plant Managers, with duties split into liquids and solids handling processes.

Plant Managers are also responsible for ordering and stocking chemicals and serving as shift and Operator oversight, including approving time and leave requests as well as employee evaluations.

Plant Managers can also create cleaning-related preventive maintenance work orders in Maximo and may observe Operators in the performance of duties and ensure that processes are operating as designed.

Plant Superintendents typically serve as the official Operator in Charge, a designation required by the State of Georgia and requires certain licensure levels. All monthly reporting is submitted to Georgia EPD in the Operator in Charge's name.

Due to lack of onsite representation from Engineering and Construction's project management staff, Plant Superintendents and Plant Managers often serve in informal onsite project management capacities, overseeing contractors and providing support and assistance as needed.

Because Yellow River and Crooked Creek share an Administrative Associate, other plant staff must fill in to monitor the gates for vendor, contractor, and visitor access requests, as well as support other time-sensitive tasks that would normally be supported by the Administrative Associate.

### Maintenance Planning and Scheduling

Maintenance Planning and Scheduling is performed by the Planner/Scheduler Unit within the Plant Engineering Division. The Planner/Schedulers Unit is led by a Trades Coordinator and staffed with five Planner/Schedulers. Currently, only one Planner/Scheduler is assigned to F. Wayne Hill, one is assigned Yellow River, one is assigned Crooked Creek, one is assigned all pump stations, with the fifth responsible for both water production plants along with all tanks and boosters associated with water distribution.

Planner/Schedulers can create schedules for work to be performed by maintenance staff, operations staff, and/or contractors.

The Planner/Schedulers are responsible for reviewing the preventive maintenance schedules in Maximo and writing the weekly schedules for the maintenance staff in their assigned plant or area. Maximo is able to automatically generate work orders for preventive maintenance that has been entered into Maximo with a set schedule or sequence; other work orders must be manually created.

The Planner/Schedulers are using excel as an initial maintenance scheduling tool. All needed maintenance is tracked in an excel spreadsheet that is reviewed weekly to determine which preventive maintenance is needed based on timeline and priority of needed service. The Planner/Scheduler leverages resource calendars provided by Division leadership to understand the crews available to perform the work.

Once the work orders are entered into Maximo for the scheduled work, the Planner/Schedulers then write the schedule by the responsible craft, such as mechanics, electricians, or external vendors. The goal is to schedule for 100% of the available time for the assigned facility. This may be hindered by lack of communications around upcoming trainings, scheduled leave, or other changes in staff availability.

There is no formal communications process or review of inventory available in the warehouses to ensure needed parts and materials are available for the scheduled work, nor are there advanced review or work beyond the week being scheduled.

Each plant operates differently and has different assets, including whether certain responsibilities are assigned Operators or maintenance staff, so the Planner/Scheduler has to learn those specific assets and maintenance requirements for that plant and functional responsibility alignments for that plant.

### Predictive Maintenance

The Predictive Maintenance Section is responsible for a series of processes that collect and analyze data to better understand future preventive and corrective maintenance needs before there are failures or shutdowns.

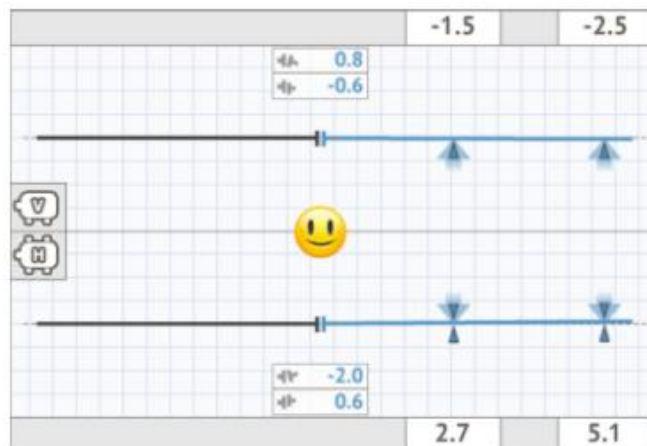
The Unit's Trades Technicians can use vibration collection to assess bearings in equipment and infrared thermography to detect temperature waves or higher than average temperature readings. Currently, Facility Operations does not have automated vibration collection sensors integrated into the SCADA system, so Technicians must capture all data. Ultrasound can be used to detect air leaks as well as initial condition assessments.

The Section also uses unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, for physical plant inspection, such as when inspecting the cooling water pumps installed at the Central Facility.

There are two Program Analyst positions that are responsible for analyzing the vibration data that is collected by the team. There is often a delay between data collection and review and analysis. The analysts develop weekly reports based on the facility testing schedule. The analysts are not only analyzing the individual results from each test, but also tracking monthly vibration collections and analyzing the data for trends and looking to identify potential faults in bearings or other equipment issues before an asset fails.

These reports include a summary analysis result, a current severity level, and a recommendation as well as the data collected during the assessment.

Other assessment types also generate reports, such as the alignments. These reports depict the pump dimensions, current measurements, and a graphical representation of the alignment level, as shown in the following sample.



Thermography reports include images illustrating exactly which valves, fittings, bearings, or other connections are of concern as well as data on the fault, probable cause, and recommended action.

The Section is working to ensure that all Technicians are certified in all of the utilized technologies, to ensure adequate cross-training.

Vibration collection is scheduled by each facility's Planner/Scheduler, with a calendar set up so that all of the facilities are assessed regularly.

Other assessment types are scheduled based on the results of the vibration collection and other data collection trends. Ad hoc assessments may also be requested by plant leadership. All of these assessments are scheduled by the Section Manager.

This Section is also often asked to support special projects, such as using infrared thermography to assess the installation of the new VFD drives at F. Wayne Hill. This Section is also frequently asked for drone photography by other County Departments.

Much of the planning and data collection is documented in Microsoft Access. There are some informal efforts to build out driving routes, as well as transform the current processes into more robust programs, but current staffing level and workload prevents this from being more of a priority.

### Water Production Asset Maintenance

Water Production Maintenance is responsible for maintaining all of the assets within the water production plants, plus assets such as tanks and boosters that facilitate system distribution.

Mechanical and electrical Trades Technicians are organized into plant-based groupings, with staff housed at each plant. There is also a group assigned to the tanks and boosters.

For the SCADA/Process Control Associates, there is a Process Control Associate and Trades Technician assigned to each plant, with one assigned to support the tanks and boosters. These staff are responsible for managing and maintaining the instrumentation in the facilities, including flow meters, level indicators, and communications-related equipment or sensors for SCADA.

Water production asset maintenance includes preventive maintenance, which is typically coordinated and scheduled through the Plant Engineering Division Planner/Scheduler Unit. Preventive maintenance may include mechanical maintenance, including oil and filter changes, electrical maintenance, and process control maintenance, such as calibration, sensor maintenance, programming, and replacement.

The Section is also responsible for corrective maintenance for assets in the water production and distribution system. Corrective maintenance work orders may be generated through preventive maintenance inspections, predictive maintenance analysis, or identified and requested by operational staff.

If needed corrective maintenance is identified during a preventive maintenance work order, the Trades Technician can generate a new work order to document the corrective maintenance. Corrective maintenance and preventive maintenance must be entered on two separate work orders. Work orders must also be unique to each asset, so if work on one asset identifies needed maintenance on another asset, a separate work order must be created to document the additional maintenance performed on each asset.

The maintenance workload can be challenging as the plants are aging. Current staffing levels have left staff feeling unable to get to all of the work orders, or create challenges in managing workload if additional maintenance needs are discovered while working on an asset. Predictive maintenance assessments have proven incredibly valuable in helping prioritize the available hours. The Department is doing a good job of managing and planning for upgrades and renovations, but these can take time and additional support during transition periods. Once complete, these upgrades will require additional training and support to ensure the Section can provide all of the needed maintenance. The scheduled transition from chlorine gas to sodium hypochlorite generation for water treatment will create new demand and require mechanics to become familiar with a new system.

### Water Reclamation Asset Maintenance

Water reclamation maintenance is responsible for maintaining all of the assets within the water reclamation plants.

Maintenance units are organized by facility, with two units assigned to F. Wayne Hill. Trades Technicians are organized into electrical, mechanical, and SCADA/process control-related maintenance.

There are two Process Control Associate and Trades Technicians crews assigned to support instrumentation. Instrumentation staff are shared between Yellow River and Crooked Creek, which can cause response time and work order prioritization concerns. While the two plants are only 15 miles apart, it can take upwards of 45 minutes to traverse the county during periods of heavy traffic.

Water reclamation asset maintenance includes preventive maintenance, which is typically managed and scheduled by the Plant Engineering Division Planner/Scheduler Unit. Maintenance staff review the assigned work orders and then review warehouse inventories to ensure that they will have access to the needed parts and materials for the assigned work.

All three facilities are all designed and operate very differently, which can create challenges when the workload is imbalanced, as Trades Technicians from one site don't have familiarity with the other facilities and can't be as effective in helping out if needed. Currently, the Section is leveraging instrumentation staff to assist in managing the maintenance workload at the facilities.

The different trades groups are also staffed to perfection. Yellow River and Crooked Creek each only have one electrical Trades Technician. This may require them to either work by themselves, or use other Trades Technicians without specific electrical maintenance knowledge to assist in completing work orders. Additionally, this means that the electrician Trades Technician is functionally always on-call, as other staff don't have the expertise to complete some of the needed maintenance.

### Pump Station Operations and Maintenance

The Pump Stations Section within the Facilities Maintenance Division is responsible for overseeing all of the wastewater pumpstations across the County. The County currently has approximately 210 pump stations that require operational support and regular maintenance.

The Section is divided into five units; two units support regular preventive check-ins on all pumpstations, based on geographically assigned routes. These crews, which are led by a Trades Coordinator and staffed by seven Trades Technicians, are responsible for ensuring regular and efficient operations across the pumpstations, as well as all preventive maintenance. They regularly inspect each pump station, and will address any small maintenance needs while on site, if able. If not, they coordinate entering a work order to ensure the corrective maintenance is performed.

The goal is to maintain a seven-day rotation, so that all sites are reviewed every seven days. This schedule includes monthly in-depth station checks and cleaning.

One unit is responsible for all electrical maintenance and large-scale repair work. This may include performing the work, or overseeing contractors who are responsible for the repair work. This unit has one mechanical and one electrical team that address work orders created by the units assigned to regular pump station reviews and preventive maintenance. The electrical team also has an electrical preventive maintenance route, to ensure that each station is reviewed for electrical maintenance needs at least once annually.

One unit oversees the approximately 650 air release valves (“ARVs”) throughout the County, as well as maintaining chemical balances and odor control at the larger pumpstations. The ARVs are focused on routine inspections and preventive maintenance, and can shift to corrective maintenance if a need is identified. The odor control crew has a routine of regular station checks, as well as responsibility for corrective maintenance for odor control that may be identified during a preventive maintenance station check.

This Section also has a unit managed by a Process Control Associate who oversees three Trades Technicians. This crew is responsible for SCADA instrumentation and telemetry across the pump stations, coordinating in updating processes, replacing sensors, and providing other maintenance and repairs as needed.

Most Trades Technicians work independently, unless the scheduled work for the day requires additional assistance, such as pulling the pumps out of the station for additional maintenance or inspection. Pump Station Trades Technicians often work in isolated areas, and are also working in hazardous conditions, frequently exposed to both physical and health safety concerns.

Trades Coordinators are also responsible for overseeing contractors who are used for a variety of servicing and maintenance tasks, such as servicing and load bank testing the generators and pump replacement or significant repairs.

Pump station operations are monitored using the SCADA system, which tracks pressure levels and water levels throughout the pumpstations and can sound alarms if levels are outside of operating norms. Dispatchers within Field Maintenance can radio the Trades Technicians with any alarms in the system.

Regular annual maintenance is typically scheduled by the assigned Planner/Scheduler in the Plant Engineering Division.

All crews must complete work orders to document the maintenance performed on the asset. All work orders are reviewed by the Trades Coordinators to ensure adequate notes and that the work is assigned to the correct asset.



Fleet vehicle servicing also causes issues in the Trades Technicians being able to stay on top of their scheduled routes and preventive maintenance. Delays in getting vehicles back from regularly scheduled service, and corrective repairs not being fully resolved and requiring multiple visits have put strain on availability of vehicles.

### Asset and Information System Support

Asset and Information System Support is primarily performed by the Plant Engineering Division. Overall engineering and system support for SCADA and the other Facilities Operation information systems was moved into the Plant Engineering Division recently, to ensure comprehensive strategic oversight and support across all application uses throughout the facilities.

The SCADA Projects and Information Systems Sections provide application administration and support to the facilities. The SCADA Projects Section is responsible for SCADA programming and coordinating with the Process Control Associates and Trades Technicians assigned to instrumentation and telemetry in the maintenance of the SCADA system. The SCADA Projects Section is responsible for coordinating with contractors to design the SCADA processes and ensure that the processes are appropriately automated and reflect the operating environments within each of the plants. Currently there are not any staff dedicated to the network and cybersecurity needs of the systems.

The Information Systems Section manages around seven of the other operating systems used in the facilities, including Maximo, LIMS, etc. The Information Systems Section is currently responsible for managing Jira for the Department.

These groups serve as an intermediary between end-users and the Systems and Technology Division, providing initial assessment of issues, troubleshooting, and can escalate to the Systems and Technology Division or vendors as needed. Both Facilities Operations and Facilities Maintenance submit initial issues or concerns to the SCADA Projects or Information Systems Section, as appropriate, for support and troubleshooting.

Asset support includes asset reliability engineering and facility support. The Asset Management and Reliability Section is responsible for assessing the current utilization of assets, including understanding current workflows and processes. This team can conduct root cause investigation for failures or issues as well as develop and propose rotation strategies or other mitigation methods to reduce stress and minimize the potential for asset failure. Currently, this team serves in more of a reactive role, often called in to investigate once an operator, contractor, or maintenance technician notices an issue with an asset. Asset Management and Reliability is infrequently involved in engineering, design, or product/part specification decision-making.

Projects can currently be assigned to Asset Management and Reliability from a number of sources, including proactive review of data to determine what investigations may be needed. This can cause challenges in workload balance and prioritization of assignments. There is also not a developed program for review and analysis, which may lead to inconsistent assessment and processes between Section members, as well as inconsistent expectations from stakeholders.

The Plant Engineering Division was also recently approved for positions to serve in a Plant Engineering Section. This group will be staffed by a Section Manager plus two Engineers – with one assigned to water production and one to wastewater. This group will serve as facilities advocates who can dedicate more time to understanding facilities processes and workflows, and can research potential solutions to process-related challenges as well as ensure consistent application of programs designed for more efficient and effective operations, with a focus on cost-savings over time.

### Contract Management and Oversight

Contractor management and oversight is performed by staff in a variety of divisions across Facility Operations. Currently there is a Contracts Section in Plant Engineering that oversees many of the annual contracts for the facilities. The Contracts Section estimates that it tracks approximately 150 contracts. The Contracts Section liaises with the Facilities Operations divisions, as well as Technical Services to ensure contractors are performing within the defined scope, deliverables, and specifications of the contracts.

These staff are responsible for coordinating the needed services, providing contractor oversight to ensure work that is performed has been completed to Gwinnett County standards, and processing the invoices for the work performed.

The Construction Manager II oversees a Construction Manager I; a second Construction Manager I position was recently approved. This Unit serves as project management for many of the short-term construction projects in the facilities, including HVAC replacements, LED lightbulb upgrades, and other projects. Once fully staffed, some contracts will be assigned by location, with more general construction support, such as HVAC, assigned to a single Construction Manager I for consistency in interacting with contractors.

The Contracts Section also coordinates sole source approvals, contract renewals, and manages contract budgets. The Program Analyst II ensures the appropriate approvals are obtained from the Water and Sewer Authority and the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners must approve all contracts over \$100,000, and the Water and Sewer Authority approves all contracts over \$500,000.

The Program Analyst III within the Contracts Section is responsible for supporting the budgets and financial reports for the facilities. The Program Analyst III prepares monthly plant report with available capital and operating budgets, as well as supporting all POs and shopping cart issues for facilities staff.

The Planning/Scheduling Section is also responsible for coordinating and scheduling some services that are provided by both contractors and internal staff.

Within Facilities Maintenance, each Section has Trades Coordinators, Contract Inspections Associates, or Trades Supervisors that are responsible for coordinating contractor services related to their specific functional area. The Contract Inspection Associate oversees contractors responsible for landscaping and grounds maintenance, as well as coordinates and oversees general maintenance contractors, such as HVAC, plumbing, painting, and other facilities contracts.

## General Facility and Grounds Maintenance

The General Facility and Grounds Maintenance Section is responsible for non-asset specific maintenance throughout DWR's facilities, including the plants, pump stations, and DWR's Central Facility. The Section was recently assigned responsibility for the lab at F. Wayne Hill as well as the newly opened Water Tower.

This Section is also responsible for assisting in delivering equipment and vehicles to Fleet Management, as Fleet Management doesn't offer field services or pickup services.

In addition to general contract management and oversight, the Section also provides contract management for contracts related to the grounds, HVAC services, generator servicing, general electrical, painting, and plumbing contracts. This includes writing contract specifications and recommending initial award and all renewals, as well as scheduling and overseeing contract implementation. The Section is using multiple-award contracts to help ensure availability of vendors to complete the work to Gwinnett County standards. The Section has also reworked all of the grounds maintenance contracts to focus on landscaping and appearance standards, and now requires the contractor to hold landscaping licenses and certification for commercial chemical applications.

The Contract Inspection Associate is directly responsible for most of the contract management and oversight. This position is responsible for project management for larger projects that require coordination with a variety of vendors and other Facility Operations staff. This position also does compliance reviews, which may include driving by sites to ensure work is being completed, and documenting issues or concerns through pictures if needed.

Currently, only the Section Manager has the commercial pesticide applicators license for chemical application, so any pesticide applied by Section staff are applied under his license.

The Section tracks all chemicals that are on hand, that have been applied, and the license holder and reports this information as part of the EPA stormwater requirements.

This Section uses Maximo for asset management. For building maintenance, a preventive maintenance schedule has been created in Maximo, so preventive maintenance work orders are automatically generated on the schedule in the system. For the grounds maintenance, work orders are typically entered in the system when time permits after the work has been completed. The Unit has an informal hard copy schedule for the rotation of maintenance and site management that is supplemented with ad hoc email and call requests for additional service. This informal schedule is maintained by the Trades Supervisor.

## Communications

The Division has worked to ensure there are strong, consistent communication methods within each of the facilities. Water Production facilities hold change-over meetings to discuss any problems or issues that occurred during the previous shift. Plant Manager offices are physically located in the operations buildings, instead of in the administrative building to allow for visibility and opportunities for interactions with staff.

Within the Division, the physical separation of staff as well as the variety of key functions and responsibilities combine to create a challenge in identifying communication methods that reach all audiences effectively. Staff who spend time in the field, or work non-business day shifts do not often interact with management more than one or two levels above their own position. Leadership continues to work to identify the best strategies for effective messaging and tone to reach all employees in a timely and efficient manner. Water Production Plant Managers send weekly emails to all plant staff to provide consistent information to all staff at the same time. Wastewater Plant Managers start their day 30 minutes before the night shift ends, to ensure opportunities for interaction with staff on all shifts.

Many Division staff noted that Department senior leadership rarely visited the sites, and if they did visit, it was either because something had gone wrong or there was a public visit coming up. Staff noted an interest in opportunities for more informal, organic interactions with leadership so that visits feel less punitive or performative.

Water Production Shift Supervisors are using eLogger or physical logs to record notes and reference any newly created work orders. Within the Wastewater facilities, there is a physical logbook used to record any process changes, issues, or concerns noted during a shift. The logbook information is also recorded in Maximo, as appropriate, and the logbook references the work order number in case additional information is needed.

The Division is working to strengthen communications with other divisions whose work may impact operations. The Division holds regular meetings with Technical Services and some of the staff scientists to discuss plant issues as well as discuss where data may indicate the potential for future problems, so that everyone can collaborate to proactively mitigate and address potential issues. These meetings do not always include maintenance or asset reliability staff, which may provide a more limited view of potential issues or solutions. Lanier Plant also has satellite offices, so that DWR Central Facility staff can come to work from an office at the plant and meet with plant management and staff to review issues or concerns.

Staff noted issues with the lack of onsite engagement from project managers over construction projects, with plant management often having to serve in informal project management roles, and act as an intermediary between project managers and the contractors.

There may also be challenges in information being disseminated from Central, as there may be inconsistent decisions about how far down the line information should be communicated. Staff noted that there were more meetings held at the DWR Central Facility before the pandemic, which allowed for better information sharing, relationship-building, and more informal interactions.

Within Maintenance, there are frequent informal communications and check-ins. Staff felt that the lines of communication were open to reach out to Section Managers as needed. Formal communications are less frequent, with some teams moving towards quarterly meetings to review trends, themes, and issues.

## Strategic Initiatives

Facility Operations has focused on consistency, asset reliability, and planning as strategic priorities.

The Division has worked to create comprehensive consolidated electronic operation manuals (“EOMs”) for all of the Department’s assets and systems. The Information Systems Section was charged with consolidating, reducing duplication or discrepancies, updating the manuals to reflect current asset operations and standards, and to ensure that all EOMs are user-friendly and accessible to staff in a variety of roles throughout the Division.

Asset management is the prevalent mindset of all strategic planning and decision-making throughout the Division, including the consideration of sustainability projects, reviewing the use of energy, materials, and people in the most effective and forward-thinking ways possible.

In 2020, the Division sought to document and understand the current state of all assets across the facilities. This process included assessing the current asset performance, understanding how it should be performing and designing a performance strategy that focused not only on optimized performance, but the correct performance levels for sustained reliable performance. Using this initial assessment process, the Division is working to formalize performance testing and management programs for each facility, and leveraging these programs to identify needed decisions around rehabilitation and replacement, and prioritizing these decisions based on timeline and availability of capital funds. These assessments will also be utilized to better plan for chemicals, staffing, supplies, and maintenance materials. The Division works closely with the Department’s scientists to continually analyze and assess process issues and chemical utilization, as well as work with the Asset Reliability Section to understand process change impacts on assets.

These assessments are also being leveraged to develop more formal programs for preventive maintenance processes. One program in development is working to formalize the current tank inspection process into a program that is designed to assess each tank at least once every five years, to identify preventive maintenance needs and have insight into the anticipated repair and replacement timelines

Hiring and retention have been strategic challenges for the Division, as it looks to identify programs and efforts to bring in qualified candidates. Titling is proving to be a limitation. Trades Technician as a general title doesn’t capture the interest or attention of applicants with specific skill sets, and may result in qualified candidates not applying for open positions.

The facilities are seeing good results from the intern program. Many of the entry-level Trades Technicians in the plants have been hired from intern positions. Several of the Technicians we spoke with also noted that tours of the plants when they were in the Gwinnett County School System were important in their understanding and becoming interested in the work being performed.

The limited number of titles, combined with staffing challenges, have also impacted the ability of employees to receive training. All employees are receiving training and time support to ensure appropriate licensures are obtained and retained, but there aren’t as many perceived opportunities for staff to express interest in receiving additional training, or develop niches outside of skilled trade specific areas, such as electrical training, pesticide application licensure, plant identification training, or higher-class commercial driver’s licenses.

## Systems and Applications

In addition to the systems listed below, the Division should be commended for its dedication to system security. The Division has made significant improvements to the network and cybersecurity throughout the facilities. There are several plant-level firewalls, as well as separate servers for several of the systems, and a segmented network.

### Hach WIMS

Hach Water Information Management Solution, (“WIMS”), along with SCADA, is one of the primary data collection systems in use within the Division. Hach WIMS collects instrumentation data, and is leveraged for reporting to the EPA, EPD and other agencies as needed. Hach WIMS is integrated into the Laboratory Information Management System (“LIMS”) for automated data processing.

### Maximo

Maximo is a CMMS, or computerized maintenance management system. Maximo is the system of record for all facility assets, including job plans, preventive maintenance schedules and calendars, work orders and notes. Work orders are generated through Maximo for assignment and completion by maintenance staff.

There are not formalized guidelines for entries into Maximo, so there have been some challenges in matching all records due to inconsistent naming conventions and notes standardization.

### SCADA

Facility Operations uses Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (“SCADA”), to monitor and adjust facility levels/systems/functions. The Department is in the process of switching to a new vendor, Wonderware.

All three divisions within Facility Operations are involved in SCADA. Operators within the plants monitor the system levels and calibrations and review for any alarms. Operators can adjust levels in certain circumstances. Engineers within the Plant Engineering Division are responsible for overall system process control design and implementation. Process Control Associates and Trades Technicians within the Maintenance Division are responsible for physical maintenance of the SCADA system. There can often be disconnects between the three groups with system responsibilities.

The SCADA Projects Section currently only has engineers but needs more staff for security and upgrades. Operational Technology staffing is difficult due to its complex nature, high risk and visibility, and in-office requirements.

### eLogger

eLogger is an electronic logbook software that allows Operators on each shift to record information for shift changes, such as any changes in chemicals, SCADA calibrations, or items noted during inspections that may require additional review or follow-up. The Division is also using it to document pump station checks and create a single repository for notes. The Division is working to introduce eLogger in all of the facilities.

## Centralpoint

Centralpoint is a digital experience platform that serves as an integrated document management system. Centralpoint can scan disparate data systems to ensure a single comprehensive repository for important operating and permit-related reporting documents and includes a robust search function. The Division has put all electronic operations manuals in the system and is evaluating how to best leverage it in the future, including potential integration with Maximo.

## Tableau

Facility Operations is using Tableau to pull data from a variety of other systems for data visualization and strategic analysis. The Department is working to determine which visualizations may be most appropriate for different stakeholder groups. DWR is discussing implementing a Strategic Tableau Plan to ensure that data entry and upload is consistent and ensures that the correct visualizations are updated for the correct stakeholder groups.

## Jira

Jira is used by several divisions and sections throughout the Department but is owned and managed by the Plant Engineering Division. The Contracts Section uses Jira for contract and project management.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Between the use of SCADA and Hach WIMS, the Division collects large quantities of data, ranging from data required in reporting used to confirm permit and regulatory compliance, to predictive and preventive maintenance data that helps the Division understand asset reliability and maintenance needs.

This data, coupled with data collected through predictive maintenance testing, provides a range of leading and lagging indicators for the Division.

Permits issued by State and Federal regulatory agencies govern the production levels, required operating conditions, and standards for the water produced by the facilities, so real-time, daily, and weekly data analysis is critical to the Division's successful maintenance of all permits. Across all facilities, the Division tracks more than 160 monthly performance metrics across a variety of categories. Both Water Reclamation and Water Production produce monthly operating reports that combine operational and maintenance metrics for an overall understanding of plant operations. Metrics are tracked at the plant and at the system level. The metrics we were provided did not consistently identify target performance levels.

Facilities Maintenance also collects and analyzes monthly metrics, in addition to those included in the facility operations monthly operating reports. This information is tracked on a dashboard that identifies each metric as leading, lagging, or both and uses six month rolling averages where available. The dashboard also identifies a performance target and assess overall and facility-specific performance. The January 2022 overall facility performance is illustrated below.

Facility Operations Metrics Dashboard: January 2022			
Leading/Lagging	Performance Metric	Performance Target	Facility Ops. Overall
Lagging	Asset Availability %	Increasing Trend - 97%	92%
Leading/Lagging	Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF) in Hours:Minutes	Increasing Trend	1:25
Leading	Ready To Schedule Backlog - Weeks (Less than 2 = Yellow   More Than 4 = Red)	2 - 4 Weeks	4.54
Leading	% Proactive Labor Hours vs Total Labor Hours (Proactive + Reactive)	80%>	73%
Leading	% of Predictive Maintenance Hours	15%	7%
Leading/Lagging	Avg Mean Time To Repair MTTR in Hours	Decreasing Trend	329.12
Leading	Planned & Scheduled Maintenance Hrs. %	90%	74%
Leading	Planned & Scheduled Maintenance W/O's %	95%	92%
Leading	% of Available Hours Scheduled (Monthly Average)	100%	97%
Leading	P-Card Order Cycle Time in Days	<1	5.70
Leading	Shopping Cart Order Cycle Time in Days	<1	5.40
Leading/Lagging	PM Compliance %	95%	88%
Leading	Facility Ops Craft Utilization %	75%	86%
Leading	Schedule Success % (Monthly Average)	80%	87%
Leading	Total Deferred Maintenance W/O's	Decreasing Trend or 0	176
Leading	Stock Outs	0	1
Lagging	Maintenance Cost as a % of RAV	2 - 3.5 %	0.94%
Leading/Lagging	% of Emergency & Urgent Labor Hours vs Total Labor Hrs. (All Work types)	< 7.5%	19%
Leading/Lagging	Total Number Reported Operations and Maintenance Related Safety Incidents	No Incidents in Last Month	4
*Data is populated using six month rolling averages if available			
*Green Cells: The monthly trend is moving in the right direction (Up or Down) or the target has been met.			
*Yellow Cells: The monthly trend is the same as previous month or has moved in the wrong direction for 1 month.			
*Red Cells: The monthly trend has moved in the wrong direction for 2 consecutive months.			

In addition to the dashboard, the analysis include graphical representation of two years' worth of data for dashboard maintenance metrics, to provide more contextual understanding of current performance. This information is tracked at the overall facility level as well as for each individual facility. There are also planning and scheduling metrics to assess Planner/Scheduler Unit performance.

Maintenance also uses weekly Red-Green reports to assess maintenance staff productivity for each facility. The initial schedule of work orders and total estimated hours is compared with the Maximo entries made by the field staff to determine how much time was completed versus scheduled.

Much of the SCADA and Hach WIMS data is real time. Other data points, such as vibration testing data, is only available when Trades Technicians are able to go out and capture the data and Program Analysts can read and interpret the data.

The Predictive Maintenance Section collects data for each assessment that they complete. This information can be compiled into reports for each assessment, as well as monthly and annual summary reports. This information is shared with facility management on a regular basis to ensure insight into needed maintenance.

Annual vibration reports for the plants document the average severity of vibration in assets throughout the plant, with localized information for assets by specific buildings or components of operations. The annual report also illustrates the number of assets analyzed by month, relative to total number of assets.



The Division also has software that can track the engine idle time on fleet vehicles. Some vehicles, such as the trucks that house the cranes used for pump maintenance, require the engine to be kept running to operate the hydraulics that power the crane. Currently, none of this information is shared with Fleet Management to ensure that all preventive maintenance is considerate of engine wear and tear during idle time that may not be reflected in vehicle mileage or time-based maintenance schedules.

While the data captures a lot of valuable information, it does not capture the staff fatigue that was shared frequently during our fieldwork. Staff are committed to their work and to ensuring quality service for the residents of Gwinnett County, so they are going above and beyond to ensure needs are met. Staff noted a lot of on-call time, and the vacancies making it challenging to get time off. Metrics may not always demonstrate a quantitative need for additional staff, but many staff cited a reduced quality of life over the last few years.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Lanier Filter Plant has an additional facility responsible for residual processing. Currently, there is only one employee staffing this facility.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should create an additional position to ensure adequate staffing support for residual processing.

**Observation 2:** Many of the operational roles in the Division are staffed to perfection, which can cause additional stress in periods of extended vacancies, absences, or medical-leave situations.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent staff per shift, or more floater positions should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.

**Observation 3:** Plant Superintendents and Managers often have to serve as on-site project management for construction and capital repair projects. This takes time away from their daily duties and may impact their ability to complete all required functions.

**Recommendation 3:** Engineering and Construction should coordinate with Facilities Operations to ensure that project managers are regularly onsite and serve as the official contact for contractors.

**Observation 4:** Due to the complex nature of wastewater processing, training is critical to become fully proficient across all of the buildings and assets involved in the process. With current staffing levels, training can be a challenge. The wastewater plants also do not have floater operations positions to support shift shortages.

**Recommendation 4:** The wastewater plants should consider creating floater positions to support shift shortages. These positions could also be used to support training of new employees. If the floater positions are staffed with experienced operators, when not needed in a supplemental capacity these positions could also be leveraged to provide on-the-job training for new hires without taking time away from the operational requirements of the shift.

The Division should also collaborate with the Water Innovation Center to develop additional training opportunities, potentially including experiential training in a testing environment, rather than in the operating environment.

**Observation 5:** The Yellow River and Crooked Creek Water Reclamation Facilities share a single Administrative Associate. Operations staff at Yellow River and Crooked Creek water reclamation plants may be asked to supplement administrative duties, which takes time away from other operational duties.

**Recommendation 5:** Wastewater Operations should consider hiring an additional Administrative Associate, so that both Yellow River and Crooked Creek have a dedicated Administrative Associate on site.

**Observation 6:** The Predictive Maintenance Section is able to provide a variety of predictive analyses of asset wear and conditions. Currently, the assessments are taken at a single point, then analyzed and provided back to the plants on a delay.

In addition, the Section is often called to support special projects and requests throughout the County, given their available technology. The time spent on these special projects and requests can impact their predictive maintenance schedule cause a delay in assessments.

**Recommendation 6:** Facility Operations should research available hardware that would allow for real-time vibration assessments to be taken and integrated into the SCADA dashboard. This could free up Technician time to conduct other types of assessments and participate in special projects throughout the County without getting behind on predictive maintenance schedules.

**Observation 7:** As the plants age, or as new technology is integrated or updated in the plants, there is an increased demand on the maintenance staff. These sections often have just enough staff to support the workload, with minimal allowances for training or absences. In addition, several of the skilled trades staff are only allocated to one staff per trades type per location, such as electrician or instrumentation. This means that these staff stay in a near-permanent on-call status, even with planned absences or rotations off of the schedule.

**Recommendation 7:** Facility Operations should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent maintenance staff per location, or experienced skilled floater positions with electrical or instrumentation experience should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.

**Observation 8:** Facility Operations collects large volumes of data, and is using the data to understand performance, such as the dashboards and rolling averages found on the Maintenance monthly reports. There are not currently positions dedicated to this analysis, and there may be missed opportunities to better understand or identify themes in operational metrics that impact maintenance workload, or other similar interrelated trends.

**Recommendation 8:** Facility Operations should consider creating a data analyst position. This position could support the development of standard protocols for using Maximo, to ensure consistent naming standards and work order notes entries. This position could assist with QA/QC for work orders to ensure integrity of the data that is captured, as well as provide additional data analysis for themes, trends, or prediction of emerging issues based on historical data.

**Observation 9:** The Division is predominantly using the Asset Management and Reliability Section in a reactive capacity, engaging staff once assets have started to show signs of wear or failure. There is a missed opportunity to engage these staff and leverage their knowledge and data in project design and equipment specifications development more proactively.

**Recommendation 9:** The Plant Engineering Division should work with Technical Services and Engineering and Construction to assist them in understanding the value of incorporating the Asset Management and Reliability Section in scoping, design, and technical specification development conversations.

## 3.B.4 Department of Water Resources – Field Operations

The Field Operations Division (“Field Operations” or “Division”) is responsible for overseeing all of the linear assets of the County – including all of the pipes used to move drinking water and wastewater throughout the County. Gwinnett County uses a blend of gravity and force mains to push the water back to the waste management facilities, and uses tanks and boosters to store and distribute drinking water throughout the County.

### Key Functions

The Field Operations Division is responsible for a variety of key Department functions:

- Dispatch and Investigations
- Preventive Maintenance
- Corrective Maintenance
- Warehouse and Fleet Management
- Contract Management and Oversight
- Lucity Administration and Quality Control

### Dispatch and Investigations

The Dispatch Unit (“Dispatch”) provides Gwinnett County residents a direct line to report water leaks, sewer, spills, outages, or other issues. Dispatch is staffed 24/7 by Service Associates (Dispatchers). Currently, none of the Dispatchers are bilingual. The County used to offer some basic level Spanish language classes to staff to assist in basic translation, but have not offered these classes in some time. Staff have access to Lionbridge for translation services, but often find that the caller does not actually have an emergency need once the call has been connected. Trades Supervisors and Associates assigned to the Investigations Unit (Investigators) can also use Lionbridge in the field to interact with residents or complainants.

Dispatchers speak with callers who report water leaks, overflows, and other issues. If the issue is with an asset, then the Dispatcher can create a work order that sends an Investigator out to complete an initial review of the site and to determine appropriate response status. For issues that may be on the caller’s side of the meter, or on private property, Dispatchers can provide general assistance in how the caller may be able to resolve the issue. For issues related to illicit discharge or detention of liquids, then the issue is submitted to the MS4 Compliance Section of the Technical Services Division. Dispatch can create work orders in Lucity to send out Investigators for complaints and concerns. For issues related to DWR contractor work, such as pipe replacement, root treatment, easement clearing, or other projects, the Dispatchers may contact the coordinator or supervisor who is responsible for overseeing the contractor’s work.

Investigators go out and review all complaints that are entered as work orders. Investigators are primarily assigned to respond within defined geographic areas, but there may be some overlap based on expertise and workload. Investigators can initiate work orders for the corrective maintenance crews, depending on the nature of the issue and the required resolution.

If the leak, spill, etc. has touched a live body of water, then the issue is classified as a spill and additional steps must be taken to document the response and initial spill protocol. Work orders will still be initiated to resolve the issue, but additional data must be collected and reported to the Environmental Protection Division (“EPD”) of Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources.

Dispatch is also responsible for creating the public and employee notices for all emergency water-utility repairs. Technicians in the field contact Dispatch to notify them of the outage location, pipe size, estimated impacted customers, and estimated length of the outage. This is recorded on an internal log, then the Sheriff’s Office is contacted, and an online notification is generated through the intranet that ensures the information is posted to the Gwinnett County website. This intranet form also generates email notices to staff throughout the County.

Planned outages are not always timely communicated with Dispatch to ensure consistent and accurate information is tracked and shared with residents timely. Often, this information is communicated to Dispatch the morning of the planned outage or impact. For issues that may generate high volumes of calls and questions, this amount of notice is often inadequate to ensure staffing to support the call volume.

Dispatch is also responsible for providing real-time monitoring of alarms for the pump stations. If the SCADA system triggers an alarm for any of the County’s 210 pump stations, the Dispatcher assigned to system monitoring radios the pump station maintenance technicians so that they can review and respond accordingly. All notices are recorded on a log that also reflects the time that the radio notification was sent.

### Preventive Maintenance

The Preventive Maintenance Section is divided into two units: one to service sewer assets, including pipes and manholes; and one to service water assets, including lines, valves, and fire hydrants.

The Preventive Maintenance Section has a variety of technologies and equipment that can be leveraged to assess the state of both water and sewer lines throughout the County. The crews are responsible for manhole inspections, hydrant inspections, valve inspections, and water main inspections, in collaboration with contractor crews to assist in supporting the workload.

The Sewer Unit is leveraging Sewer Line Rapid Assessment Tools (“SL-RATs”) and CCTV crews to assess the current state of sewer lines and manholes. SL-RAT transmitter devices send out tones at multiple frequencies. These tones are recorded by a receiver device at another point to provide an initial assessment of pipe blockage conditions. Based on these initial results, the crew may recommend that the nearby sewer pipes also be scoped with a CCTV camera to better assess the current condition of the pipes. The CCTV crews, who are certified to operate the cameras to ensure appropriate lighting and operations to accurately assess conditions. The CCTV crews are also responsible for performing inspections on all new subdivision and development lines and mains prior to accepting and integrating them into the larger system.

All pipe conditions on the sewer side are assessed using the National Association of Sewer Service Companies (“NASSCO”) rating system, with 5 being the worst rating and 1 being the best rating. The rating considers both structural and operational conditions. Inspections that result in a level 5 assessment are forwarded to the Corrective Maintenance Section for resolution.

For sewer pipes that show some level of blockage but may not be considered level 5 conditions, a work order is created for a hydrojet flushing of the lines. The hydrojet flushing involves high-pressured water being pushed through a portion of the line, to assist in cutting through roots, debris, or other blockages. The debris generated is collected by the crews and disposed of, to ensure it doesn't cause additional blockages or issues down the lines. The Unit has a planner/scheduler position to assist with scheduling for the hydrojet crews, but since the crews have moved to Lucity for work orders, there may no longer be a need for a position specifically to support planning and scheduling for these crews.

The Sewer Unit is also responsible for inspecting and assessing the condition of lines at critical crossings, such as creeks and streams. The crews review for creek bank erosion, the potential for debris to come free and damage the pipes, and other environmental factors. The crews also review the pipes and piers to ensure that there is no pipe sag, and that the piers don't show any signs of instability or weakening. Crews take pictures of the conditions and upload them to the asset in Lucity. For sagging and pier issues, the Corrective Maintenance crews are typically able to repair and rehabilitate pipes of 12 inches or less; larger pipes typically utilize the on-call contractors for maintenance work.

The Water Unit is responsible for valve condition assessments, pipe and valve leak detections, and testing the fire hydrants to ensure adequate flow to support fire suppression without substantial impact on water pressure in surrounding areas.

The Water Unit is also responsible for testing fire hydrant flow before the Gwinnett County Planning and Development Department completes the inspection process for new developments. Given the growth in the County, the Water Unit is averaging 10-20 tests weekly just for new development – with current staffing levels, the Unit can't always get to the preventive testing that should be performed regularly.

The Water Unit is also responsible for flushing hydrants to prevent buildup or other issues. Crews also test the chlorine levels in the water coming from hydrants, to ensure compliance with chlorine level standards.

The Unit is also working to map all water lines, valves, and hydrants for the City of Lawrenceville. The City's records do not consistently mark all hydrants and valves, meaning that the team has to guess and physically review sites to attempt and locate valves and hydrants. The Division is planning on purchasing ground-penetrating radar to improve the efficiency of the valve location process.

Both units also require Trades Associates to be on-call. The Preventive Maintenance Unit has been working to revise the on-call schedule to try and manage some of the on-call fatigue that had been occurring.

### Corrective Maintenance

All corrective maintenance, typically classified as rehabilitation, repair, or replacement, is performed based on work orders that are entered and tracked through Lucity. Lucity allows for multiple levels of prioritization of work orders, to ensure that the more urgent work orders are addressed first. Work orders may be created by Investigators who are responding to customer calls or complaints, as well as based on work identified during a preventive maintenance work order and determined to be larger than those crews can address. There may also be emergency work orders generated due to contractor issues or damage that occurs during other types of work, such as road paving, that is performed near system assets.

The Division has had challenges in identifying contractors who provide a true on-call emergency response, so the mentality/practice has been to shift towards using the Corrective Maintenance Section staff to support more of the emergency-level response, and shifting more of the routine and scheduled large-scale corrective maintenance, repair, and replacement work towards the contractors the County has available.

There are four specialized units within the Corrective Maintenance Section. The Clean Water and Distribution Unit focuses on water distribution lines and assets, such as water mains, hydrants, and vaults. The Sewer and Collections Unit is primarily responsible for sewer lines and manholes.

The Stormwater Section is responsible for repairs and emergency maintenance on stormwater pipes. Stormwater repairs and maintenance often require an additional level of coordination including reviewing current project plans and variances between plans and actuals, as well as reviewing easements to determine the space and amount of access that has been granted to complete the work.

The Corrective Maintenance Division also has a Landscape and Restoration Unit. This Unit is responsible for fixing landscaping and restoring areas where emergency work has been completed. This can include sod, shrubbery, gravel, as well as coordinating contractors to provide concrete and pavement restoration. This Unit is critical to customer service and ensuring that customers believe that any damage or issues have been resolved and that the area is as good as it was before, if not in better condition than before the work started. This Unit also has dump truck drivers that deliver materials to a variety of corrective maintenance sites, both for materials needed for the maintenance work as well as materials needed in the restoration efforts.

When there aren't emergency maintenance work orders in the system, the Corrective Maintenance Unit can assist the Preventive Maintenance Unit work through backlogged work in CMMS, such as preventive reviews of fire hydrants, valves, or other assets. The Division has not developed a formal process to ensure effective use of corrective maintenance downtime. It can be a challenge to balance downtime during regularly scheduled shifts with the increased need for serving in on-call and emergency response capacities.

While assigned to the Contracts Section, the Meters Unit is responsible for all meter maintenance, repair, and replacement. For some larger meters, either a contractor or the Backflow Prevention and Large Meter Unit may take responsibility for the replacement work. This Unit is also working to deploy Automated Meter Reading ("AMR") meters on a number of vaulted commercial meters, to provide more granular real-time data to high volume customers.

The majority of the meter work performed by this Unit is corrective, or reactive maintenance work. The Unit also has the responsibility of testing meters to determine if mechanical meters have worn out; due to the number of reactive work orders, the Unit is unable to adhere to the proposed schedule for testing. There is not a dedicated testing team, and this work cannot always be performed by a single Trades Associate, as many meters are in vaults or other confined spaces that require a spotter or second employee in accordance with Gwinnett County safety standards.

The County uses a third-party for meter readings. The contractor's meter readers can enter a trouble code onto their handheld device, and information entered on the handhelds are automatically communicated through SAP to generate a work order to check the meter for leaks. Customers may also contact Dispatch if they have concerns about leaks.

The Trades Associates within the Unit are assigned geographic areas of the County to cover, to minimize windshield time. The Unit is not currently using GIS to map work order routes or geographic assignments. If a Trades Associate does not have any active work orders, they may be able to perform testing on meters in older subdivisions or neighborhoods within their geographic area.

### Warehouse and Fleet Management

The Warehouse Section is responsible for maintaining warehouses at DWR's Central Facility as well as several of the plants. Most of the supply, material, and parts contracts are multi-year and may include contracts with several vendors to assist in supporting the Department's needs.

The Central Facility warehouse serves as the primary repository for most larger parts and supplies. Each of the plants have baseline stock based on recurring needs, such as filters, gloves, etc. Plant-based warehouses should coordinate contract-based supply and part orders through the Central Facility. Other items may be directly ordered or replaced by the plant warehouse staff.

Space is at a premium at most of the facilities, so the space allotted to the warehouses may not meet the changing needs of what type of materials are being stored. Temperature-controlled items can be a challenge to store at appropriate temperatures when space is limited.

The Central Facility also has outdoor storage for large parts such as pipes. Currently, this storage is not covered, which may impact wear and tear on the parts and may also impact lifespan of the part once installed. The County is looking to install overhead covers to help minimize the wear and tear.

Given the current supply chain issues, having access to needed supplies, materials, and parts has been a challenge and has highlighted the lack of consistent communications between the Warehouse and the end-user divisions reliant on the warehouses for support. Some of the vendors have been unable to honor the contractual pricing, given the market conditions, and other contractors are unable to provide the requested supplies and materials. In some instances, however, the County's contracts have been invaluable in sourcing hard-to-obtain materials at competitive prices. The Warehouse is even assisting some contractors with supplies and parts they have been unable to get for County projects. The Division is working with the County's procurement team to identify workaround and alternative means for obtaining needed parts and supplies.

Most parts, supplies, and materials must be assigned to a work order, although some materials and smaller parts may be checked out and stored on trucks for quick access in the field and then assigned to the work order by the technicians. Vehicle stock levels are at the discretion of the technician. The Warehouse Section Manager has some insight into ensuring that parts and materials are assigned to work orders, but minimal visibility into what each technician may choose to staff on his/her vehicle.



The Central Warehouse uses SAP to track inventory. The facilities track all assets through Maximo, so the facility warehouses use Prometheus in combination with the Maximo warehouse module. Using this set of systems allows Facilities Maintenance Trades Technicians to assign parts and materials to the asset they are used for, as well as tracking all maintenance labor. Physical inventory is taken annually at each facility-based warehouse. At year-end, Gwinnett County's Financial Services Department supports the annual reconciliation of Prometheus inventory data so that it can be transferred to SAP to compile the comprehensive Departmental inventory.

All Departmental staff have access to the inventory levels within the system, although there is inconsistent utilization of this information in preparing for upcoming projects and coordinating with the Warehouse to ensure that the supplies and parts have been ordered in advance of the scheduled work kicking off.

Staffing can be a challenge at the facility warehouses. Some only have one staff, so if that person has stepped away or has an unplanned absence it can be hard to meet the needs of the staff supported by that warehouse. Only having one dedicated staff person in each warehouse can also create challenges when there are large deliveries, or when larger parts need to be pulled that require coordination to access the part. Warehouse staff may request assistance from other plant operations or maintenance staff to support their workloads.

The Warehouse Section is also responsible for liaising with the Fleet Management Division within the Support Services Department. These duties include working to schedule preventative maintenance on vehicles, assigning pool vehicles to staff whose vehicles are being serviced by fleet, and coordinating transportation of equipment that may need to be taken over on a trailer, as Fleet does not offer transportation, nor do they offer many field services currently.

Fleet coordination has been challenging given the long delays in receiving service. Many staff assigned vehicles frequently cited one-to-two-week turnaround times on routine maintenance, such as oil changes that were scheduled for a specific day and time. Routine maintenance, combined with more corrective maintenance needs, have placed a strain on the pool of available vehicles in the Department, and has caused problems for many staff who either do not have access to a vehicle when their vehicle is receiving services, as well as problems for staff who have to transfer large quantities of equipment, parts, and materials between vehicles as they have to switch between pooled vehicles based on the larger needs of the Division. Staff noted starting on one vehicle, but if the service took longer than anticipated having to move to another vehicle as their pooled vehicle had been reserved for another crew to use.

### Contract Management and Oversight

Contracts oversight is divided into three types of contract oversight:

- Annual Contracts
- Backflow Prevention
- Stormwater Maintenance and Repair

### *Annual Contracts*

The Annual Contracts Unit is responsible for construction management for all annual contracts related to water and sewer line assessments, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation. These responsibilities include overseeing contractors in the field, reviewing the results of contractor inspections and assessments, and assisting the maintenance teams in determining when the use of a contractor may be advantageous. Members of this team may also review and provide quality assurance over the work performed by contractors. For example, the Construction Manager who is responsible for overseeing the contractor who performs sewer assessments reviews the videos recorded by the contractor as well as the contractor's reports to determine what the next preventative or corrective maintenance steps should be.

### *Backflow Prevention*

The Backflow Prevention and Large Meters Unit oversees customer backflow prevention compliance. Backflow devices prevent backflow of polluted water from contaminating the water supply. Backflow compliance testing is performed by a third-party, with copies of testing results provided to the County. Inspectors may shadow the testers to confirm compliance with requirements, and also provide some QA/QC retesting to validate the accuracy of the reported results. Due to staffing, the Unit is unable to perform much QA/QC currently. Contract Inspection Associates may also verify the installation of backflow devices at required sites and confirm that the appropriate type of backflow was installed correctly to prevent contamination. Currently, there is one Contract Inspection Associate responsible for overseeing backflow compliance for over 21,000 accounts across the entire County.

The Backflow Prevention Unit has a Contract Inspection Associate responsible for construction inspections for new developments, including meter installations for new mains, large meter placements, relocation of vaults, etc. This is performed in coordination with Gwinnett County's Planning and Development Department. This role also utilizes the Accela system to record inspection results.

### *Stormwater Maintenance and Repair*

The Stormwater Maintenance and Repair Unit is responsible for overseeing contractors who perform work or initial condition assessments related to stormwater maintenance and repair. One Construction Manager is responsible for the contract for stormwater pipe lining, performing field inspections of contractor work and confirming compliance with contract deliverable standards.

Another Construction Manager is responsible for overseeing the proactive inspection contract. The contractor places a pole camera down manholes to perform NASSCO-compliance assessments on the condition of the pipes, including assigning the pipe a grade and noting any pipe defects. The contractor generates reports to document the inspection for MS4 permit compliance. The Construction Manager reviews the reports and generates work orders for all needed repairs and rehabilitation, typically completed by Gwinnett County crews. The Inspection Associate is responsible for reviewing contractor video files for completeness and accuracy to ensure that the reports matched the recorded video and accurately captures all defects and accurately rates the condition of the pipes.

The Construction Manager II over the Section also performs field observations and job site visits to ensure safe and compliant job sites.

## Lucity Administration and Quality Control

The Field Operations Division has a Data Unit within the Contracts Section that is responsible for serving as the administrator for Lucity within the Department. This Unit is responsible for getting all users set up in Lucity, providing ad hoc support to those end-users, managing the Lucity dashboard for the division, and providing QA/QC on all work orders to ensure data integrity and accuracy of entries. The Data Unit also works with Lucity end-users to understand challenges with using the system and, where possible, may consider minor process adjustments to make the system more user-friendly. Crew or Unit Supervisors are responsible for most of the initial Lucity staff training, although there isn't formal training, and this may result in newer hires learning their supervisor's preferred process rather than the most effective or correct way to complete a work order.

The Unit performs QA/QC reviews on 100% of all Coordinator-approved work orders, as well as assisting in collecting and preparing data for GAWP audits.

This Unit is also responsible for supporting the rest of the Contracts Section by providing shape files and other data to assist in asset condition assessments. All contractor deliverables are also tracked to ensure compliance in uploading their data into Lucity.

This Unit is also responsible for preparing a variety of reports, such as monthly operation reports, to relevant Division and Department stakeholders.

## Communications

Communications can be a challenge when many division staff are either in separate physical locations, or predominantly based on the field instead of frequently accessible by computer.

The Division has worked to improve communications, with frequent stand-up meetings and check-ins at the beginning and end of the workday. The Division has also worked to schedule more quarterly analysis and assessment meetings, to ensure consideration is given to the bigger picture and there is not an over-emphasis on the day-to-day.

The Division also works to involve Trades Associates in decision-making that impacts their jobs. As the Division works to purchase new CCTV devices, leadership has involved staff in the assessment of the different suppliers and the potential advantages and disadvantages of the available models, and included their input in the final decision-making.

There are still challenges in ensuring proactive communications between other divisions and the warehouse. Coordinator-level projects are not always conveyed in advance, so parts and materials may not be available. Some units are operating more week-to-week, which the supply chain cannot always accommodate.

Inter-departmental and divisional communications are also not always considerate of the timeframes required for response. Communications about easement needs may not be timely enough to ensure wide enough easements for some types of work, or requesting same or next day turnaround in responding to proposed conditions can be challenging for crews to review. The Gwinnett County Department of Transportation releases an annual paving list, which is accompanied by a pre-inspection of the roads, which can lead to investigation requests if there are issues noted in the pre-inspection. If the issues are significant, the current DWR process may take years to get the project through scoping and design, at which point DOT has already completed the project, and then DWR is required to cut into recently paved areas, increasing the costs of the project rehabilitation costs.

## Strategic Initiatives

All of the units and sections within the Field Operations Division have worked to utilize technology to automate as much as possible. While there is some work to be done to ensure consistent use of processes and systems, automation and technology have gone about as far as they can go with currently available technology; additional support and efficiency will need to come from more manpower, rather than additional technologies.

The Division strives to perform as much preventive maintenance as possible, preventing issues from magnifying to become replacement-level issues, and ensure actions are taken to extend the lifespan of current assets and ensure continued reliability.

The Division is also working to get high-volume customers on flow meter monitoring that allows for 15-minute consumption data. Currently, there are approximately 400 high-volume customers on the meters, with a goal of 800 total customers in the near-term. Once this project is complete, customers on the flow meters will represent approximately 30% of overall water sales with high-volume data analysis.

The overall linear assets of the County are considered middle age. While the Division is trying to use preventive and predictive maintenance as much as possible, this is limited in part by current staffing levels, as well as the age of the system. As the system continues to age, more corrective maintenance and replacement will be needed, which takes more time and more manpower to support. The Division will need to ensure its staffing and budget are prepared for needed system upgrades, staff support, and adjustment of performance metrics to reflect the changing condition, age, and needs of the system.

Staffing challenges on many of the teams also results in management having to perform many day-to-day tasks, or get caught in a cycle of responding to issues and events, rather than acting proactively and strategically.

## Systems and Applications

### Lucity

The Division primarily uses Lucity for managing linear assets. Work orders for all preventive and corrective maintenance are entered into Lucity, and Lucity is used to track Trades Technician time spent on work orders.

## CRM

Dispatchers are using the CRM to research customer complaints to determine if water outages are based on failures to pay bills, as well as to research history of other services or requests submitted for that address.

## SCADA

Dispatchers monitor pump station alarms and radio information to the Facility Operations Maintenance Pump Station Unit to research and resolve any system alarms.

## SAP

The Warehouse Section uses SAP for inventory tracking and management at the DWR Central Facility.

## Prometheus/Maximo

Maximo is the vertical asset management system used by Facility Operations. Inventory that is used to support Facility Operations and stored in facility-based warehouses must be tracked in Maximo to ensure that parts and materials can be assigned to the repaired asset. Warehouse staff use Prometheus, a mobile-based asset management system, in collaboration with Maximo.

## Accela

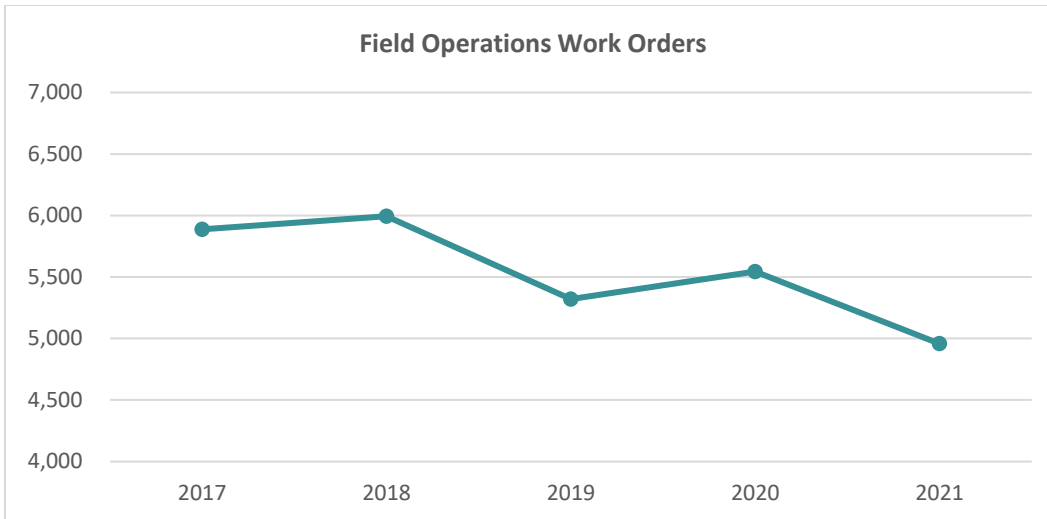
Several employees within the Division regularly liaise with the Planning and Development Department and use Accela to document portions of their work so that Planning and Development has comprehensive documents and workflows for processes owned by Planning and Development. This may require duplicative entry for these employees. These employees also received minimal training on Accela, so often have to figure out how to document approvals and upload documents.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Field Operations collects large volumes of data in Lucity to document and understand the work being performed and the impact of that work. Much of this data is leveraged as leading and lagging indicators to help the Division assess Key Performance Indicators, and better understand root cause issues and successes.

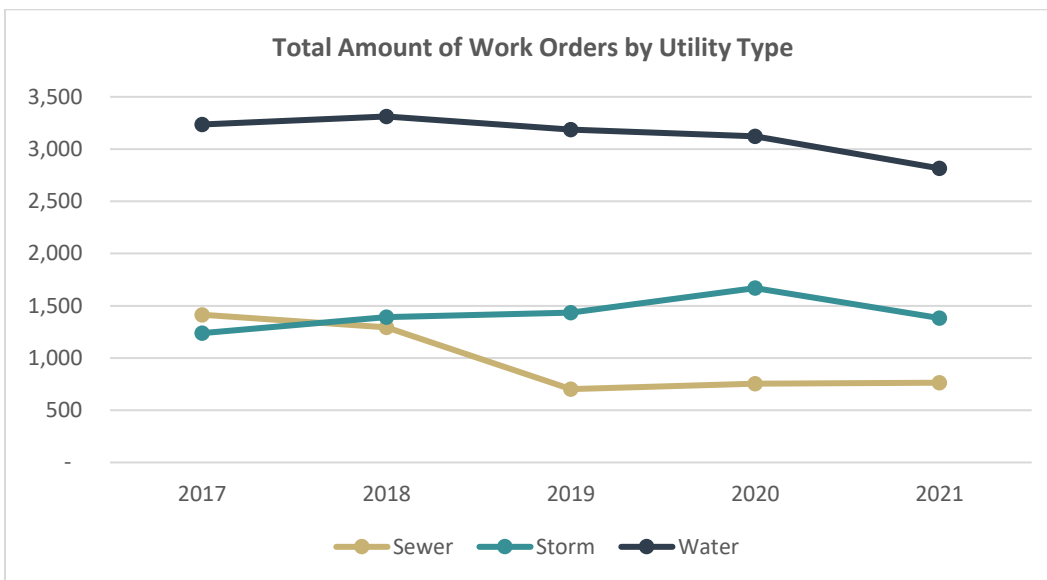
Cisco Finesse is also able to track data on call volume, length of time to answer, average length of time on call, and other customer service data metrics to ensure that the Dispatch Section is providing timely customer service responses.

For other sections and units within Field Operations, Lucity is able to track overall work orders by system type, to understand the unique number of orders processed by the preventive and corrective crews. The data we received analyzes work orders at the system level and did not differentiate between preventive and corrective work orders, nor did we review data that analyzed the amount of time spent on work orders, as this information has been inconsistently tracked and reported over the review period.

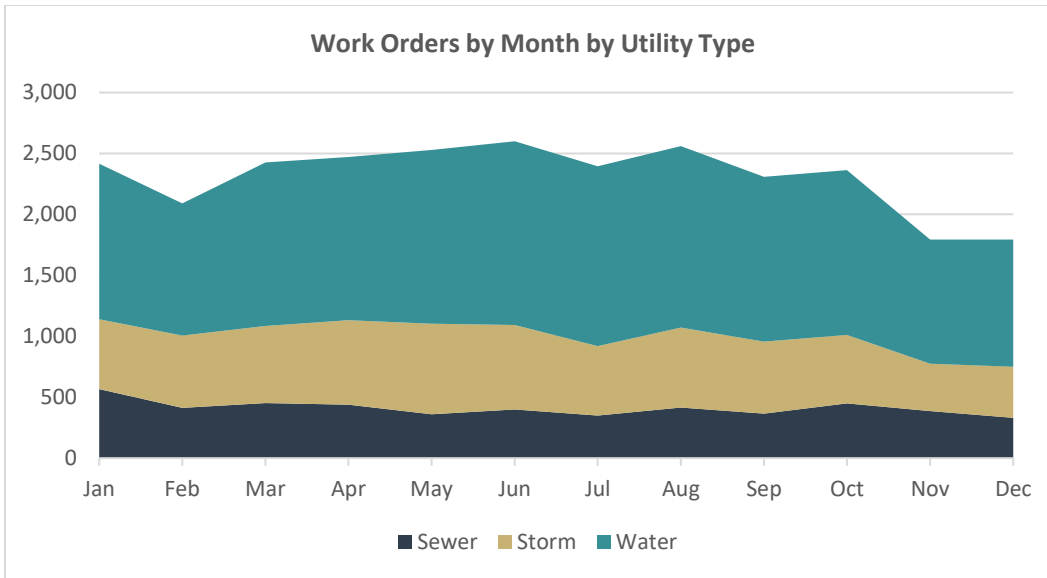


Overall, the number of work orders performed annually has decreased by approximately 15% over the past five years. This may reflect a number of changes in process, such as noting additional corrective maintenance work on an existing corrective maintenance work order, rather than generating a new work order for corrective maintenance actions performed on the same asset.

The most significant decrease has been in sewer line work orders, reducing by nearly 46% as noted in the following table. Water system work orders continue to represent, on average approximately 57% of all work orders each year.



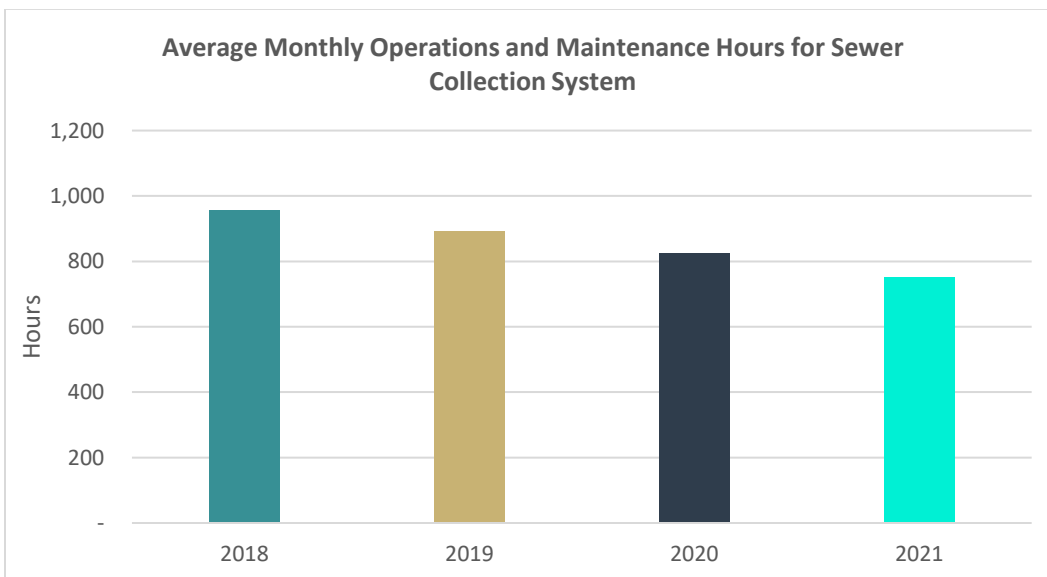
Lucity can report work orders by month, which may provide some insight into high volume months, or provide information that could be analyzed in collaboration with overtime data to determine if an increase in work orders, or increased complexity of work orders have resulted in more overtime utilization.

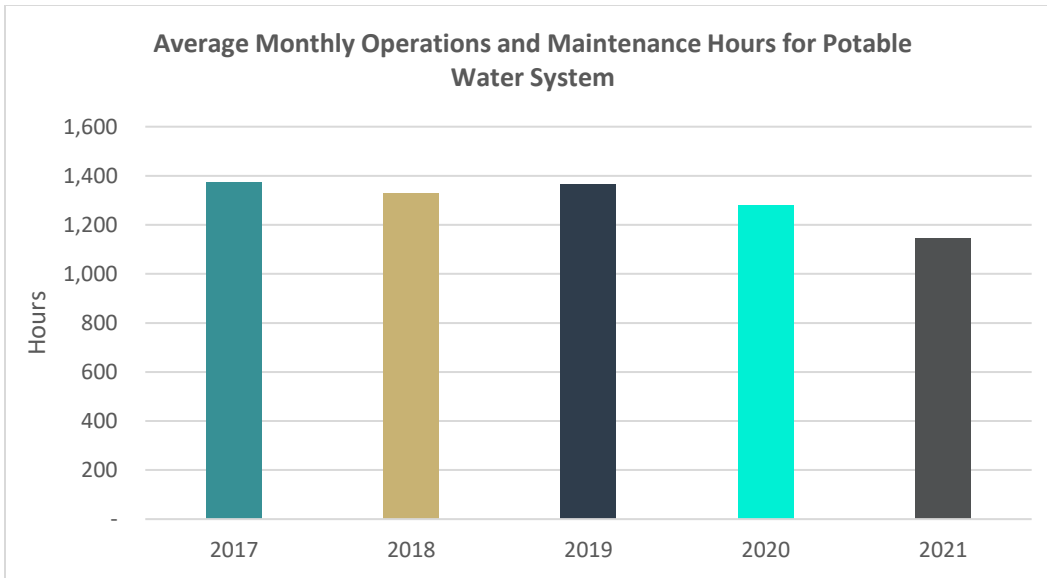


The Division also provides the Monthly Operations Reports (“MORs”) pulling data from a variety of systems that support operations, including Lucity. This report compares certain data points against comparable Georgia counties, as well as against national and regional benchmarks. As an example, in reviewing the number of water main breaks per 100 miles of pipe for 2010-2018, Gwinnett’s reported breaks are well below national and regional reported performance levels.

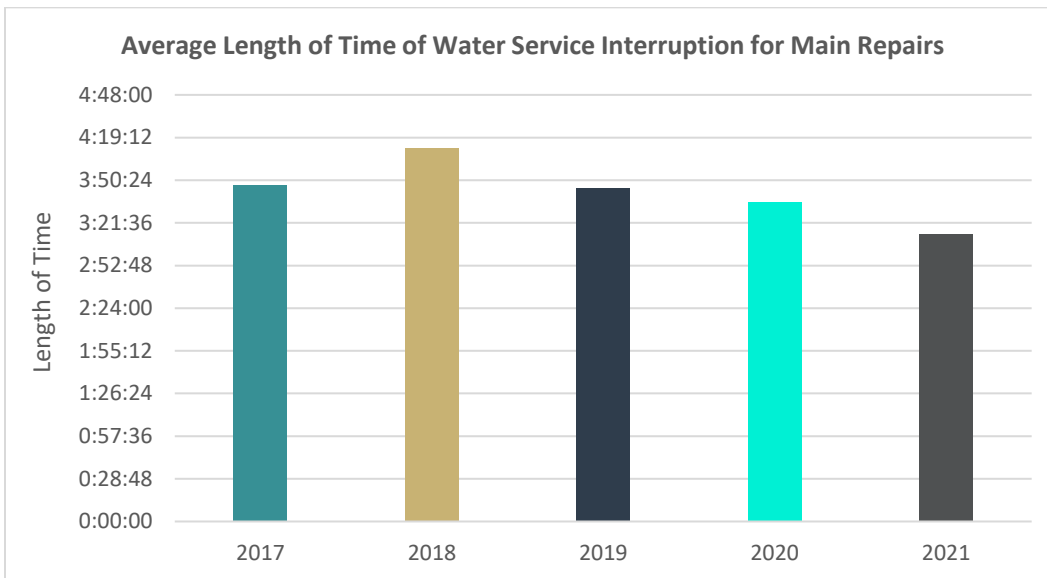
Gwinnett County also participates in American Water Works Association (“AWWA”) benchmarking surveys and provides a variety of datapoints to AWWA to help understand performance relative to peers. The Division utilizes this data to help create KPIs to better understand unit performance. Most of these metrics have been tracked for more than ten years, allowing an excellent foundation to understand changes in performance over time.

One of the KPIs assesses the number of monthly operations and maintenance hours performed by the Division per 100 miles of different pipe systems.

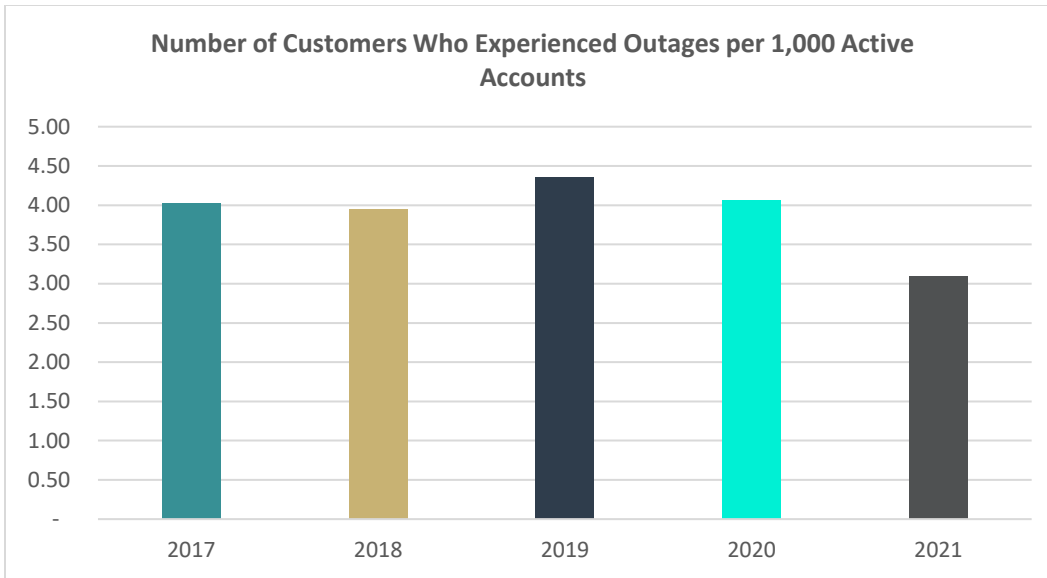




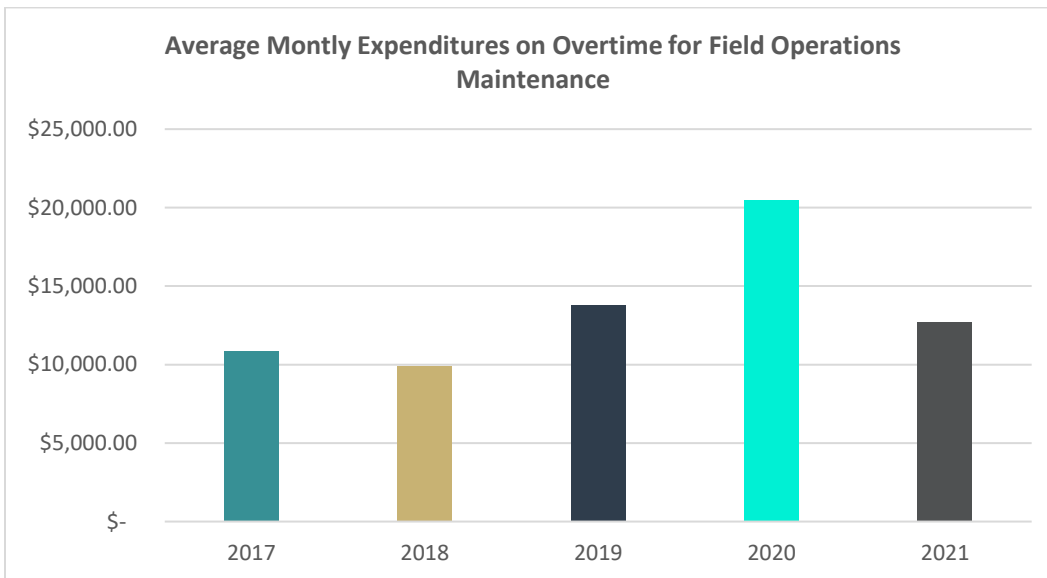
Other performance indicators track customer service data points, such as percentage of calls that had an onsite response within 24 hours, number of customers experiencing water outages each month per 1,000 active water accounts, and the 12-month rolling average time that water service is interrupted by main repairs, as illustrated in the following tables. These data points may provide excellent indicators of customer service and staff responsiveness and should be publicized to help stakeholders understand the responsiveness of the Division.







The Field Operations Maintenance Division also tracks overtime expenditures by month (as do other divisions within Field Operations). The following table captures the average monthly expenditures on overtime within Field Operations Maintenance between 2017 and 2021.



The Field Operations Maintenance Division also uses Red-Green reports to understand what percentage of assigned work each week is completed; this report demonstrates which assigned work orders were completed, and also gives insight into how much of the work being performed is planned work versus unplanned priority work.

The warehouses use monthly cycle counts to assess performance. Each cycle count determines the percentage of physical counts that were over or under system-reported inventories. Warehouse uses stockout frequencies and cycle counts to assess performance. Current challenges with supply chain creates challenges, as does communication issues with other divisions.

Within the Contracts Section, much of the contractor tracking is more informal, although some units may use Jira to assist in contract management, it is not uniformly utilized across the Division.

For Backflow prevention, the Section can generate a Backflow Noncompliance Report, which identifies the number of inspections that have been completed, the test due date, and the inspection test date. The Sections’ goal is around 10% noncompliance or less. The recent sample report that we reviewed showed noncompliance of approximately 13%. As there is currently one staff member assigned to oversee more than 21,000 accounts, proactive management, outreach, and report review can be challenging to keep on schedule.

Lucity also collects a lot of data on meter replacement work orders. Water meter testing has fallen off significantly in the last two years, with a shift to focusing on corrective maintenance and repair efforts. Given staffing demands within the Meters Unit, there also has not been much opportunity for proactive or predictive data analysis to understand geographic areas with high levels of work orders to identify themes or trends in meter issues or failure types. There is also an opportunity to do proactive review of meter age to better inform proactive meter review and inspections.

Water Meter Testing			
	2019	2020	2021
Apartment Complex	125	34	20
Commercial	151	70	7
Distribution/Warehouse	1	0	0
Hotel	13	10	2
Industrial	1	1	0
Institution	21	8	0
Mobile Home Park	7	1	1
Office Park	10	0	1
Public School	57	36	7
Recreation Area	11	1	0
Rental Property	38	27	0
Residential Multi-Unit	1	0	0
Residential Single-Unit	247	116	1
Wholesale	27	27	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>53</b>

The Division also has software that can track the engine idle time on fleet vehicles. Some vehicles, such as the hydrojet truck, require the engine to operate the hydraulics that power the hydrojet. Other vehicles may need to be running in order to access the CCTV, or leave the emergency lights on when working near roadways. Currently, none of this information is shared with Fleet Management to ensure that all preventive maintenance is considerate of engine idle time that may not be reflected in vehicle mileage or time-based maintenance schedules.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Dispatch Unit does not currently have any bilingual staff, and relies on either a paid translation service, or Customer Care Division staff to assist in translation. As not all callers to the Dispatch Unit have emergencies or leaks to report, the use of the paid translation service can be an expensive way to learn that the customer actually needs to speak to someone in Customer Care or another County department.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should work with the County to identify if basic foreign language skills, or key phrases education could be provided to Dispatchers to improve customer service. Potential solutions could include both customized foundational classes, or potentially subscriptions to language learning software.

**Observation 2:** The Dispatch Unit is responsible for ensuring adequate internal and public notice of water outages. For emergency outages, dispatch is notified by field crews. Planned outages are inconsistently communicated with Dispatch, and may not be communicated until the morning of the scheduled outage. As mass outages can impact workload, this can create strain on the Unit.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should review its current protocols for planned outage notification to determine how more lead-time of notice for planned outages can best be achieved. This may include engaging the Unit Manager in planning meetings, creating additional Lucity workflow notifications to the Dispatch Supervisor, or scheduling regular meetings with the Construction Manager or Supervisor in this Unit.

**Observation 3:** Many positions are staffed to perfection for previously assessed workloads. As workloads have expanded, staffing levels have not kept up. As the system ages, corrective maintenance workloads have expanded, and many issues may require more staff or manhours to repair. For some units, this has resulted in a reduction of the preventive maintenance performed. Water meter testing and backflow prevention compliance QA/QC are two areas where the workload has exceeded current staff capacity. These challenges are compounded by the growth in the County, which increases the number of assets that must be monitored by each unit.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should review staffing levels and assignments within many of the units that have blended preventive and corrective maintenance roles. The Department may need to increase the Unit size, or consider creating crews specifically dedicated to preventive or QA/QC capacity expansion.

**Observation 4:** The Division's Data Unit is responsible for QA/QC of 100% of Lucity work orders. Lucity work orders have already been reviewed by the Trades Coordinators for these units, so a 100% review rate is a redundant role.

**Recommendation 4:** The Data Unit should be shifted into more of an analytical role, rather than a work-order level QA/QC role. Many of the Unit and Section Managers cite a lack of time to effectively pull and review data for trends and potential future areas of concerns. The Data Unit should shift away from 100% QA/QC and should work with Unit and Section Managers to complete more trend analysis to assist in predictive analytics of aging system assets and more effective preventive maintenance efforts.

To ensure more consistent and accurate work orders, the Data Unit should work with the Training Section within Business and Staff Services to develop comprehensive Lucity training for new employees who are required to use Lucity within their jobs. The training should include job aids or cheat sheets to aid employees in the field.

## 3.B.5 Department of Water Resources – Public Information and Outreach

The Public Information and Outreach Section (“PIO” or “Section”) is responsible for communicating a variety of technical, scientific, and public safety information to Gwinnett County stakeholders and citizens. The Section is also responsible for developing and overseeing internal and external communication strategies as well as ensuring consistent emergency communications response.

### Key Functions

The Section is responsible for several key functions:

- Public Outreach and Events
- K-12 Outreach and Events
- Water Conservation Coordination
- Internal Communications Strategy and Messaging
- Construction-related Outreach and Events

In addition to these key functions, the Section is also responsible for ensuring all Department messaging is compliant with County and Department brand standards, including coordinating approvals from the County Communications Department. The Section also responds to media inquiries and drafts and issues press releases.

Most of the employees and contractors have environmental science or education backgrounds, rather than communications backgrounds. As a result, the majority of the strategic planning and communications-specific functions, such as press releases, newsletter articles, and responding to media inquiries, are the responsibility of the Section Manager.

### Public Outreach and Events

PIO participates in a variety of public outreach events, including staffing tables at events and festivals hosted by the County or other organizations, setting up small pop-up events in well-trafficked parking lots, and hosting two major festivals each year. Most of these events are coordinated by the Outreach Unit.

The Outreach Unit also provides a variety of public education opportunities, including classes or talks on topics such as:

- Adopt-a-stream
- Household hazardous waste
- Indoor water conservation
- Septic tank maintenance
- Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG)
- Rain barrels

Classes may be scheduled by the Outreach Unit for public attendance or scheduled at the request of County civic, educational, recreational, or non-profit groups.

The Outreach Unit also hosts monthly volunteer clean-up events around the County. These are mostly stream clean-up and litter pickup events. The Outreach Unit also coordinates DWR employee volunteer workdays.

### K-12 Outreach and Events

The Section's Education Unit is responsible for providing a variety of educational programs to students throughout Gwinnett County. For elementary students, the primary focus is on the "Water on Wheels" program, which aligns with Gwinnett County Schools Academic Knowledge and Skills "(AKS)" educational standards for most grade levels. Topics include the water cycle, watershed and water quality monitoring, pollution, water conservation methods, and other topics relevant to their educational curriculum and compliance with all Gwinnett County (AKS) education standards. Staff members may also be guest readers in classrooms or serve as liaisons for coordinating tours of DWR facilities.

For high school students, offerings focus more on engagement with environmental clubs, providing adopt-a-stream program information, and providing information about careers in water production, conservation, and reclamation. One of the Department's current employees cited a school visit from DWR employees as his introduction to the opportunities at DWR and the avenue that led him to seek a career with the Department.

### Water Conservation Coordination

The Water Resource Program Coordinator also serves as the water conservation coordinator for the Department. Responsibilities include checking permits to ensure appropriate mitigation strategies are proposed and implemented, offering a low-flow toilet rebate program, and coordinating with the Water Resources Outreach Manager to provide public outreach and education on water conservation topics.

Because the Water Resource Program Coordinator splits time between water conservation efforts and education program coordination, there hasn't been staff time available to create a more targeted initiative for water conservation throughout the County.

### Internal Communications Strategy and Messaging

Public Information and Outreach is responsible for developing and implementing the internal communications plan, in coordination with Department leadership. Internal strategies include creating the County Connections newsletter, sending informational emails as appropriate, and creating the Tyler Talks newsletter – a departmental email communicating relevant information and updates from the DWR Department Director to DWR staff.

### Construction-related Communications

The Construction-related Communications Project Coordinator is responsible for coordinating communications and engagement with residents and other stakeholders who may be impacted by DWR construction projects. These communications start in advance of the construction kickoff, and include letters, face-to-face and public meetings, postcards, signage in the impacted area with contact information for the contractor or crew responsible for the work, and phone calls and emails with project status and in response to stakeholder inquiry. The Unit is engaged in the CIP process and develops an individualized communications plan for each project.

## Communications

This Section has strong internal communications and works to ensure that information is also disseminated throughout the rest of DWR, as appropriate.

As noted in the key functions section, the Section is responsible for a variety of communications efforts throughout the Department. The Section regularly holds virtual Teams or in-person meetings to keep everyone up to date with upcoming projects, events, and general workload awareness.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Section has developed comprehensive internal and external communications strategies, including a full emergency communications plan for incidents such as sewer spills, boil water advisories, and pathogens in the water. The Section does not have a dedicated method of directly contacting geotargeted areas or residents in areas that have been identified as potentially impacted.

The Section has also worked to target areas of the County with high rates of issues that impact the sewer system, such as FOG, to provide additional outreach and education about mitigating those types of issues.

The Section uses a variety of communication channels to ensure that they are meeting stakeholders who interact with the County in a variety of ways. The Section engages using the County's social media accounts, the County Connection newsletter, the Commissioners' newsletters, flyers, brochures, postcards, mailers included with water bills, radio interviews, and TV Gwinnett, as appropriate. Currently, only the Section Manager has media training.

The Section has ideas for more targeted initiatives for water conservation, such as leak detection device installation rebates, increased outreach for lower-income residents, rental properties, and high-density areas, but currently does not have the staffing to support these additional initiatives.

## Systems and Applications

The Section currently utilizes Lucity to track all of its public interactions, tracking the number of events and the number of attendees for the events. The Section utilizes all social media channels made available by the County to promote information about events, emergency communications, and other information relevant to stakeholders. The Department does not have its own social media accounts, so coordinates with the Communications Department to share information through the County's social media channels.

For the Construction Communications Unit, all interactions and communications plan progress is tracked through spreadsheets.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Section collects some output data in Lucity around the number of individuals that the Section interacts with through public outreach and education offerings. There is also a separate spreadsheet to track the construction communications interactions.

For some events, Lucity also tracks the number of pounds of trash picked up, or number of pounds of hazardous waste collected. There are currently no formal follow-up plans or metrics to ensure sustained engagement of interested residents and stakeholders.

The Section does not currently have outcome-based measures or analysis. The Department collects a variety of data points that, when tracked over time, may provide some insight about the impacts of the outreach and education programs the Section hosts. Field Operations shares some information, but there is not a formal, consistent sharing of information currently.

Data on hydrojet flushing work orders is shared on occasion to provide some insight into whether FOG workshops and outreach made an impact on sewer blockages requiring flushing, but this hasn't been consistently tracked.

The Section may also want to consider geo-tracked data analysis on potential education program efficacy in schools where the Education Unit regularly presents. The Field Operations Division uses Lucity to collect detailed information about preventive and corrective work orders. This data, coupled with geo-tracked water consumption data, recycling efforts, etc. may all provide some insight into program impacts.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Many of the employees in the Public Information and Outreach Section have backgrounds in science or education and do not have training in public speaking, writing for public utilization, or media training.

**Recommendation 1A:** The Section should budget time and funding to support public speaking, writing for public consumption, and media training for all Section members.

**Recommendation 1B:** As the Section fills its vacant positions, it should consider seeking applicants who have communications experience or training as well as the other job requirements.

**Observation 2:** Currently, education outreach and water conservation coordination and outreach are performed by the same group. This group currently has one full-time employee and two interns to support the work.

**Recommendation 2:** The Section should consider splitting water conservation and education outreach into two separate positions. If there is a separate position dedicated to water conservation, a more targeted strategic plan should be developed to ensure consistent, effective initiatives are developed to provide information about water conservation initiatives and programs.

**Observation 3:** The Public Information and Outreach Section collects data on a variety of outputs, including number of interactions and engagements, and pounds of trash or hazardous waste collected. Currently these efforts are not consistently compared with outcome data, or other departmental data to better understand the impacts of the Section's efforts.

**Recommendation 3:** The Section should work with other DWR divisions, in particular Field Operations, to understand what information is regularly collected in Lucity about preventive and corrective maintenance work orders. The Section should coordinate with the Field Operations Program Analyst III to regularly receive data and reports from Lucity that may better capture the potential impacts of education and outreach efforts.



## 3.B.6 Department of Water Resources – Technical Services

The Technical Services Division (“Technical Services”) supports, improves, and optimizes the operation and maintenance of DWR’s assets. The Division provides permitting, regulatory compliance, planning, and operational assessment services related to the County’s water, sewer, and stormwater program delivery. This includes the prioritization, planning, and preliminary design of projects based on long-range planning, capacity, risks, and needs.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Permitting and Water Quality
- Stormwater Services
- Water and Sewer Services
- Infrastructure Support

### Permitting and Water Quality

The Permitting and Regulatory Compliance Section is responsible for maintaining compliance with state issued Environmental Protection Authority (“EPA”) permits and for issuing and monitoring County Industrial Pretreatment Permits.

#### *State Issued EPA Permits*

The Permit and Regulatory Section Manager is supported by a Water Quality Superintendent and numerous environmental scientist and water quality positions that sample and test water and wastewater on a daily basis throughout the County to ensure compliance with multiple EPA permits. The County has received multiple EPA water and wastewater permits to provide drinking water and treat wastewater for County users that require a great deal of compliance with federal and state requirements. The EPA permit requirements necessitate regular water and wastewater sampling and testing.

A safe and reliable drinking supply is essential to a growing, progressive community like Gwinnett. DWR staff is committed to researching and implementing innovative ways to deliver high quality water at an excellent value. DWR’s water supply comes from Lake Lanier, providing “raw water” that is naturally low in suspended materials, bacteria, dissolved organics, and metals. This raw water is processed by one of two water production facilities – the Shoal Creek or Lanier Filter plants. Water samples are taken and tested throughout the day on a daily basis. The Section operates the Environmental Lab which tests and analyzes both the raw water and treated water for contaminants at all stages of the water treatment process (intake, throughout the distribution system, and final product at various locations). The Environmental Lab tests water at more than 800 sites throughout the County and includes more than 20 Environmental Scientists and Water Quality positions that perform numerous daily tests to ensure EPA quality and safety standards.

DWR publishes periodic Water Quality Reports leveraging the data from the Permit and Regulatory Services Section. The Water Quality Reports are succinct summaries ideal for public consumption that show various testing results and documents any EPA violations. The tables below are excerpts from the 2020 Water Quality Report.

EPA Regulated Inorganic Substances or Contaminants							
Substance (Unit)	Analysis Frequency	MCL	MCLG	Average	Range	Major Sources	Violation
Fluoride <sup>1</sup> (ppm)	Daily	4	4	0.97	0.68-1.11	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth	No
Nitrate/Nitrite <sup>2</sup> (ppm)	Annually	10	10	0.48	0.43-0.52	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks; erosion of natural deposits	No

<sup>1</sup> Fluoride is added to water to help promote dental health in children.  
<sup>2</sup> Nitrate and Nitrite are measured together

Gwinnett County Water Distribution System - Lead and Copper Levels at Residential Taps					
Substance (Unit)	Action Level 90%	90th Percentile sample result	Number of sites exceeding Action Level (AL)	Major Sources	Violation
Lead <sup>3</sup> (ppb)	15	1.2	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems	No
Copper <sup>4</sup> (ppm)	1.3	0.17	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems	No

Gwinnett is required to test a minimum of 50 homes for lead and copper every three years. The last testing occurred in 2020, and the next testing will take place in 2023. Compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule is based on obtaining the 90th percentile of the total number of samples collected and comparing it against the lead and copper action levels. To have an exceedance, the 90th percentile value must be greater than 15 ppb for lead or 1.3 ppm for copper.

<sup>3</sup>Of the 50 homes tested in 2020, no sites exceeded the action level (AL) for lead.  
<sup>4</sup> Of the 50 homes tested in 2020, no sites exceeded the action level (AL) for copper.

Disinfection By-Products, By-Product Precursors and Disinfectant Residuals							
Substance (Unit)	Analysis Frequency	MCL (LRAA)	MCLG (LRAA)	Highest Detected LRAA <sup>5</sup>	Range	Major Sources	Violation
TTHMs (Total Trihalomethanes) (ppb) - Stage 2	Quarterly	80	0	59.7	11.125-59.7	By-products of drinking water disinfection	No
HAA5s (Haloacetic Acids) (ppb) - Stage 2	Quarterly	60	0	31.125	11.275-31.125	By-products of drinking water disinfection	No
TOC (Total Organic Carbon) (ppm)	Monthly	TT	N/A	Average=1.08	0.88-1.3	Decay of naturally-occurring organic matter in the water withdrawn from sources such as lakes and streams	N/A
Chlorine (ppm)	Monthly	MRDL=4	MRDLG=4	1.64	0.82-2.29	Drinking Water Disinfectant	No
Bromate (ppb)	Monthly	10	0	Average=1.5	<1.0-2.4	By-product of drinking water disinfection utilizing ozone	No

<sup>5</sup>LRAA= Locational Running Annual Average

Turbidity							
Substance (Unit)	Analysis Frequency	MCL	MCLG	Highest value reported	Lowest % of samples meeting limit	Major Sources	Violation
Turbidity (NTU)	Continuous	TT, <0.3 in 95% of monthly samples	0	0.26	100%	Soil Runoff	No

Note: Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. It is monitored because it is a good indicator of water quality. High turbidity can hinder the effectiveness of disinfectants.

Microbiological Contaminants							
Substance (Unit)	Analysis Frequency	MCL	MCLG	Highest % positive samples (monthly)	Range	Major Sources	Violation
Total Coliform Bacteria 6 +/-	Monthly	<5% positive samples (monthly)	0	0.13%	0-0.13%	Naturally present in the environment	No
* 270 samples taken monthly							

Wastewater is also sampled and tested to maintain compliance with EPA permit requirements. DWR maintains more than 215 pump stations to move wastewater from homes and businesses to one of the County’s three wastewater treatment facilities – F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Center, Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility, or Crooked Creek Water Reclamation Facility.

DWR’s sewer collection system serves more than 180,000 sewer customers throughout the County. The system includes more than 3,000 miles of wastewater pipeline. The three wastewater treatment facilities treat on average 56 million gallons of wastewater a day.

The Section’s Environmental Lab generates, maintains, and reports large amount of data related to water and wastewater conditions and provides monthly excel reports to the Permit and Regulatory Compliance Section Manager. The Section Manager reviews the reports and prepares the monthly (and other periodic) reports required to be submitted to the EPA per the County’s water and wastewater permit requirements.

DWR has maintained a long history of not having any EPA water and wastewater permit violations. In fact, Gwinnett County recently won the Georgia Association of Water Professional’s regional Water Taste Test Competition in 2022, going on to subsequently win the statewide “taste-off.”

#### *Industrial Pretreatment Permits*

The Permitting and Regulatory Compliance Section is also responsible for issuing and monitoring compliance for Industrial Pretreatment Permits. Industrial Pretreatment Permits are issued by the Section to various commercial/private sector organizations for wastewater discharge into the County system related to the organization’s business (laundromats, manufacturing plants, etc.). Industrial Pretreatment Permits are designed to protect the County’s water system and reduce conventional and toxic pollutant levels discharged into the environment by industries.

DWR has implemented a local pretreatment program approved by the EPD to issue permits and monitor wastewater discharge. Relevant businesses apply for an Industrial Pretreatment Permit and if approved, are required to provide periodic reporting along with Section sampling and testing. There are more than 50 industrial categories that require Industrial Pretreatment Permits. The Permitting and Regulatory Compliance Section maintains Water Quality Coordinator, Water Quality Supervisor, and Water Quality Associate II positions to oversee the Industrial Pretreatment Permits program.

#### *Stormwater Services*

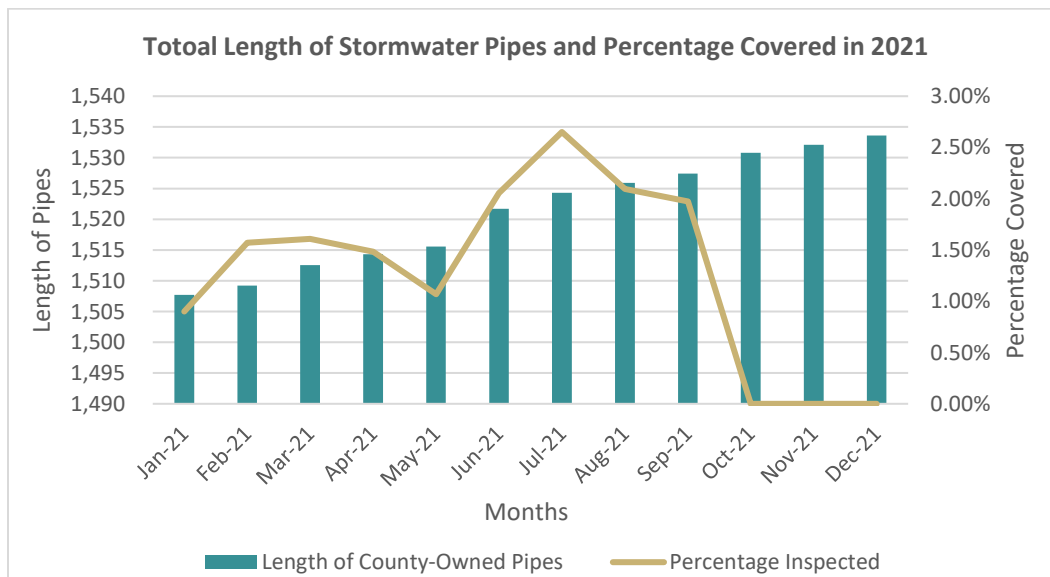
Stormwater Services provides active monitoring and reporting for the County’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (“MS4”) Permit, monitoring other stormwater related strategic initiatives, and supports capital projects related to stormwater.

*MS4 Permit and Other Improvement Programs*

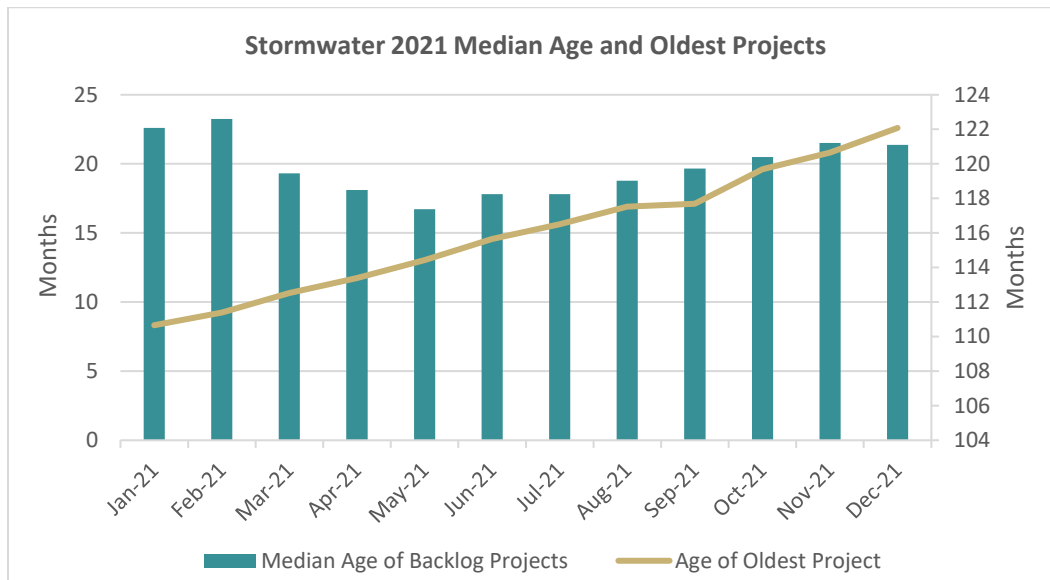
Stormwater is the water that originates from rain and other precipitation. Stormwater can soak into the soil, be held on the surface and evaporate, or run off into lakes, streams, and other local waterbodies. Stormwater is not treated at facilities and instead travels directly to local waterbodies. As a result of decades of growth and development, bodies of water in the County have been affected by flooding and erosion, land development, road construction, littering, landscaping, lawn care, and other activities. The Stormwater Services Division manages stormwater quantity and quality through various operational and engineering practices.

The Federal Environmental Protection Division (“EPD”) issued Gwinnett County its current MS4 permit in June of 2019 and required the County to develop and submit a Stormwater Management Plan (“SWMP”). The County developed its SWMP and submitted to the EPD in December 2019. The County’s SWMP outlines numerous objectives and measurable goals to manage and reduce stormwater based on various operational, engineering, and public education practices. The SWMP includes information on the County’s maintenance of stormwater systems, illicit discharge detection and elimination, monitoring of impaired waterways, public education and involvement, industrial and highly visible pollutant source inspections, and stormwater controls. Stormwater Services actively monitors existing conditions and water quality, and leverages modeling techniques to predict future impacts.

Stormwater Services collaborates with other Departmental divisions to help ensure compliance and meet the requirements of the MS4 permit. As an example, Stormwater Services collaborates with the Field Operations Division (Stormwater Maintenance and Repair Unit) to ensure that all pipe is inspected at least once every five-years, which is the length of the MS4 permit term. DWR schedules all pipe to be inspected at least once every 4.5 years, with a six-month window built in to allow for catch-up if there are significant issues. One of the metrics tracks the total amount of proactive miles measured each month. The following table compares the total length of proactive inspections relative to the total length of all County-owned stormwater pipes. For 2021, the DWR averaged approximately 19.5 miles proactively inspected per month.



Another data point that stormwater collects that depicts workload and helps illustrate the balance between corrective and preventive needs is the median age of backlog projects, and the age of the oldest project, both tracked in months.



While the Department has made some progress in reducing the median age of workorder backlog, the age of the oldest project continues to grow, suggesting that additional resources may need to be dedicated to assisting in working through the backlog, or assessing if there are trends on the types of work requests that are aging beyond 24 months that may require a different approach for resolution.

In addition to monitoring MS4 compliance, Stormwater Services also manages the County’s Watershed Improvement Program (“WIP”) and Watershed Protection Plans (“WPPs”). The WIP focuses on specific projects to improve those areas impacted by urban stormwater runoff. To target those areas most in need of improvement projects, WIPs are developed for watersheds throughout the County.

Stormwater fees are based on the square footage of the impervious surface area (hardened surfaces that prevent or significantly reduce the ability for water to enter the soil) for each property. The amount of impervious surface (in 100 sq feet increments) is multiplied by the current rate of \$2.46 to determine annual stormwater user fees. The user fees are applied to the annual tax bill. Stormwater user fees are periodically assessed and adjusted. Stormwater Services maintains very detailed information about the County’s stormwater user fee on its website with numerous artifacts explaining stormwater, the need for a stormwater program, the establishing ordinance, applications for credits, and contact information for public inquiries.

### *Capital Project Planning*

Stormwater Services is involved in the planning of new capital projects and helping to mitigate stormwater issues with current infrastructure/existing construction. Stormwater Services is involved in the “Emerging CIP” process in which all the relevant domains within the Water Resources Department gather to discuss new capital projects with each group providing domain-specific expertise. Stormwater Services assesses each new capital project to understand potential stormwater impacts and develops strategies to mitigate and manage stormwater implications. As projects are being planned, Stormwater Services also coordinates with other County departments (such as Transportation, Education, and Parks) to assist with the project’s design to better manage stormwater impacts.

For capital planning, Stormwater Services leverages the EPA's Storm Water Management Model (“SWMM”). SWMM is an open-source public software used for the planning, analysis, and design related to stormwater runoff, combined and sanitary sewers, and other drainage systems. Stormwater Services leverages the SWMM to help predict runoff quantity and quality from drainage systems.

### *Water and Sewer Services*

The Water and Sewer Technical Division (“Division”) is responsible for the capital planning and preliminary design of water and wastewater projects before the Engineering and Construction Division constructs the projects. The Division is divided into two primary asset classifications – linear (pipe) and vertical (plants/facilities). The Division is also responsible for asset management and leverages Lucity for managing linear assets and leverages Maximo for managing vertical assets.

### *Capital Planning*

The Division is responsible for the initial conceptual design (approximately 30% complete) of water and wastewater capital projects. Capital projects are identified and selected in multiple ways:

- In accordance with Master Plans
- In accordance with Repair and Replacement schedules
- Through proactive Divisional data analysis identifying and predicting needs
- By receipt of issues/complaints from citizens and other stakeholders

DWR’s Capital Improvement Plan consists of projects that provide clean, potable water for Gwinnett residents and businesses; collect and reclaim wastewater to protect the environment and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public; and manage stormwater. These projects include construction of new facilities, improvements to existing water facilities, and projects that improve the efficiency of operations. The need for improvements or new facilities may be driven by increased demand, changes in regulatory requirements, required service level improvements, asset replacement due to age, or a combination of these and other factors. The focus of DWR’s current Capital Improvement Plan is the rehabilitation and replacement of aging infrastructure and ensuring capacity for the future. Capital projects typically fall into the following six categories:

- Water Reclamation Facilities
- Collection System
- Distribution System
- Water Production Facilities
- Systems and Technology

- Miscellaneous

DWR's 2022 capital budget is approximately \$233M.

DWR maintains a good collaborative and strategic working environment. As capital projects are initially identified and approaching the design phase, the Department has created the "Emerging CIP" process in which all the relevant domains with the Water Resources Department gathers monthly to discuss new capital projects with each group providing domain-specific expertise. The Water and Sewer Technical Services Division is involved in the Emerging CIP process to review and assess each new capital project regardless of whether the project has direct or indirect water/wastewater impacts, and develops strategies to manage water and wastewater implications.

As capital projects move forward, the Water and Sewer Technical Services Division is responsible for developing the "Project Scoping Report" which takes the project concept to approximately 30% design. The Project Scoping Report is then passed to the Engineering and Construction Division for review, final design, and construction.

#### *Asset Management*

DWR's water and wastewater infrastructure system consists of:

- Water Distribution System – 3,800 miles
- Water Collection System – 3,000 miles
- Water Production – 2 facilities
- Water Reclamation – 3 facilities
- Wastewater Pump Stations – 213 stations

For years, DWR has maintained an Assessment Management Plan ("AMP") based on data within the Department's Computerized Maintenance Management System ("CMMS"). Decades of data around work orders and inspections from Lucity (liner assets) and Maximo (vertical assets) was used to help develop the AMP. Approximately four years ago, DWR created a Strategic Asset Management Plan ("SAMP") to:

- Define the purpose of asset management plans
- Increase alignment with the County's overarching strategic goals
- Delineate asset classes into various systems
- Create a common methodology for defining risk and a common structure for development of the plan

The development and maintenance of a SAMP is a leading practice and aids the Water and Sewer Technical Services Division in managing and extending the life of Department assets. The SAMP includes a detailed hierarchy for the asset registry, procedures for how work is coded, and data around the quality of the work performed. The SAMP includes comprehensive asset inventories, robust maintenance management systems, asset condition documentation, risk-based prioritization, business case evaluations, and the monitoring of KPIs.

The linear assets managed through Lucity also maintain spatial information through GIS. The vertical assets managed through Maximo do not have any spatial information.

### Infrastructure Support

The Infrastructure Support Division is responsible for assisting developers with new construction development projects and for maintaining asset and GIS information for the Department.

### Development Support

The Development Support Section recently moved from the Engineering and Construction Division to the Technical Services Division to better align its pre-development services with similar functions within the Technical Services Division. The primary function of the Development Support Section is to assist developers in the construction planning phase to support capital investment and the related economic benefits to the County.

Developers inquire about water and sewer status with the Section regarding current infrastructure and future plans that impact potential development. The Section works with developers to spur economic growth while protecting County citizens and stakeholders ensuring that all proposed developments are feasible, safe, and align with environmental standards.

Developers complete and submit a “Sewer Capacity Certification Request” to the Section for review and potential approval. The Sewer Capacity Certification Requests detail proposed sewer impacts on the existing system. The Section reviews the requests and performs predictive modeling using InfoWorks ICM ( a modeling software) to assess capacity and system impacts.

### Data Management

The Data Management Section manages the CMMS which oversees service requests, inspections, and work orders, and also is responsible for maintaining the Department’s GIS database. The Section leverages Esri ArcMap for its GIS platform. Information is collected, maintained, and provided to other Department divisions/sections for data analysis and assessment.

As the Data Management Section is responsible for the Department’s GIS data, the Section is instrumental in providing data related to stormwater billing. The Section manages a third-party vendor to annually conduct a fly over of impervious surfaces throughout the County. The GIS information is used to calculate impervious surface square feet for each parcel of land, which is provided to the County’s Tax Assessor for stormwater user fee calculation which is included in the annual tax assessment.

Much of the data maintained by the Data Management Section is used by other DWR divisions/sections to create periodic dashboards for data management and analysis.

### Communications

The Division demonstrates good communications and collaboration with other divisions within DWR. The Technical Services Division is generally highly educated and engaged in its technical mission and objectives. Numerous Division professionals hold related advanced degrees and also served as industry consultants bringing industry experience, best practices, and lessons learned to DWR. As the various functions and roles of the Technical Services Division are generally intertwined with other Department functions and professionals, the Division appears to understand the importance of proactive and constant communications. The Division also appears to provide good customer service to the development community in terms of technical and infrastructure information assistance, and provides timely service.



## Strategic Initiatives

The Technical Services Division and DWR as a whole, is considered advanced in its operations and a leader in the industry. This is evidenced by the numerous awards achieved by the Department. The Division has already implemented numerous strategic initiatives enhancing quality and output. Examples are:

- DWR often exceeds EPA/EDP standards and requirements for water, wastewater, and stormwater
- The Division participates in the collaborative Emerging CIP monthly meetings to discuss thoughts on water, wastewater, and stormwater impacts/implications
- The County has developed a stormwater user fee similar to other local governments. The user fee is also assessed on the annual tax bill helping to ensure timely collections
- The Division maintains a “Strategic Asset Management Plan” which proactively better manages and extends the life of assets

The Division does oversee a “septic to sewer” program to assist with homeowners converting their septic systems to the Department’s sewer infrastructure. The Division should better prioritize, promote, and incentive this program to enhance the effectiveness.

## Systems and Applications

- Lucity is the primary system for managing linear lines of business, including Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater
- Maximo is the primary system for managing vertical lines of business, including fieldwork and work requests at each plant
- Maximo was the first maintenance request management system, but Lucity was brought in to integrate with GIS for increased visibility and tracking
- ArcGIS is the primary GIS suite of products used throughout the Division
- Tableau is used for data visualization in reporting and assessing Division data
- Hach WIMS is leveraged by the Division for water and wastewater data analysis and reporting

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks and maintains voluminous amounts of data and information that is reported internally and externally – which is a positive achievement and speaks to the investment in multiple needed management systems. The Division should assess all its current data/performance tracking and potential data/performance tracking needs to ensure that all data managed is relevant and reported. Leadership should approve a data/performance catalog that specifies what data is maintained and assessed, the period of reporting, and who the target audiences should be.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Internally, permit-related data is often reported in Excel files. The Division is responsible for measuring, monitoring, and assessing large volumes of data for permit requirements.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should assess the utilization of more formal management systems to more holistically track, report, and maintain data for permit related requirements.

**Observation 2:** Permit records (reporting and supporting data) are often maintained in hardcopy format.

**Recommendation 2:** Permit records should be stored in electronic format available for instant access to all relevant DWR professionals.

**Observation 3A:** Lucity is used by the Division to manage linear assets. Maximo is used to manage vertical assets.

**Observation 3B:** Lucity has integration with GIS, Maximo does not have integration with GIS.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should explore the feasibility of utilizing a single system to comprehensively manage all assets with integration to GIS capabilities.

**Observation 4:** The Division tracks and maintains voluminous amounts of data and information that is reported internally and externally.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should assess all its current data/performance tracking and potential data/performance tracking needs to ensure that all data managed is relevant and reported. Leadership should approve a data/performance catalog that specifies what data is maintained and assessed, the period of reporting, and who the target audiences should be.

## 3.B.7 Department of Water Resources – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed the management of each division within the Department of Water Resources to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide a comprehensive overview of Department of Water Resources' use of IT. After collecting observations from the interviews, we analyzed the interview results and categorized them. We followed up with stakeholders on common issues to gain additional information. We summarized observations into a matrix to display the observations category, related system or process, issue summary, and associated comments. Lastly, based on the summarized observations, we developed recommendations for improvement. The following sections present the summarized improvement opportunities by process or system identified in the department interviews.

### Commendations

While opportunities for improvement are a typical result of an operational assessment, the DWR should be commended for the following:

1. The creation and building of The Water Tower a nonprofit organization, a public-private sector partnership focusing on applied research, technology innovation, workforce development, and community engagement.
2. Inclusion of technology in the Department's strategic plan. As a note, several issues and recommendations identified in the assessment were identified in the Department's 2021-2022 Strategic Plan.

### Technology Observations

#### Business and Staff Services

##### *Finance*

- The current billing software SAP is not user-friendly and lacks mobile capability. The Department manages multiple billing systems, and there is a need for a single billing system for the Department that integrates with the County's Finance Department.

##### *Customer Care*

- The Customer Care Division receives customer complaints via phone, email, or other means. Cases are logged and managed in the CRM. Some issues may require work orders to be entered in Lucity, which does not communicate with the CRM and/or SAP.

##### *HR*

- No system or technology issues were reported.

### *Systems and Technology*

- The Department has 90 applications to manage. Application management is distributed between the Systems and Technology Section, application owners within other divisions in DWR, and the County's Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department. The systems and technology group has created a matrix for system responsibility between divisions and departments. However, the roles and responsibilities are not always followed, resulting in miscommunications and duplicative effort. An example provided is that a user may report an issue with an application, and the issue is reported multiple times to the vendor by different groups in the County.
- The System and Technology Section provides desktop and printer support to the Department. The Section is responsible for configuring computers for new Customer Service Agents. A new user account and computer are configured for each temporary worker. Due to various reasons, a percentage of the temps due not complete training and are not hired, resulting in wasted time configuring computers.
- Additional staff is needed to manage operations and maintenance. Product owners are present, but there is a lack of IT positions that must be filled. It is challenging to fill IT positions due to the skills needed and high salary requirements.
- The Division would like to better leverage Gwinnett County's ITS Department but feels that communications and service is often not timely.
- Leadership has limited oversight to support upgrades and operation and maintenance work. Specifically, there are no standards or processes for planned system upgrades and replacements.
- The Division stated a need for a full-time project manager to support new initiatives, more support and collaboration with Gwinnett County IT, and requires more internal support as management's scope of work grows.
- Jira is used internally for performance tracking, communications, and project management.
- Lucity and Maximo are both available maintenance request management systems but do not meet all the Department's requirements.
- There is a high variability of responsiveness from the County ITS Department. The Infrastructure and Networking teams within ITS have been responsive and reliable in the past. However, some application teams, back-office support, purchasing, and receivables have not been consistently dedicated.
- Remedyforce is useful for better tracking and cataloging repeated issues to assess the root cause better.
- AWWA completed a study to determine what cyber security upgrades were needed, resulting in a new cyber security team and network operations center. The security standards are high and difficult to meet.

- Onboarding and offboarding temporary employees in Customer Care is a challenge, as the timing and process are difficult to manage. They must create accounts and image machines for each new user and erase devices for outgoing users, which frequently occurs due to high temporary employee turnover.
- Maintaining standards and processes while updating systems is challenging.
- Major changes could be communicated more effectively by the County ITS Department.
- There is a need for higher visibility regarding the County's system inventory, such as providing a central knowledge base for IT staff.
- There is a need for better cohesion and communication with other departments.
- Software license management is complex due to a lack of cohesion between divisions when updating staff changes and status. Offboarding communication for assets and licenses should improve as the team implements more standards and processes for easier tracking. However, contractor management is complex due to frequently missing or incorrect information in the paperwork.
- The Division has a comprehensive plan developed titled "2021-2023 Strategic Business Plan Systems and Technology Division," which provides strategic guidance for division initiatives. These initiatives include cyber security upgrades, COOP, standards review, compliance, asset management, records and content management, infrastructure management, mobilized workforce, increased customer service, and better resource management.

#### *Safety and Training*

- The Training Unit has developed over 60 training programs. uPerform is used for content creation. It was reported that uPerform is difficult and is limited in its ability to develop multi-course programs that auto advance and track progress within the lesson sequence.
- To distribute and track employee training, the County uses a custom Learning Management System (LMS) integrated with SAP. Training staff can assign training courses to position numbers in SAP to assign and track employee training requirements. The Training Unit included their LMS requirements in the vendor specifications for the new ERP and are hopeful that they will be able to replace their current LMS with the County's new ERP system.

#### *Engineering and Construction*

- All hard bid projects are managed in Excel, including standard operating guidelines ("SOGs"). Contractors have their document management systems, but hard copies must be submitted for DWR's "old school files."
- Engineering and Construction utilizes GIS to display previous, current, and upcoming projects they manage.
- The Division stated that DWR doesn't have a project management or enterprise record management system.

- The Division utilizes the system CIP Tracker to track project cash flow and performance tracking. For each project, looking to see if the contractor is meeting deliverable schedules, but there is no individual employee metric tracking other than reviewing CIP Tracker to make sure data is up to date and for annual employee appraisals.

## Facility Operations

### *Operations*

- The Department uses eLogger to record shifts and inspection notes.
- The Department uses Centralpoint for document management and plans to expand use to include workflow and comprehensive document storage.
- LIMS is the laboratory information system.
- The Department uses Hach WIMS (Water Information Management System) for data analysis and system monitoring. Hach WIMS is used for data capture, process management, transformation, and EPA and EPD reporting. The system provides a dashboard information screen for plant operations and efficiency.
- Hach WIMS is the primary system used by the Division to collect and report data to state and federal government agencies for over 20 years. It is integrated with the LIM system for automated data processing.
- The Division has utilized Maximo for asset management for over 10 years. It is integrated with Outlook for alerts but is not user friendly. Its scheduled date for decommissioning is 2025.
- eLogger is the system for managing station checks and pump stations. It has helped digitize and automate previously manual processes.

### *Maintenance*

- The Division uses Maximo for work order entry and ensuring that all maintenance is associated with a specific asset.

### *Plant Engineering*

- The Department has struggled with Tableau due to the amount of data imported for analysis. The Department needs a plan for Tableau to ensure the right visualizations are being developed for the right audiences.
- The Division uses ArcGIS for geospatial work.
- Contract management predominately involves annual contract renewal or review. Renewals and rebids come from Purchasing, then they coordinate with Engineering and Construction to complete contracts. There is an internal spreadsheet for tracking all managed contracts.
- Facility Operations uses Jira for contract management and some project management.

## Field Operations

- The Division has Data Analysts who utilize Lucity for work orders for supporting field operation systems, and provide some Lucity support for staff.

## Technical Services

- Lucity is the primary system for managing linear lines of business, including Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater.
- Maximo is the primary system for managing vertical lines of business, including fieldwork and work requests at each plant.
- Maximo was the first maintenance request management system, but Lucity was brought in to integrate with GIS for increased visibility and tracking.
- ArcGIS is the primary GIS suite of products used throughout DWR.

## Strategic Programs

- The Strategic Programs group utilizes Lucity and finds it to work well for their needs.
- The Strategic Programs group utilizes Microsoft Teams to track all Law Department projects and agreements.
- Excel is used internally to manage the comprehensive list of intergovernmental agreements (“IGAs”).
- ArcGIS and Lucity are working well for the Strategic Programs group.

## Technology Summary Recommendations

There are multiple systems within the Department of Water Resources, and the Assessment revealed opportunities for improvement.

Our summary recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Update Systems and Equipment:** There are numerous recommendations to update systems and equipment, including Lucity, Maximo, and SAP. We recommend taking a strategic approach and looking at each system holistically to develop a system improvement plan for each application and working with the County ITS Department to incorporate the individual system plans into a detailed technology plan for the Department.
- 2. Increase Collaboration:** There are numerous recommendations for better cross Department collaboration with the County ITS Department. We recommend creating a team to evaluate and develop a plan for better collaboration and communications throughout the Department.
- 3. Eliminate Duplicative Systems:** Several opportunities exist to evaluate redundant systems (Lucity, Maximo, multiple billing systems). We recommend conducting a fit-gap session or a needs assessment to define the requirements for system requirements.
- 4. Increase Resources:** There are several recommendations to increase resources and hire staff. We recommend developing a strategy to address the resource needs and develop a plan. Due to labor shortages, consider evaluating and increasing the use of outsourced staffing models.
- 5. Improve System Functionality:** There are several recommendations for evaluating the existing systems to determine if specific observations can be addressed.

- 6. **Improve Process:** There is a recommendation for improving the process for configuring new Customer Service Agent’s computers.

Regarding the recommendations, it should be noted that several issues and recommendations identified in the assessment were identified in the Department's 2021-2022 Strategic Plan. DWR should continue working on the following objectives.

- **Objective 1: Cyber Security (SCADA Directive):** Develop a cyber security design and plan to focus on the SCADA system primarily. This objective will create the segmentation within the SCADA network to protect against outside threats and other internal systems that could impact SCADA operations.
- **Objective 3: Systems and Technology Standards:** Review the current DWR Systems and Technology standards and work with a demand services contractor to outline and implement the new standards.
- **Objective 4: Software Compliance and Asset Management:** Maintain compliance of all DWR endpoint devices (laptops, desktops, and other handheld systems) using software management tools that will ensure that devices are running the currently supported software versions along with managing the number of devices within DWR.
- Utilize an asset management system that can effectively integrate with other purchasing, human resources, accounting, and budgeting departments to ensure increased visibility and up-to-date assets and staffing.
- **Objective 6: Infrastructure Management:** Establish a sustainable, secure, compliant, robust, and reliable IT infrastructure that enables a consistent technology experience for all users.
- **Objective 9: Resource Management:** Develop internal resources in the Systems and Technology Division by setting individual goals related to specific training related to the resource's technical discipline

### Detailed Observations

Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
Business and Staff Services	Managing current system is difficult	The current billing software SAP is not user-friendly and lacks mobile capability. The Department manages multiple billing systems, and there is a need for a single billing system for the Department that integrates with the County’s Financial Services Department.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> Work with the team evaluating the new ERP system to determine if the new ERP system will provide an enterprise billing solution that includes utility billing.	SAP



Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
Business and Staff Services	Lack of Cohesion	Application management is distributed between the Systems and Technology Unit, application owners within other divisions in DWR, and the County's ITS Department. The Systems and Technology Unit has created a matrix for system responsibility between divisions and departments. However, the roles and responsibilities are not always followed, resulting in miscommunications and duplicative effort. An example provided is that a user may report an issue with an application, and the issue is reported multiple times to the vendor by different groups in the County.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Meet with the application owners in the division to review the roles and responsibilities matrix and make any adjustments as needed.	Process
Business and Staff Services	Lack of Standards and Processes	A new user account and computer are configured for each temporary worker. The agents are hired as temporary workers and must complete a one-week training course before starting. Due to various reasons, a percentage of the temps due not complete the training and are not hired, resulting in wasted time configuring computers.	<b>Improve Processes:</b> Create a pool of computer with generic user ids to assign to temps for training.	Process
Business and Staff Services	Managing current system is difficult	uPerform is used for content creation. It was reported that uPerform is difficult and is limited in its ability to develop multi-course programs that auto advance and track progress within the lesson sequence.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> Define the requirements for a new training content development systems and work with IT to evaluate a new vendor solution.	uPerform
Business and Staff Services	Managing current system is difficult	The Training Group included their LMS requirements in the vendor specifications for the new ERP.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> Monitor and participate in the new ERP system project to ensure the new ERP will meet the County's Learning Management System requirements.	SAP

Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
Engineering and Construction	Lack of Resources	The Division stated that DWR doesn't have a project management system or enterprise record management system.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> The lack of project management and enterprise records management systems has been reported by other departments. Work with IT to define the requirements for a Project Management System and Enterprise Record Management Systems.	Process
Engineering and Construction	Managing current system is difficult	All hard bid projects are managed in Excel, including standard operating guidelines (SOGs). Contractors have their document management systems, but hard copies must be submitted for DWR's files. The project manager in DWR is the sole individual with access to those systems.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> The lack of project management and enterprise records management systems has been reported by other departments. Work with IT to define the requirements for a Project Management System and Enterprise Record Management Systems.	Excel
Engineering and Construction	Managing current system is difficult	The Division utilizes the system CIP Tracker to track project cash flow and performance. For each project, looking to see if the contractor is meeting deliverable schedules, but there is no individual employee metric tracking other than reviewing CIP Tracker to make sure data is up to date and for annual employee appraisals.	<b>Improve System Functionality:</b> Review the CIP track tool to determine if there is a way the functionality can be added to track individual employee performance.	CIP Tracker
Facility Operations	Lack of engagement with existing systems	Centralpoint is utilized by the division for document management but is underutilized.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Promote the functionality of Centralpoint to the divisions.	Centralpoint
Facility Operations	Managing current system is difficult	The Division has utilized Maximo for asset management for over 10 years. It is integrated with Outlook for alerts but is not user friendly. Its scheduled date for decommissioning is 2025.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> Maximo is used by other departments at the County. Work with IT to ensure that Maximo will be upgraded or replaced.	Maximo

Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
Facility Operations	Lack of Cohesion	There is a lack of cohesion with the County's ITS Department; they are challenging to engage with and require frequent follow-up, as new systems and upgrades require coordination to open firewalls.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Leadership and IT teams should develop and adhere to an IT upgrade plan/schedule.	Process
Facility Operations	Managing current system is difficult	The Department has struggled with Tableau due to the amount of data imported for analysis.	<b>Improve System Functionality:</b> Develop a plan for Tableau to ensure the right visualizations are being developed for the right audiences.	Tableau
Facility Operations	Lack of Resources	The SCADA team only has engineers but needs more staff for security and upgrades. Operational Technology staffing is difficult due to its complex nature, high risk and visibility, and in-office requirements.	<b>Increase Resources:</b> Develop a strategy to hire security staff and developers for SCADA. In addition to internal hires, evaluate outsourced staffing models.	SCADA
Field Operations	Duplicate Systems	The warehouse uses Maximo for facility-based inventory. Inventory data from Maximo is transferred to SAP resulting in redundant inventory systems	<b>Eliminate Duplicate Systems:</b> Evaluate the functionality of the new ERP System to determine if it meets the Department's asset inventory requirements.	Maximo
Field Operations	Manual Processes	Contract management predominately involves annual contract renewal or review. Renewals and rebids come from Purchasing, then they coordinate with Engineering and Construction to complete contracts. There is an internal spreadsheet for tracking all managed contracts.	<b>Update Systems and Equipment:</b> Evaluate the functionality of the new ERP System to determine if it meets the Department's contract management requirements.	Excel

Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
Systems and Technology	Lack of Cohesion	The Systems and Technology Section would like to leverage Gwinnett County's IT department but feels that accessing them is difficult. There is an opportunity for collaboration between divisions.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Develop a plan to better collaborate and communicate with the County's IT department for better visibility	Process
Systems and Technology	Lack of Cohesion	Leadership has limited oversight to support IT upgrades, support operation and maintenance. Specifically, there are no standards or processes for planned system upgrades and replacements. The committee chooses new applications, but the Systems and Technology Section manages all operations and maintenance.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Develop a project governance structure to keep leadership informed of IT upgrades, support operation and maintenance.	Process
Systems and Technology	Lack of Cohesion	The Systems and Technology Section manages 90 systems, some of which overlap with Gwinnett County's ITS Department's purview. As a result, there is a lack of cohesion between divisions that use many systems.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Develop a plan to better collaborate and communicate with the County's ITS Department for better visibility.	Process
Systems and Technology	Lack of Resources	Additional staff is needed to manage operations and maintenance. Product owners are present, but there is a lack of IT positions that must be filled. It is challenging to fill IT positions due to the skills needed and high salary requirements.	<b>Increase Resources:</b> Develop a strategy to hire product owners. In addition to internal hires, evaluate outsourced staffing models	Process
Systems and Technology	Lack of Resources	The Section stated a need for a full-time project manager to support new initiatives, more support and collaboration with the County's ITS Department, and requires more internal support as management's scope of work grows.	<b>Increase Resources:</b> Work with HR to hire a project manager.	Process

Division	Summary Observation	Observation	Recommendations	System
<b>Systems and Technology</b>	Lack of Standards and Processes	There is a need for more infrastructure and standards to support the Section. The Section has established a committee with ITS to review and prioritize requests, which has resulted in streamlined request management criteria and standards. Implementing such standards for other processes can eliminate manual effort and time-consuming processes.	<b>Increase Collaboration:</b> Develop a project governance structure to keep leadership informed of IT upgrades, support operation and maintenance.	Process
<b>Systems and Technology</b>	Managing current system is difficult	Jira is used internally for performance tracking. Lucity and Maximo are available project management systems but often do not function properly.	<b>Eliminate Duplicate Systems:</b> Evaluate the functionality of Lucity or Maximo across the Department to determine if the systems can be consolidated. Work with the County ITS Department to determine the requirements for project management system. This issue has been reported by multiple departments.	Jira

## 3.B.8 Department of Water Resources – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The metrics and performance data reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department. There are missed opportunities to effectively demonstrate the customer service and quality product provided by the Department.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

**Observation 2:** Several Divisions within the department noted concerns with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. Staff feel there is a disparity in the level of frequency of communications and visibility of leadership. This perceived lack of opportunities for engagement also results in the perception that only certain divisions or sections have opportunities to engage with external planning processes, or provide input on broader strategic planning or development initiatives.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations, and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Many divisions have several levels of middle management, which leaves staff feeling all information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information.

**Recommendation 2:** Department leadership should continue efforts to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts that seek to involve staff who may be housed at different locations.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Observation 3:** The Department has several units or sections whose titles represent contract management and oversight as their primary function. In many of these instances, contract management and compliance oversight is shared amongst multiple divisions, sections, units, and workgroups. This may lead to misunderstandings about what each group's role is, and how these roles interact and relate. This may also lead to missed oversight and review checkpoints, as one workgroup may assume another workgroup is responsible for a portion of contractor compliance or management.

There are also multiple repositories for contract-related documents, including internal workbooks, logbooks, CMMS information, Access databases, physical files, and the use of Jira for contract management. This may result in not all files being captured as part of the official record, and may result in duplicative work performance.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department needs to assess and inventory all contractor compliance functions to understand which roles and tasks reside in each workgroup. The Department should create consistent levels and clearly document who is responsible for which tasks. This may include expanding the use of Jira or other software to include all employees who oversee contractors, to ensure comprehensive compliance review and deliverable oversight files are maintained in a single repository for each contract.

The Department may want to consider renaming some of the workgroups to better reflect their roles.

**Observation 4:** Project Managers throughout the Department do not use a formal and consistent system/tool for project management.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should explore purchasing a formal project management system for use in multiple divisions.

**Observation 5:** The procurement lifecycle is lengthy and time traditionally equals money when procuring the construction of large capital projects.

**Recommendation 5:** Standard procurement service level agreements ("SLAs") should be considered by County leadership for the County's Purchasing Department (and other internal service functions) to ensure procurement lifecycle expectations are consistent. Procurement policies and procedures may need to be evaluated and adjusted. Additional resources may also be needed.

**Observation 6:** Construction firms provide varying quality of work and County policy dictates that the selected construction vendor is based on responding to the County's requested items/requirements in the RFP, and lowest bid (price).

**Recommendation 6:** The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the "Gwinnett Standard" and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a "successful project."

**Observation 7:** The Department has strong leadership and supervisory training programs that are made available to all employees. These programs do not include much consideration of the increased administrative responsibilities assigned to many employees in entry management positions. Staff noted learning curves and lack of training and formal guidance in understanding finance, purchasing and P-Card, and HR requirements newly assigned to them in managerial roles.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should work to develop internal training classes or programs on the administrative requirements of management positions. The Department should also consider creating more job aids and cheat sheets for staff new to these positions, to ensure that they are performing these functions consistent with Department and County policies and procedures.

**Observation 8:** DWR has created several newer middle management positions to help with workload imbalances across the Department. Once these positions are created, there is minimal guidance or expectations set for what responsibilities these new positions will assume, and how that may impact the responsibilities of other positions. Many staff have determined their own responsibilities, which may result in inconsistency in how the role is performed across different units or sections. There have also been some issues in managers not relinquishing duties to the newly created positions, leaving the new managers without adequate workload, which has resulted in some perceptions of micromanagement by lower-level staff.

**Recommendation 8:** DWR should ensure that it is performing full workload analysis prior to creating new management positions. This analysis should always include an analysis of current positions above and below the manager, to determine if there needs to be shifts in workloads. It should also include an assessment of where technology and automation may assist in reducing workload, instead of creating new positions. When new positions are justified, Department leadership should clearly document which responsibilities will be assigned to each role, and follow up to ensure that this is consistently enforced and implemented.

**Observation 9:** DWR collects engine idle time data for most of the vehicles. Several of the vehicles require the engine to be on in order to operate equipment or apparatus on the vehicle. Currently, fleet service is scheduled based on either mileage or time between services. This schedule may not always include an assessment based on engine hours, and may create missed opportunities for preventive engine maintenance that could prevent costly and timely repair services.

**Recommendation 9:** DWR should work with Fleet Management to develop preventive maintenance schedules that include consideration of engine time, and should regularly review and share engine idle time with Fleet Management to coordinate preventive maintenance appointments.

**Observation 10:** Current supply chain concerns have impacted the Warehouse Section's ability to be as efficient and responsive as it usually is. The Warehouse Section is working with County Procurement to identify alternative and emergency purchase methods. Issues have been compounded by the processes within other divisions for proactively checking inventory and keeping the warehouses updated about upcoming needs.

Additionally, some of the inventory rules for storage and disposition after a period without use have resulted in critical parts being classified as surplus, when current supply chain issues mean that to obtain another part may take more than six months.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department should review current timelines and processes for end-user divisions and staff to check warehouse inventory for needed parts and materials. The Department may need to modify processes and extend forecasting timelines to ensure that the warehouse had longer periods of advance notice to get parts and materials.



The Department may also need to create revised inventory rules for critical operating parts and materials, as many parts may be on backorder for more than six months, and others may be used in sets instead of single parts.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant’s work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role’s responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County’s growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

## Additional Observations and Recommendations Identified During Phase 3 Assessment

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

## 5. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.

## 6. Strategic Roadmap

The following pages detail the more than 90 recommendations for the in-scope departments. The recommendations are categorized by applicable owner (enterprise-wide or single department), are assigned a prioritization level for implementation, and include a typical timeframe for implementation. The detailed report should be read in its entirety to better understand the context for the identified observations and recommendations. The County has the ultimate responsibility to determine the prioritization level and timeline for implementation of any of the recommendations in this report.

The County should dedicate resources and engage external specialists where needed to assist with implementation.

“The most dangerous phrase in our language is: *‘we have always done it this way’.*” – Grace Hopper

Category	Department	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Communications - Fiscal and Administration	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As the Fiscal and Administration Division more fully defines the administrative duties for which it is responsible, the Communications Department leadership should provide clear guidance on who is responsible for specific Department's HR functions.	2	2	3
Culture	Communications - Fiscal and Administration	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Fiscal and Administration Division should consider installing permanent signage for the information desks in order to direct GJAC and Nash building visitors to the desks.	3	1	2
Culture	Communications - Fiscal and Administration	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider expanding the use of current language solutions, such as the Department of Water Resources' language line, Lionbridge.	2	1	1
Process	Communications - Fiscal and Administration	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should ensure each division informs the Fiscal and Administration Division of all purchases and should establish a formal procedure for receipt and submission of invoices. The Department should consider replicating the Department of Transportation Financial Section's model utilizing SharePoint for automated invoice approval workflow.	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Communications - Fiscal and Administration	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as determining staff schedules at the information desks.	3	1	3



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Process	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As the Division continues to increase the number of PR Specialists and redistribute workloads, the Division should ensure the PR Specialists begin to proactively approach and engage their internal clients with strategic planning of campaigns. Leading practices include start-of-year planning meetings and regular status meetings with end-user departments to understand the internal client’s strategic priorities, establishment of a content calendar to identify focus areas for different parts of the year, and a review of previous initiatives’ performance to best understand the tactics and strategies that work for each internal client.	2	2	3
Process	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.	1	1	3

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Culture	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should view social media as a key communications resource, similar to other media and channels. Social media should be considered as a possible tactic, similar to video or printed flyers, for all campaigns at the beginning of the campaign planning process. The social media team should be brought into conversations at the same time the Multimedia and Video Production or Branding and Design Divisions would. The Information Technology Services Department, in conjunction with the Website Administration Division, should consider social media when making functional changes to the website. The Multimedia and Video Production Division should be aware of social media video leading practices to ensure social media-friendly cuts are produced for many, if not all, videos. Overall, the Department should work to better integrate social media into Departmental strategy and should promote a wider understanding and appreciation of social media as an important communications tool.	2	1	3
Process	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should prioritize developing intake forms and procedures, as well as fully implementing Hive as a project management tool. The Department should also clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for project intake and project management – as well as processes, practices, and policies for how end-user departments request projects and provide appropriate lead time – in order to ensure the Division performs as efficiently as possible. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies for project requests and lead time adherence.	1	1	3

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Technology	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should consider subscribing to a social media listening tool in order to perform sentiment analysis and strategically address those County programs and initiatives members of the public view most negatively.	3	3	1
Performance Assessment	Communications - Public Relations and Marketing	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as managing staff workloads and focusing on those communications tactics with the greatest amount of success.	3	1	3
Process	Communications - Multimedia and Video Production	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.	1	1	3
Process	Communications - Multimedia and Video Production	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for project intake and project management – as well as processes, practices, and policies for how end-user departments request projects and provide appropriate lead time – in order to ensure the Division performs as efficiently as possible. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies for project requests and lead time adherence.	1	1	3

Category	Department	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Technology	Communications - Multimedia and Video Production	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> In addition to prioritizing filling vacant positions and establishing lead time guidelines, the Department should consider providing the Division with adequate backup computers and equipment to ensure the Division has adequate time to run upgrades on software and systems. The Division should also prioritize running upgrades to software and systems, setting expectations with internal clients and the rest of the Department for appropriate delivery times when upgrades are required.	2	2	2
Technology	Communications - Multimedia and Video Production	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> As the Department continues to roll out Hive for project management, the Division should work with the other divisions to best understand how to utilize the system for management of video projects and should begin to work within the system.	1	2	3
Performance Assessment	Communications - Multimedia and Video Production	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as on those video tactics with the greatest amount of success.	3	1	3
Process	Communications - Website Administration	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> County leadership should consider establishing clearer delineation of duties, responsibilities, and user rights for management of the public website, and communicate these expectations to both the Communications and Information Technology Services Departments. County leadership should enforce expectations regarding management of the public website and staff in both departments should have opportunities to freely express concerns regarding management of the public website to departmental and County leadership.	1	1	3

Category	Department	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Culture	Communications - Website Administration	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Departmental and County leadership will need to set an example for the rest of the County government in accepting the necessary shift in mindset on the website. As the website undergoes a modernization process, Departmental and County leadership should encourage end-user departments to look to the Website Administration Division as the experts in structuring and promoting website content and services.	1	1	3
Technology	Communications - Website Administration	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> As the website undergoes the modernization process, the Division should continue to determine ways customer service capabilities can be enhanced on the website and how the website can become more user friendly.	1	2	1
Technology	Communications - Website Administration	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should consider conducting website functionality testing – possibly through use of an independent third-party – to better understand the website’s audience and that audience’s user habits. The Division should consider a usability study, as well as conducting A/B testing to determine what content the audience is most likely to respond to.	2	2	2
Performance Assessment	Communications - Website Administration	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional and Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions, such as establishing user paths and how to use various channels to drive traffic to the website. The Division may need to work with ITS on collecting, analyzing, and implementing decisions based upon these performance metrics.	3	1	3

Category	Department	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Communications - Branding and Design	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should clearly define formal processes, practices, and policies for brand management and requirements for end-user departments submission of collateral pieces for review. Departmental and County leadership should enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with Department-developed processes, practices, and policies to ensure brand management.	1	1	3
Culture	Communications - Branding and Design	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department will need to learn to balance brand adherence with messaging fidelity – this balance might come from a combination of strategic initiatives from both the PR and Marketing Division and the Branding and Design Division, encouraging PR Specialists to spend more time onsite with internal clients to better understand their messaging and development of formalized intake forms and procedures to provide end-user departments more structure when submitting design requests. Departmental and County leadership will also need to reiterate to end-user departments the necessity for the County to have one look and one voice, stressing that design isn't about personal preference.	1	2	3
Process	Communications - Branding and Design	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> While the Division needs to balance managing the roll out of Hive as the Department's project management system with the rest of the Division's responsibilities, the Division should prioritize the establishment of formal project intake procedures and forms. Departmental leadership should develop policies, procedures, and practices around project intake and Departmental and County leadership should communicate and enforce expectations around these policies, procedures, and practices to end-user departments.	1	1	3

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Technology	Communications - Branding and Design	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Divisional and Departmental leadership should work with the Information Technology Services Department to determine a list of requirements for the laptops used by the Division, and should ensure the Division has enough laptops meeting these requirements for consistent use by current and future employees.	2	1	2
Process	Communications - Media Relations	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Media Relations Manager should consider developing a set of guidelines explaining what makes a story newsworthy and likely to be published by news outlets. Departmental leadership should share these guidelines with end-user departments as part of the Communications Department's established policies, procedures, and practices. The Department should consider whether recommending social media promotion of stories is appropriate in those cases when a press release may not be the best way to publicize a story.	2	2	3
Technology	Communications - Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Ensure newly hired staff for content management, project management, and coordination utilize systems to the fullest and ensure other staff and end-user departments utilize systems.	1	2	3
Technology	Communications - Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Ensure the Department regularly upgrades software and systems and each employee is provided with adequate equipment to fulfill the responsibilities of their position.	2	2	2
Technology	Communications - Technology	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Define the process and response times for different types of communication requests. Follow industry-recognized standards and practices, such as Agile or ITIL, to process work orders and requests and track performance based on the criteria these guidelines provide. Communicate the request process and service level response times to the end-user departments.	1	1	3

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Technology	Communications - Technology	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Evaluate the functionality of Hive to determine if it can be configured to meet the Department’s requirements for a Request Management and Tracking System. If not, continue to use Hive while working with IT to define the requirements for a comprehensive Request Management and Tracking that provides greater collaboration, file storage, and project management functionality.	1	1	1
Technology	Communications - Technology	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Hire a data analytics manager, or similar individual, who can implement and utilize a comprehensive data analytics system for increased visibility and tracking. If adding a position is not possible, leverage ITS or the County’s Office of Strategic Excellence for assistance in developing Departmental metrics and analytics. Implement a data analytics and visualization system such as Tableau or Microsoft Power BI for better tracking and visibility.	2	2	1



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Culture	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As the Department fills the newly allocated positions and begins to balance workloads, the Department should embrace its position as the County's center for marketing and communications expertise. The Department should collect and analyze available performance metrics that align with Departmental strategic initiatives and priorities and make data-driven decisions, proactively sharing with end-user departments leading-practice and data-proven strategies for developing marketing and communications campaigns and initiatives. The Department should also consider building out an annual content calendar with each division working together to promote similar topics, events, programs, and initiatives across all channels at relevant times of the year, and to ensure all Departmental employees are aware of those expected projects that will require heavier use of Departmental resources. Overall, the Department should identify and take advantage of opportunities to operate in a more proactive manner, providing strategic direction for the entire County's communications efforts. In the meantime, the Department should manage expectations with internal clients, including County leadership, as the Department builds out its staff, ensuring internal clients understand the limitations the Department has while it is understaffed.	1	1	3
Culture	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> County and Departmental leadership should collaborate to fully establish a vision and mission for the Communications Department. Especially important is the need to determine the Department's degree of authority over and interaction with other departments' communications personnel and initiatives. County leadership should clearly communicate the duties, responsibilities, and objectives of the Communications Department to all members of the County government.	1	1	3

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Process	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Department leadership should lead the effort to establish a comprehensive communications plan, establishing the policies, procedures, and practices that will govern the Gwinnett County government’s internal, external, and emergency communications. Departmental leadership should communicate and consistently enforce these policies, procedures, and practices with County leadership and end-user departments.	1	1	3
Culture	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> As Communications continues to hire for newly allocated positions, the Department needs to position itself more as a resource for end-user departments. The Department should consider conducting a roadshow once staff are in place and forms and processes have been developed, inviting other County departments to come learn the capabilities of the Department and understand the advantages of working with the Department. County leadership should encourage end-user departments to view the Communications Department as a resource and utilize the Department for campaign planning and collateral design. While the County will undoubtedly go through growing pains as end-user departments lose a degree of autonomy, the County should set a goal of establishing a common practice of including the Department in all communications efforts, thereby building a more unified brand and voice.	1	2	3
Process	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should establish service-level agreements (“SLAs”), such as lead times, in order to manage expectations with end-user departments. Lead time guidelines are a set of generic timelines identifying how long certain types of projects will take to complete and identifying when client input is needed in order for on-time delivery. By establishing SLAs, the Department can mitigate the practice of internal clients providing most requests without adequate lead time.	1	1	3

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People	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> As the Department shifts to function similarly to a private PR or advertising agency, the Department should consider seeking managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff with private PR or advertising agency experience. Bringing in managers and supervisors with private sector experience will help the Department stay current on leading practices in private industry.	2	2	1
Technology	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should prioritize implementing Hive as a fully functional project management system, creating the necessary forms and workflows that will help with staff efficiency. The Department should ensure all divisions understand how to utilize the system and actually do use the system for management of projects.	1	1	1
People	Communications - Department	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should consider establishing the Project Manager as the role responsible for implementation and governance of the Department's systems, such as Hive. The role could also serve as a "traffic manager," helping oversee the project management process and help balance workloads within the Department.	2	2	1
People	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider expanding the current telework policy to allow Customer Service Associates ("CSAs") with strong quality assurance scores and adequate tenure to telework. The Division should also consider offering flexible shifts, such as four 10-hour days, to incentivize retention and assist in recruitment. This shift to 10-hour days may also provide additional customer flexibility to receive assistance outside of traditional business hours.	3	2	3

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Technology	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County is currently procuring a new ERP, which is the system responsible for many of the water billing and payment process functionalities. As the County works towards implementing the new ERP, it should coordinate with the Department of Water Resources to make available web-based account queries and other more modern options. If the ERP does not offer these functionalities, the Department should consider conducting a feasibility study to determine if there are bolt-on or other products that may provide these customer-focused options in conjunction with the new ERP.	2	3	1
Process	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Quality and Training Unit should work with the Safety and Training Division to develop and record trainings that could be made available on-demand to provide reminder or refresher training to CSAs.	2	1	3
Technology	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider replacing the cameras in the front counter and drive-thru areas with cameras that also record audio. These camera feeds can also be used to conduct quality assurance reviews of staff in these areas.	3	1	2

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Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Revenue and Reporting Unit should organize a workgroup to develop more automated data capture and submission processes. This workgroup should include the end-users responsible for submitting the data as well as product owners for the systems that generate the data, to determine if there are more automated processes for generating the needed data. The Facility Operations Division is working to fully utilize Centralpoint. As Facility Operations expands its utilization, this may be a potential solution that could be expanded to collect more of the needed data, and serve as a workflow tool that assists in automating and tracking all data points in a single space. If Centralpoint doesn't provide the needed functionality, SharePoint may also provide some automated workflows, with messages generated each reporting period nudging end-users to upload and submit the requested data.	2	2	3
Process	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should work with HR to receive copies (redacted, as appropriate) of all workplace incidents and occupational injuries reported. This information should be standardized and also used to assess the effectiveness of workplace safety training and other initiatives implemented by the Safety Officers.	2	1	3
People	Water Resources - Business and Staff Services	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should consider adding a recruiting-focused position to the Human Resources Unit. This position should spend time with all divisions to fully understand the vacant positions to ensure qualified candidates are applying to open positions. Once the Department's vacancies stabilize, this position can be shifted towards more retention and employee-moral efforts.	1	1	1

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Culture	Water Resources - Engineering and Construction	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Formal feedback regarding the performance of engineering design consultants should be discussed among the Division’s leadership, and if agreed to in consensus, discussions with the engineering consultant and future work assignment implications should occur and be documented.	3	1	3
Process	Water Resources - Engineering and Construction	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Standard procurement service level agreements (“SLAs”) should be considered by County leadership for the County’s Purchasing Department (and other internal service functions) to ensure procurement lifecycle expectations are consistent. Procurement policies and procedures may need to be evaluated and adjusted. Additional resources may also be needed.	1	2	2
Process	Water Resources - Engineering and Construction	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project.”	1	2	1
Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Engineering and Construction	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> As the Division is currently in the process of enhancing the CIP Tracker, it should be enhanced to holistically provide necessary and consistent project management tools for all the Division’s capital construction projects. If the CIP Tracker cannot be leveraged as a formal project management tool, the updates to the CIP Tracker should continue, and the Division should explore purchasing a formal project management system.	2	2	2

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Process	Water Resources - Engineering and Construction	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> County leadership should further evaluate the current policy not allowing Construction Manager and Contract Inspection positions to take home County-issued vehicles. If all variables are considered and it is decided to allow certain E&C positions to take home County-issued vehicles, the process for assigning work/routes should be primarily performed late in the day for the next day's work.	3	1	1
People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should create an additional position to ensure adequate staffing support for residual processing.	1	1	1
People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent staff per shift, or more floater positions should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.	1	2	1
Process	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Engineering and Construction should coordinate with Facilities Operations to ensure that project managers are regularly onsite and serve as the official contact for contractors.	2	1	3
People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The wastewater plants should consider creating floater positions to support shift shortages. These positions could also be used to support training of new employees. If the floater positions are staffed with experienced operators, when not needed in a supplemental capacity these positions could also be leveraged to provide on-the-job training for new hires without taking time away from the operational requirements of the shift.  The Division should also collaborate with the Water Innovation Center to develop additional training opportunities, potentially including experiential training in a testing environment, rather than in the operating environment.	2	1	1

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People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Wastewater Operations should consider hiring an additional Administrative Associate, so that both Yellow River and Crooked Creek have a dedicated Administrative Associate on site.	2	2	1
Technology	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Facility Operations should research available hardware that would allow for real-time vibration assessments to be taken and integrated into the SCADA dashboard. This could free up Technician time to conduct other types of assessments and participate in special projects throughout the County without getting behind on predictive maintenance schedules.	3	3	2
People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Facility Operations should evaluate the staffing model to determine if more permanent maintenance staff per location, or experienced skilled floater positions with electrical or instrumentation experience should be created to ensure that staff fatigue does not create safety or operational concerns.	1	1	1
People	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Facility Operations should consider creating a data analyst position. This position could support the development of standard protocols for using Maximo, to ensure consistent naming standards and work order notes entries. This position could assist with QA/QC for work orders to ensure integrity of the data that is captured, as well as provide additional data analysis for themes, trends, or prediction of emerging issues based on historical data.	2	3	1
Process	Water Resources - Facility Operations	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Plant Engineering Division should work with Technical Services and Engineering and Construction to assist them in understanding the value of incorporating the Asset Management and Reliability Section in scoping, design, and technical specification development conversations.	2	1	3



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People	Water Resources - Field Operations	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should work with the County to identify if basic foreign language skills, or key phrases education could be provided to Dispatchers to improve customer service. Potential solutions could include both customized foundational classes, or potentially subscriptions to language learning software.	2	2	1
Process	Water Resources - Field Operations	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should review its current protocols for planned outage notification to determine how more lead-time of notice for planned outages can best be achieved. This may include engaging the Dispatch Unit Manager in planning meetings, creating additional Lucity workflow notifications to the Dispatch Supervisor, or scheduling regular meetings with the Construction Manager or Supervisor in this Unit.	1	1	3
People	Water Resources - Field Operations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should review staffing levels and assignments within many of the units that have blended preventive and corrective maintenance roles. The Department may need to increase the Unit size, or consider creating crews specifically dedicated to preventive or QA/QC capacity expansion.	1	1	1

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Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Field Operations	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Data Unit should be shifted into more of an analytical role, rather than a work-order level QA/QC role. Many of the Unit and Section Managers cite a lack of time to effectively pull and review data for trends and potential future areas of concerns. The Data Unit should shift away from 100% QA/QC and should work with Unit and Section Managers to complete more trend analysis to assist in predictive analytics of aging system assets and more effective preventive maintenance efforts.</p> <p>To ensure more consistent and accurate work orders, the Data Unit should work with the Training Section within Business and Staff Services to develop comprehensive Lucity training for new employees who are required to use Lucity within their jobs. The training should include job aids or cheat sheets to aid employees in the field.</p>	2	1	3
People	Water Resources - Public Information and Outreach	<p><b>Recommendation 1A:</b> The Section should budget time and funding to support public speaking, writing for public consumption, and media training for all Section members.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1B:</b> As the Section fills its vacant positions, it should consider seeking applicants who have communications experience or training as well as the other job requirements.</p>	2	2	1
People	Water Resources - Public Information and Outreach	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Section should consider splitting water conservation and education outreach into two separate positions. If there is a separate position dedicated to water conservation, a more targeted strategic plan should be developed to ensure consistent, effective initiatives are developed to provide information about water conservation initiatives and programs.</p>	2	3	1

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Process	Water Resources - Public Information and Outreach	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Section should work with other DWR divisions, in particular Field Operations, to understand what information is regularly collected in Lucity about preventive and corrective maintenance work orders. The Section should coordinate with the Field Operations Program Analyst III to regularly receive data and reports from Lucity that may better capture the potential impacts of education and outreach efforts.	3	1	3
Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Technical Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should assess the utilization of more formal management systems to more wholistically track, report, and maintain data for permit related requirements.	2	1	2
Process	Water Resources - Technical Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Permit records should be stored in electronic format available for instant access to all relevant DWR professionals.	1	2	2
Technology	Water Resources - Technical Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should explore the feasibility of utilizing a single system to comprehensively manage all assets with integration to GIS capabilities.	2	3	2
Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Technical Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should assess all its current data/performance tracking and potential data/performance tracking needs to ensure that all data managed is relevant and reported. Leadership should approve a data/performance catalog that specifies what data is maintained and assessed, the period of reporting, and who the target audiences should be.	3	2	3

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Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> There are numerous recommendations included in the Technology Observations and Recommendations section of this report to update systems and equipment, including Lucity, Maximo, and SAP. We recommend taking a strategic approach and looking at each system holistically to develop a system improvement plan for each application and working with the County ITS Department to incorporate the individual system plans into a detailed technology plan for the Department.	2	3	2
Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> There are numerous division-specific recommendations for better cross Department collaboration with the County ITS Department. We recommend creating a team to evaluate and develop a plan for better collaboration and communications throughout the Department.	2	1	3
Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Several opportunities exist to evaluate redundant systems (Lucity, Maximo, multiple billing systems). We recommend conducting a fit-gap session or a needs assessment to define the requirements for system requirements.	2	3	2
Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> There are several division-specific recommendations to increase resources and hire staff. We recommend developing a strategy to address the resource needs and develop a plan. Due to labor shortages, consider evaluating and increasing the use of outsourced staffing models.	2	1	1
Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> There are several system- and division-specific recommendations for evaluating the existing systems to determine if specific observations can be addressed.	2	3	1
Technology	Water Resources - Technology	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> There is a recommendation for improving the process for configuring new Customer Service Agent's computers.	3	1	3

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Performance Assessment	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.	3	1	3
Culture	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Department leadership should continue efforts to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers and non-work-oriented team-building efforts that seek to involve staff who may be housed at different locations.  Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.	1	1	3
Process	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department needs to assess and inventory all contractor compliance functions to understand which roles and tasks reside in each workgroup. The Department should create consistent levels and clearly document who is responsible for which tasks. This may include expanding the use of Jira or other software to include all employees who oversee contractors, to ensure comprehensive compliance review and deliverable oversight files are maintained in a single repository for each contract.  The Department may want to consider renaming some of the workgroups to better reflect their roles.	1	2	3

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Technology	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should explore purchasing a formal project management system for use in multiple divisions.	2	2	1
Process	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Standard procurement service level agreements (“SLAs”) should be considered by County leadership for the County’s Purchasing Department (and other internal service functions) to ensure procurement lifecycle expectations are consistent. Procurement policies and procedures may need to be evaluated and adjusted. Additional resources may also be needed.	1	1	1
Process	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The criteria to select construction vendors based primarily on the lowest bid should be reconsidered as the practice may not align to the “Gwinnett Standard” and there are many other factors (other than price) that can contribute to the definition of a “successful project.”	1	2	1
People	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should work to develop internal training classes or programs on the administrative requirements of management positions. The Department should also consider creating more job aids and cheat sheets for staff new to these positions, to ensure that they are performing these functions consistent with Department and County policies and procedures.	2	1	3

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People	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> DWR should ensure that it is performing full workload analysis prior to creating new management positions. This analysis should always include an analysis of current positions above and below the manager, to determine if there needs to be shifts in workloads. It should also include an assessment of where technology and automation may assist in reducing workload, instead of creating new positions. When new positions are justified, Department leadership should clearly document which responsibilities will be assigned to each role, and follow up to ensure that this is consistently enforced and implemented.	2	2	3
Process	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> DWR should work with Fleet Management to develop preventive maintenance schedules that include consideration of engine time, and should regularly review and share engine idle time with Fleet Management to coordinate preventive maintenance appointments.	1	1	3
Process	Water Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Department should review current timelines and processes for end-user divisions and staff to check warehouse inventory for needed parts and materials. The Department may need to modify processes and extend forecasting timelines to ensure that the warehouse had longer periods of advance notice to get parts and materials.  The Department may also need to create revised inventory rules for critical operating parts and materials, as many parts may be on backorder for more than six months, and others may be used in sets instead of single parts.	2	1	3

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People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.	1	1	1
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1	1
Performance Assessment	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.	2	1	3
Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.	2	1	3



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Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.	1	2	3
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.	2	1	3
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.	2	1	1
Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.	2	1	3

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People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).	1	1	1
Performance Assessment	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.	2	1	3
People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.	2	1	1



**Executive Summary:**  
**Phase 4 Operational and Performance  
Assessment – *Department of  
Community Services and Information  
Technology Services Department***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

August 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 2
- 3. Departments..... 4
  - 3.A Department of Community Services ..... 5
  - 3.B Information Technology Services Department ..... 24
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 35
- 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations..... 39
- 6. Conclusion..... 44

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This Executive Summary report represents the work product of Phase 4 which includes the Community Services and Information Technology Services departments. Phase 4 fieldwork began in May 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Executive Summary report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This Executive Summary report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 4 scope included the following departments:

- Community Services
- Information Technology Services

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well,” “what needs improvement,” and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

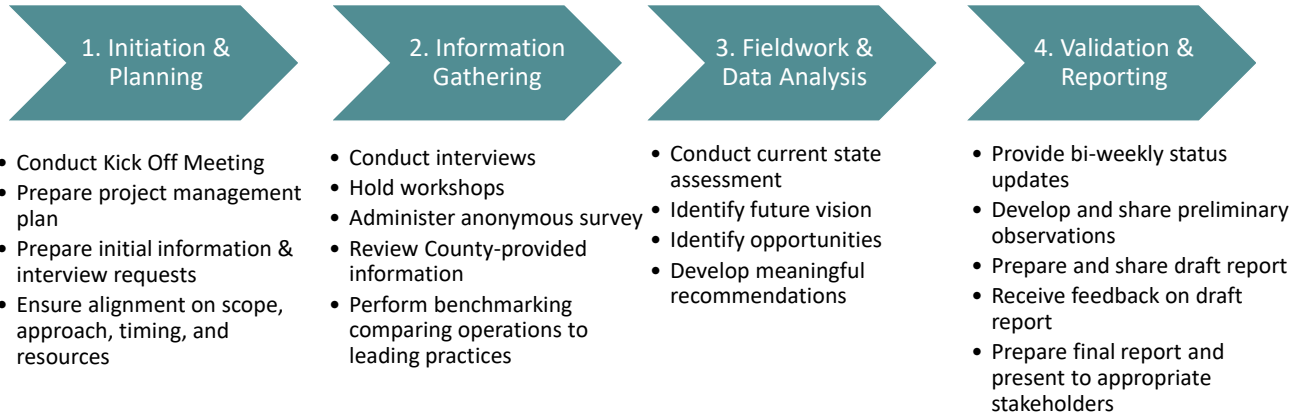
### Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 120 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This Executive Summary report summarizes analysis and fieldwork completed between May and July 2022. Our detailed report should be read in its entirety to gain additional insight and context.

## 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Community Services
- B. Information Technology Services

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Leadership and Management
- Survey
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations



# 3.A Department of Community Services

## Community Services At A Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Provide wrap-around services for residents of Gwinnett County ranging from health, wellness, recreation, and education programs to elections, community art displays, and animal welfare
- 2 | Involve Gwinnett County residents in volunteer activities associated with County government
- 3 | Build collaborative efforts between Gwinnett County residents and the County government, as well as between Gwinnett County departments
- 4 | Engage, embrace, and unify the communities that make up Gwinnett County
- 5 | Develop a safe and healthy environment for the residents of Gwinnett County

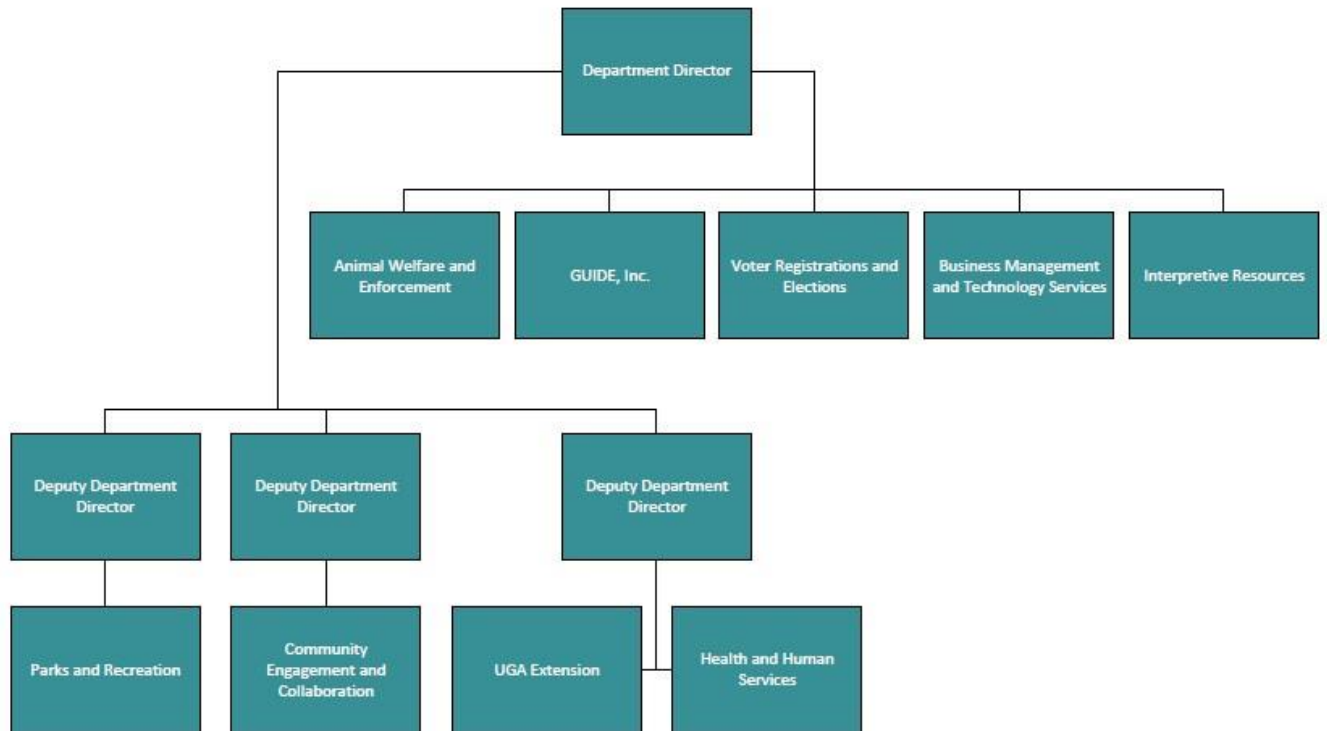
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$69,935,185</b>	<b>\$17,743,073</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through June 2022	Community Services
FTE	Filled	341
	Allocated	381

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



### Developing Strategic Partnerships



The Department has sought to develop intentional partnerships and bring together a variety of resources. This includes partnerships with other County departments, community organizations, and others within the County to provide a variety of services and programming throughout Gwinnett County.

### UGA Extension Gwinnett Recognition



UGA Extension Gwinnett has won multiple recent national and state recognitions for Agriculture and Natural Resources. These recognitions have highlighted performance and program delivery.

### OneStop 4 Health



Health and Human Services formally created and began the OneStop 4 Health program – an initiative designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various health and human services.

### Parks and Recreation Recognition



Parks and Recreation has won multiple recent national and state recognitions for both individual performers and program delivery.

## Introduction

The Department of Community Services is responsible for providing events, services, and activity spaces throughout Gwinnett County. This includes aquatic, recreation, athletic, electoral, wellness, and other resident services throughout the County.

## Organization

The Department of Community Services is led by a Department Director. The Department has nine primary functions, organized under three Deputy Department Directors, two Division Directors, two Managers, and a Project Coordinator. The nine primary functions are:

- Animal Welfare and Enforcement
- Business Management and Technology Services
- Community Engagement and Community Collaboration
- GUIDE, Inc.
- Health and Human Services
- Interpretive Resources

- Parks and Recreation
- UGA Extension Gwinnett
- Voter Registration and Elections

In addition to these nine primary functions, there is also an Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III who reports directly to the Department Director. The ASA assists the Department Director and also oversees an ASA I and a part-time Clerk.

### Animal Welfare and Enforcement

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division provides resources and support for the animal population of Gwinnett County, as well as the residents of Gwinnett County as it pertains to their interactions with both domestic and feral animals. The Division maintains a shelter, provides medical services, and enforces Chapter 10 of the Gwinnett County Code of Ordinances – the Animals Ordinance. The Division is responsible for the whole of Gwinnett County, including all incorporated areas.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Manager (“Manager”) oversees the Division and reports directly to the Department Director. Two section heads and a team head all report to the Manager. The Manager also oversees the contract for on-site medical services, currently provided by Planned PETHood of Georgia.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Assistant Manager for the Kennel (“Kennel Assistant Manager”) reports to the Manager and oversees the Kennel Section, which is responsible for maintaining the wellbeing of the animals housed at the Gwinnett County Animal Shelter (“Shelter” or “Kennel”) and conducting intake, triage, and adoptions. Three Kennel Section staff report directly to the Kennel Assistant Manager: the Animal Control Supervisor for the Kennel (“Kennel Supervisor”), the Resources and Marketing Coordinator (“Outreach Coordinator”), and an Animal Care Specialist responsible for behavior assessments and modification.

The Kennel Team, led by the Kennel Supervisor, is most directly responsible for kennel operations. The Kennel Supervisors manage one Animal Care Specialist responsible for training and a selection of Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”) of varying levels. According to the position control report provided to M&J on June 30, 13 Animal Control Officers I, six Animal Control Officers II, one Animal Control Officer III, and two part-time Animal Control Officers report to the Kennel Supervisor. The organizational chart provided to M&J indicates a slight difference as it is not uncommon for ACOs to transition between the Kennel Section and the Enforcement Section.

With more than 20 direct reports, the Kennel Supervisor relies on the Animal Care Specialists and Animal Control Officers III to assist with instruction of new ACOs and oversight of the Team. The Animal Care Specialist and Animal Control Officer III positions are graded the same and are viewed as interchangeable by Division staff.

In addition to full-time and part-time staff, Gwinnett County inmates previously provided assistance in the Kennel. With the shuttering of the inmate assistance program, the Kennel Team essentially lost about a half dozen pairs of hands on any given day that were not supplemented by additional staff allocations.

The Outreach Team, led by the Outreach Coordinator, manages the Division’s messaging and events, volunteer program, foster program, and rescue program. The Outreach Coordinator is supported by an Animal Care Specialist responsible for the rescue program, an ACO II responsible for the foster program, and up to three part-time employees responsible for day camps.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Assistant Manager for the Road (“Road Assistant Manager”) reports to the Manager and oversees the Enforcement Section, or the Road Section, which is responsible for responding to calls and enforcing the Animal Ordinance throughout Gwinnett County. Three teams report to the Road Assistant Manager: the Day Shift, the Night Shift, and the Special Operations Team.

The Day Shift is the team responsible for responding to calls between 8 am and 4 pm. The Day Shift is led by the Animal Control Supervisor for the Day Shift (“Day Shift Supervisor”), who oversees one Animal Control Officer I, three Animal Control Officers II, and two Animal Control Officers III, according to the position control report.

The Night Shift is the team responsible for responding to calls between 3 pm and 11 pm. The Night Shift is led by the Animal Control Supervisor for the Night Shift (“Night Shift Supervisor”), who oversees three Animal Control Officers I, one Animal Control Officer II, one two Animal Control Officer III, according to the position control report.

Again, because ACOs are occasionally transferred between the Kennel, the Day Shift, and the Night Shift, position counts are approximate.

Animal Control Officers III in the Day Shift and Night Shift are generally considered Training Officers and oversee the instruction of all ACOs who are new to the Enforcement Section.

The Special Operations Team is comprised of three ACOs who report directly to the Road Assistant Manager. The ACO III for Cruelty and Neglect (“Cruelty and Neglect Officer”) manages all cases of cruelty and neglect reported by the public or another ACO. The ACO III for Bites (“Bites Officer”) manages all cases of animal bites by both domesticated and feral animals in public, private residences, and the Kennel. The ACO II for Quality Control (“Probation Officer”) oversees the Division’s court cases and ensures animal-related probation sentences are enforced. Usually, all three members of the Team are Animal Control Officers III, however, the previous Probation Officer returned to the Day Shift as a Training Officer. The Division has a limited number of ACO III allocations, and the lack of an open ACO III position resulted in the new Probation Officer retaining their ACO II designation.

The Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III is the final position reporting directly to the Manager. The ASA III performs the financial, HR, and other administrative duties for the Division. The ASA III also oversees the Customer Service Team, which is comprised of three Administrative Support Associates I and a part-time Clerk. The Customer Service Team interacts with the public in-person and over the phone – responding to questions, processing leash law and barking dog complaints, and processing adoptions. The Customer Service Team informally reports to the Outreach Coordinator and Kennel Assistant Manager.

### Business Management and Technology Services

Business Management and Technology Services is responsible for financial support of all the units within Community Services. The Division is led by a Division Director, who oversees a Deputy Division Director and a Community Services Manager.

The Community Services Manager for Operations and Performance Management provides support for some of the technology systems. Specifically, the Community Services Manager is the system administrator for CivicRec, and can assist with Lucity and eBuilder as needed.

The Division Director oversees the financial and human resources administrative functions for the Department.

The Division has a Business Officer over Purchasing and Contracts. This position oversees a Business Services Associate (BSA) III, along with four part-time Clerks. This Unit is responsible for all procurement for the Department, including assisting in developing bid specifications and shopping cart transactions. This unit also performs purchasing card audits, and tracks contracts to assist with renewals.

The Business Officer over Operating Funds is responsible for managing the operating budgets for all 86 of the cost centers within Community Services. The Business Officer is supported by a BSA III and a part-time Clerk.

The Division also has a Business Officer over Capital, who is responsible for budgets and purchases associated with capital fund budgets. The Business Officer is supported by a BSA III.

The Division recently created a new Business Officer position, who will be responsible for all HR and administrative functions for the Division. HR and administrative functions will be supported by a part-time Clerk and an Administrative Support Associate (ASA) III.

To support grant financials, reporting, and tracking, the Division has a newly created Program Analyst position. This position is also responsible for overseeing the “Career Starts Here” intern program.

### Community Engagement and Community Collaboration

The Community Engagement and Community Collaboration Division was created in the last three years to combine all marketing, outreach, and public engagement efforts into a single group. This Division is overseen by a Deputy Department Director.

The Deputy Department Director has six direct reports.

The Digital Engagement Coordinator is responsible for digital media development, social media management, and coordinating film permits for filming within Department parks and facilities. The Digital Engagement Coordinator is supported by two part-time Recreation Leaders.

The Engagement Manager oversees traditional media development and printing, as well as the website, press releases, public relations for events, and other marketing and outreach-related duties. The Engagement Manager oversees two Resources and Marketing Specialists, who serve as liaisons with the non-Community Engagement and Collaboration end-user divisions, such as UGA Extension, Parks and Recreation, Animal Welfare and Enforcement, with the production and dissemination of their marketing requests.

The Engagement Manager also oversees a Resources and Marketing Coordinator, who is the graphic designer for the Department. The Resources and Marketing Coordinator oversees three part-time staff. One is titled as a Recreation Leader, one is a Staff Assistant II, and one is Publications and Marketing. These three staff assist with processing marketing material requests by entering the requesters information into approved templates, and assisting with larger projects where appropriate. This Unit predominantly supports Community Engagement and Collaboration with their requests.

Volunteer Gwinnett is responsible for coordinating volunteers throughout the Department as well as volunteer opportunities for Gwinnett County employees. Volunteer Gwinnett is led by a Collaboration Manager with the support of a Program Coordinator and a part-time Recreation Leader.

Live Healthy Gwinnett is a healthy living and wellness initiative that incorporates other more specific initiatives, such as Harvest Gwinnett and Be Active Gwinnett. The Live Healthy Gwinnett Project Coordinator is responsible for overseeing this initiative. There is a Program Supervisor over Be Active Gwinnett, with three part-time Recreation Leaders. Harvest Gwinnett is supported by a Program Supervisor, a Recreation Program Leader, and a part-time Recreation Leader.

There is a Deputy Division Director over the Building Brains Anywhere program, which includes early learning, educational and after-school programming for youth. The Deputy Division Director oversees a Project Coordinator, as well as an Administrative Associate II who supports program registration and scheduling. The Administrative Associate II oversees four part-time staff.

The Project Coordinator oversees two staff: a Program Coordinator and a Program Supervisor. The Program Coordinator is over educational programming and early learning programming, and oversees three program supervisors: one who oversees History programming, one who oversees Science programming, and one who oversees the Building Brains Anywhere early learning program. The Program Supervisor over the Building Brains Anywhere early learning program also oversees a Program Leader.

In addition, the Program Coordinator over educational programming and early learning programming supervises the part-time teachers, education leaders, and seasonal staff who work the summer day camps.

The Program Supervisor over the afterschool programming oversees the Afterschool Program Directors. There are currently seven Afterschool Program Directors. The Afterschool Program Directors oversee the Afterschool Program Leaders, with, on average, between two and four assigned to each location.

#### GUIDE, Inc.

Gwinnett United in Drug Education Inc. ("GUIDE, Inc.") is a 501c3 effort founded in 1986 as a proactive initiative to address substance abuse through prevention and wellness activities. This program is supported by both the County and the Gwinnett County Board of Education. GUIDE, Inc. has three employees whose pay is funded in part by Gwinnett County, and are considered Gwinnett County employees.

GUIDE Inc. provides a number of statewide programs, as well as program specifically within Gwinnett County. Within Gwinnett County, GUIDE Inc. provides community level prevention, engagement, and awareness initiatives. This includes coordinating with city and County Police on vendor compliance checks to ensure that no alcohol or tobacco products are sold to minors, public service announcements, and education efforts for both students and parents about positive social norms. GUIDE Inc. also hosts the Georgia Teen Institute, a four-day residential summer leadership program that integrates positive youth development efforts with prevention efforts. Attendees learn prevention information and develop action plans for re-engaging and sharing what they've learned within their communities.

GUIDE, Inc. frequently collaborates with the Department on strategic efforts and initiatives, including using GUIDE, Inc. for camp counselor training and engagement at health fairs and other community events.

GUIDE Inc. is expanding their mental health promotion and suicide prevention programs. These programs focus on providing training for adults on how to recognize a crisis, and how to respond and engage with children and teens in crisis. This also includes specific training for parents about engaging and talking with children about mental health. At the community level, GUIDE Inc. has coordinated with the Department to provide Question, Persuade, and Refer (“QPR”) suicidal ideation recognition and prevention training to all Gwinnett Fire Academy completers within the last several years; currently, all Gwinnett firefighters are trained in QPR.

Gwinnett County has an appointed position on the GUIDE, Inc. Board of Directors.

### Health and Human Services

The Health and Human Services Division partners with various County and community organizations to provide and connect service opportunities that are designed to improve the health and well-being of County citizens and stakeholders. The Division operates three senior centers and three combined “One Stop” and senior centers. One Stop centers or locations house multiple service organizations (County and external to the County) in a single building or complex designed to provide varying services at a single location.

The Health and Human Services Division is led by a Department Deputy Director/Division Director who has three direct reports – two Human Services Managers (one for Senior Services, and one for Senior /One Stop Centers) and one Project Coordinator.

The Division’s Human Services Manager for Senior Services oversees Senior Services for the Division which is responsible for providing Case Management, Transportation, In Home Services, and Food Services.

Case Management is led by a Program Specialist who oversees seven positions including Case Managers, a Referral Specialist, and a Clerk. Case Management is the entry point for users/clients of the Division and helps to coordinate service offerings based on eligibility and need.

Transportation is led by a Program Specialist who oversees six positions (Administrative Support Associates and Staff Assistants) that focus on the administration and management of transportation contractors used by the County. Transportation provides transit assistance to seniors and disabled adults for medical appointments, therapy sessions, or health-indicated treatments.

In Home Services is led by a Program Specialist who oversees five positions including a Case Manager, three Adult Day Care Associates, and a Clerk. In Home Services provides Homemaking, Caregiving, and Respite services either on a fee basis or for free depending on eligibility.

Food Services is led by a Program Coordinator who oversees 13 positions including a Program Leader, a Supervisor, an Administrative Support Associate, five Drivers, and six Cooks. Food Services also leverages part time temporary Cook positions as needed. Food Services provides frozen meals to seniors' residences and the Senior/One Stop Centers.

The Division's Human Services Manager for Senior/One Stop Centers oversees the Senior Centers and the Senior/One Stop Centers for the Division. There are two Senior Centers – Lawrenceville Senior Center, and Snellville Senior Center; and three combined Senior/One Stop Centers – Centerville One Stop/Senior Center, Buford One Stop/Senior Center, and Norcross One Stop/Senior Center.

Each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center is led by a Program Supervisor or Program Specialist. The one exception is the Snellville Senior Center, which operates as a satellite center and has limited hours.

There are a total of 52 positions under the Human Services Manager for Senior/One Stop Centers, with each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center having numerous positions based on size and the service levels for each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center. The positions at each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center varies, but include Specialists, Program Leaders, Program Supervisors, Program Assistants, Recreation Leaders, Facility Assistants, Clerks, and Cooks.

The Division's Project Coordinator is a new position designed to lead the OneStop 4 Help program. The OneStop 4 Help program is designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various services. The Project Coordinator oversees four Community Navigator positions located in various Senior Centers and One Stop/senior Centers. The Community Navigator positions help locate agencies that can assist with food security, homelessness, emergency housing, utility and rental assistance, and other social needs. The Project Coordinator also oversees one Program Analyst who supports the OneStop 4 Help program.

### Interpretive Resources

Interpretive Resources is responsible for artifact and historic site management throughout the Department. The Section is led by a Project Coordinator, with one additional full-time employee. The Section will get four additional part-time staff in the coming year.

This Section is responsible for four primary tasks, and additionally is responsible for coordinating with the Historic Restoration and Preservation Board for the County, as well as other historical societies and local community organizations, as appropriate.

Artifact Management includes processing and preserving more than 1,000 historical artifacts owned by Gwinnett County. All artifacts are tracked through PastPerfect, an online collections management software.

Historic Site Support and Preservation includes assessing all historic sites that are owned by Gwinnett County. There are currently six active sites, two sites in development, and two sites that are managed by local nonprofit organizations. The Interpretive Resources Unit is responsible for assisting with property management for the two sites managed by the nonprofit organizations.



All sites received monthly monitoring using a checklist; the Section is working to upload these checklists into Lucy.

Exhibit Management includes developing and installing exhibits, as well as monitoring permanent exhibits and coordinating with contractors for the development and installation of certain exhibitions. The Section uses a calendar to ensure rotation of artifacts and other content in non-permanent installations.

Oral Histories includes managing the oral histories collected during the County's 200th Anniversary oral history project, as well as developing and implementing a plan to continue to collect and expand the County's oral history collection.

### Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation includes all parks, recreational facilities, athletic fields, aquatics facilities, as well as the Lucy support team, volunteer resources coordination, and natural resource management.

The Deputy Department Director over Parks and Recreation and Project Administration has, as of our fieldwork, six direct reports.

A Program Analyst III oversees the IT Services Team which serves as the primary support team for Lucy, as well as supporting GIS. The Team is comprised of two IT Associate IIs, a GIS Associate II, and a part-time IT Associate.

A Program Coordinator leads the Volunteer Resources Section. This Section is responsible for coordinating community service volunteer hours, as well as Eagle Scout project oversight. The Program Coordinator is supported by a Program Leader, Administrative Support Associate (ASA) I and two vacant part-time Recreation Leaders.

There is also a Program Coordinator over conservation projects and other natural resource management programs.

The Program Coordinator over Natural Resource Management and the Environmental Heritage Center (EHC) Operations is charged with building and grounds maintenance at EHC, as well as supporting the trails and other natural resources in the parks. Currently, the Program Coordinator has three Grounds Maintenance Associate IIs assisting in this work. There are also four Parks Crew Member positions approved and not currently filled.

The Project Administration Division is in the process of being transitioned to a Division. At the beginning of our fieldwork this has not been completed, so Project Administration is reflected as a Section throughout our assessment. This Section is responsible for park design and construction management. The Section is overseen by a Section Manager and is staffed with three Planner IIIs, and two Construction Manager Is.

Parks and Recreation is managed by a Division Director who has three direct reports responsible for aquatics, recreation, and parks.

Recreation is led by a Deputy Division Director, and is divided into three geographically assigned districts. Each district is led by a Community Services Manager. The Community Services Manager over the West District is also responsible for large event planning and coordination, and oversees the Historic Courthouse.

All three districts are responsible for coordinating with park-level athletic associations on the administration of athletic leagues. There are more than 30 athletic associations representing approximately 45,000 league participants.

Each district has a mixture of Program Coordinators and Program Supervisors. Program Coordinators typically oversee several sites, while Program Supervisors are responsible for a single site. They may have responsibility for small, unstaffed sites as well. Sites are staffed with a combination of Program Leaders, Program Assistants, and part-time Recreation Assistants. For athletics support, some sites, may have specialized staff, such as Adult Athletic Specialists or Tennis Attendants.

Recreation also includes seasonal staff that operate the summer camps and other summer programming. These positions include Day Camp Directors and Day Camp Counselors, including Inclusion Counselors for some parks.

The Aquatics Manager is responsible for the 9 aquatic facilities throughout the County, which include 17 pools and two splash pads. The Aquatics Manager oversees two Program Coordinators, with each Program Coordinator assigned the management of several of the aquatic centers. Each Program Coordinator also oversees one or more part-time recruiter trainers.

Each aquatic facility is overseen by a Program Supervisor, who oversees Program Leaders, Grounds Maintenance Associates II, and part-time Pool Managers, Assistant Pool Managers, Aquatic Service Leaders, Aquatic Specialists Lifeguards, and seasonal Pool Managers through Lifeguards. Staffing levels vary by the size and programming available at the facility. When fully staffed, there are nearly 500 full and part-time employees across the County's aquatic facilities.

The Deputy Division Director over Parks is responsible for grounds and facilities maintenance across all of the County's parks and recreation facilities, with some of the aquatics facilities maintenance assigned to the GMA IIs within the Aquatics section.

The Deputy Division Director supervises the Grounds Maintenance Manager, who oversees four Program Coordinators. For parks and grounds maintenance, the County's parks and facilities have been organized into four grounds districts: East, West, North, and South. Each district is led by a Program Coordinator. Each Program Coordinator oversees the staff assigned to a park or location. Some crews may be assigned to two parks, or may have "sister parks" to help share the workload.

Grounds Maintenance Crews are supervised by either a Senior Foreman or a Grounds Maintenance Associate III, and each crew has between three and six staff, depending on the size of the park and the needed maintenance.

The Deputy Division Director over parks also oversees a Community Services Manager who over Support Services, which is responsible for skilled trades support services and staffing the warehouse for the Department. The Community Services Manager oversees two Program Coordinators.

One Program Coordinator oversees four crews of skilled trades technicians, with one dedicated to each of carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and construction. Crews will collaborate on more complex projects. Each crew is led by a Trades Technician IV, with crews of between one and three Trades Technicians of varying levels.

The other Program Coordinator oversees a Trades Technician IV who provides specialized support for pools and HVAC, a part-time Trades Technician who provides support to the Park Operations Center, and a Warehouse Supervisor.

The Warehouse Supervisor oversees the warehouse that provides support to the entire Department, with the primary user Parks and Recreation. The Warehouse Supervisor oversees a Warehouse Technicians II, a Trades Technician II, and a part-time Parks Crew Member.

### UGA Extension Gwinnett

UGA Extension Gwinnett is a partnership among the County, the University of Georgia, the State of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that offers educational programs in the areas of horticulture and agriculture, food safety and nutrition, and leadership and citizenship for youth.

UGA Extension Gwinnett consists of both County and University of Georgia employees. The Division consists of three main organizational pillars – 4H, Agricultural and Natural Resources (“ANR”), and Family and Consumer Sciences (“FACS”). The Division is led by a County Extension Coordinator who has four direct reports – County Extension Agent for 4H, County Extension Agent for ANR, County Extension Agent for FACS, and an Administrative Support Associate III. The County Extension Coordinator and the three County Extension Agents are all University of Georgia employees.

The County Extension Agent for 4H oversees two Program Assistants. 4H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4H programming exists in and out of County schools for youth from pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The County Extension Agent for ANR oversees a Program Assistant and a Clerk. ANR’s goal is to assist and educate hobby farmers, businesses, homeowners, gardeners and Master Gardener Extension Volunteers with information about plant identification, plant diseases, insect identification, pest control, and soil and water testing.

The County Extension Agent for FACS oversees a Program Assistant and a Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (“EFNEP”) Specialist. FACS helps people extend their income, improve their health, and strengthen their personal and family relationships through education, training, and programming.

The Administrative Support Associate III provides administrative support to the Division and oversees two Administrative Support Associate positions, a Program Assistant, and two Clerks.

### Voter Registrations and Elections

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division maintains Gwinnett County’s voter rolls and conducts elections within Gwinnett County for County, State, and Federal-level offices. The Division is jointly overseen by a Division Director, hired through the Department, and an Elections Supervisor, appointed by the Gwinnett County Board of Registrations and Elections (“Elections Board”). The Division Director primarily manages the administrative side of the Division, as well as owns special projects assigned by the Department Director, including managing the Department’s open records requests. The Elections Supervisor manages the operations of the Division; however, because the Elections Supervisor is the only employee appointed by the Elections Board with all other staff hired by the Department, lines of authority are not always clear.

The Division recently established a Deputy Elections Supervisor role which oversees the three sections within Voter Registrations and Elections. The Deputy Elections Supervisor's duties and responsibilities had not been formally codified in a written job description as of the time of our Assessment. The *de facto* duties of the Deputy Elections Supervisor include assisting the Elections Supervisor with day-to-day operations of the Division, ensuring compliance with state and local codes, and serving as an intermediary between the sections and the Elections Supervisor, especially during the election cycle when external demands for the Elections Supervisor's time are higher.

The Outreach, Education, Staffing, and Training Section is headed by an Assistant Elections Supervisor and comprises two teams. An Elections Coordinator oversees the Outreach and Education Team consisting of two Elections Associates II, one Elections Associate I, one Administrative Support Associate I, and one part-time Clerk. A second Elections Coordinator oversees the Staffing and Training Team consisting of three Elections Associates II, two Elections Associates I, and two part-time Clerks.

The Elections Operations Section is headed by an Assistant Elections Supervisor and comprises two teams. An Elections Coordinator oversees the Elections Operations Team, which is responsible for oversight of Election Day activities, voting equipment, and coordination of polling locations. In addition to the Elections Coordinator, the Elections Operations Team consists of four Elections Associates II and two Elections Associates I. The Warehouse Team is led by a Warehouse Manager and includes a Warehouse Supervisor, two Warehouse Technicians I, and two part time Clerks.

Both Assistant Elections Supervisors report to the Deputy Elections Supervisor.

The Elections Coordinators who lead the teams comprising the Voter Registrations and Absentee/Advanced Voting ("VRAA") Section also report directly to the Deputy Elections Supervisor.

The VRAA Section consists of four teams. The Voter Registrations Team, responsible for voter list maintenance, includes an Elections Coordinator and an Elections Associate I. The Records Team, responsible for compiling regular voter registration reports and open records requests, includes an Elections Coordinator, two Elections Associates II and one Elections Associate I. The Absentee by Mail Team includes an Elections Coordinator, two Elections Associates II, and one Elections Associate I. The Advanced in Person Voting Team includes an Elections Coordinator, an Elections Associate II, an Elections Associate I, and a part-time Clerk. The VRAA Section was only recently split into separate teams - previously all personnel reported to the flexible number of Elections Coordinators and were responsible for the same duties and responsibilities. Because the teams within the VRAA Section are still new, the position counts per team were still somewhat in flux as of our Assessment.

Administrative support for the Division is provided by an Administrative Support Associate III, an Administrative Support Associate II, one part-time Staff Assistant II, and two part-time Clerks. The Administration Team helps prepare and oversee the budget; performs HR functions as required; and works with Business Management and Technology Services on purchases, service requests, contracts, and vendor services. The Administration Team also assists the Elections Board maintain compliance with open meetings requirements and prepares and publishes the Elections Board's meeting agendas and minutes.

The Division does not have automatic promotions for any positions.

In addition to the full-time and part-time staff, the Division regularly contracts dozens to hundreds of temporary staff at any given time to work in the Division's offices, the Elections Warehouse, or polling locations.

### Overall Hiring and Retention Challenges

Many divisions throughout the Department have noted challenges related both to recruitment and retention of employees.

Department staff feel that there has been a lot of turnover and many divisions are struggling to maintain employees in roles that require specific skills or certifications.

Hiring is complicated by the limited set of available titles in use throughout the Department. This can create some confusion in understanding the differences in how titles are used in different divisions. The use of somewhat generic titles may also cause issues in the hiring process, as the titles and general descriptions may not accurately describe the role to be performed, or the skill sets that may be necessary. Additionally, the use of a consolidated list of titles has resulted in application of requirements to all employees within that position even though it may not be applicable to all roles. For example, within the Trades Technicians, certain skilled trades require licensure to advance to a level III position. Carpentry does not have comparable licensure, so currently Trades Technicians within the carpentry team are not eligible to be Trades Technician III, limiting their promotional opportunities, and failing to recognize their skills and experience.

Another example is inconsistent recognition of credentials. For plumbing and electrical licensures, for example, employees with those licenses receive a small pay incentive based on holding a relevant license. For other licenses, such as pesticide applicator licenses, or turfgrass certifications, the same pay incentives are not made available.

The use of a limited set of titles also poorly reflects the differences in skillsets and experience required to hold different roles. Program Coordinator, Program Supervisor, etc. have different meanings within different divisions, and fails to highlight the difference in skills needed across these positions.

The Department and the County have made some efforts to correct some of the low pay issues noted throughout the Department, and has recently raised pay for lifeguards, as an example. These efforts have not been consistently applied – increased wages for new hires may mean that inexperienced new hires may be earning the same, and sometimes more than, experienced staff. Additionally, within some units there are disincentives to promote from staff to coordinator level positions, since the coordinator level positions do not always qualify for on-call and overtime pay. This could result in an employee taking a functional pay cut to take on more responsibilities.

Several of the programs and initiatives are heavily reliant on volunteers and interns to meet basic program expectations, so an additional job component that takes time and isn't necessarily part of the designed job responsibilities, is volunteer and intern coordination and management. As many positions are not exempt, this creates additional challenges in completing the required work, putting on the programs and activities, and still managing volunteers/interns. For younger volunteers and interns, staff may be asked to wait with them for a guardian to pick them up after completing an event, which further reduces hours available for work completion.

Many divisions also cited challenges with County HR's timeline for hiring, especially for part-time and seasonal employees. Several staff noted that quality candidates withdrew offers, or withdrew themselves from consideration, having received another offer while the County was still working through the hiring process. For seasonal workers, the timeline delays have resulted in some positions not being filled until well into the summer season. There are also concerns with the County's HR system, Neogov, not being mobile-friendly and a potential deterrent for potential applicants.

## Leadership and Management

Employees in the Department acknowledge that leadership has been making changes that leadership believes are the right changes to move the Department forward and improve efficiency. Many employees feel, however, that decision-making is not based on leadership engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions. Often, decisions are being made without input or understanding of how decisions made to assist one division may impact another division. There is also a perceived lack of understanding of how "small" changes are magnified given the size of the Department, the differences in division's missions and operating environment, as well as the magnitude of sites that are impacted. Staff also feel that once leadership has made a decision about a policy, process, or program, that decision is finalized, and input from subject matter expert staff is not relevant, nor wanted by leadership.

Our fieldwork noted two common mindsets related to Department leadership. There were employees who supported leadership's vision for the Department, and appreciated leadership's passion for the work, noting that it helps the department succeed and is driven by a commitment to the citizens and community. Other employees' perception is that either you accept and support leadership's ideas and requests, or you get blacklisted. Some staff noted that many employees had become "yes men" in the interest of self-preservation and mental health.

This perception of biased decision-making is coupled with leadership's efforts to create a single set of policies, forms, processes, and requirements that must be uniformly applied to all divisions.

One example noted during fieldwork is the requirement that all purchases should utilize available County contracts. In theory, this practice should assist with cost-savings and efficient purchases. What staff have found, however, is that many of the contracts were procured by other departments with significantly different needs, so on-contract purchases are not cost-advantageous. There were several noted instances of consumables expiring because the minimum quantity available for purchase on contract was significantly larger than the quantity needed by that division or section, which resulted in wasted consumables and funds.

As part of the perceived leadership focus on decision-making without consideration of staff, leadership often says yes to every potential grant, initiative, program, or activity that could be provided by the Department. Often these are accepted without full planning and implementation preparation, and are handed to staff to "make it happen." This heightened sense of expectations has created a culture of staff who are "afraid to fail" where staff push themselves beyond what is reasonable because they fear retribution if they don't succeed. Many staff also feel taken advantage of - because their programs and services are public facing and designed to have positive community impacts, there is an expectation that people will always go above and beyond to meet the challenges set forth by leadership, even at personal cost.

This culture of unilateral decision-making and criticism of program issues or concerns has also created a sense among staff that they cannot afford to suggest ideas, or be innovative, because if it isn't immediately successful, or doesn't align with the Director's vision, that they may be penalized, disciplined, or publicly humiliated.

This is coupled with a Department leadership that is very hands-on and involved in day-to-day operations, and nearly all decision-making. The Department Director reviews every employee performance evaluation, is involved in the majority of purchase requests. Department leadership is actively involved in and supports many of the Department's initiatives, but many staff feel that this is less indicative of interest and engagement, and more representative of a culture of mistrust. As an example, the Department does not allow any telework, which many still feel that this policy implies a mistrust of the staff's ability to manage workload and perform without direct oversight from leadership.

As the Department has grown, the Department has focused on the creation of additional middle management roles to manage workload and ensure more equitable distribution of work. These new roles do not always feel strategic, and may have been introduced without a proper evaluation of workload, workflow, and the opportunity for more efficient processes rather than additional levels of management. This has created some inconsistency in how titling is used throughout the Department, and some disparities in roles and responsibilities within the same title band. There is also a perception that some of the current managers have not relinquished their responsibilities and fail to delegate managerial and decision-making authority down the line, so there are levels of middle management that lack true authority for decision-making.

In our time with staff throughout the Department, staff noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. Employees in divisions that tend to be more visible with the communities and receiving accolades and acknowledgements noted frequent, proactive engagement with Department leadership. Staff in other divisions cannot recall seeing Departmental leadership in their area for anything other than Departmental events or to publicize negative performance or issues.

There is also a perception that senior leadership defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that incidents and requests receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not County leadership (at either the Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. One hundred and thirty-five responses were received, representing an approximate rate of 19% permanent full-time and part-time employees. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Department of Community Services employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens
3. I am proud to work for the County

The lowest three scores from Department of Community Services employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I trust Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County
3. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the Department's staff as its greatest asset – staff work well together, bring a high level of experience to the job, and are committed to serving the community.
- Respondents identified low morale caused by executive management as the greatest detractor. Micromanagement, lack of effective communication from the top down, a perceived lack of trust (for example, the use of physical time clocks), and a perceived dismissal of input has created a culture of fear, according to staff.
- Respondents suggested hiring and staff retention practices are inefficient and ineffective. The hiring process is drawn out, orientation and training are insufficient, and advancement opportunities are non-existent or not merit based for most staff, according to respondents.
- Respondents recommended investing in new and updated technology and equipment, improved employee training, and slimming down the current approval processes (such as purchasing, discipline, and procedural changes) would help improve service delivery in the Department.
- Respondents requested management take the time to understand daily operations across the Department so as to better understand how decisions affect processes.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level and division-level recommendations.



**Observation 1:** The Department uses a limited number of titles, which can result in employees in very different roles holding the same titles. The lack of titles that accurately reflect the responsibilities of the position can create challenges in promotion as well as challenges in hiring, as the posted description may not adequately reflect the responsibilities of the role.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department needs to work with County HR to assess whether additional titles can be utilized to better delineate between roles and responsibilities. The Department should ensure that growth and promotional responsibilities are appropriate for each role, rather than compared against Department or county-wide use of the title.

**Observation 2:** The Department's organizational chart is disjointed, with similar functions present in several divisions. This has created some confusion about which division is responsible for certain functions and how the functions are delineated between divisions. Additionally, some functions are not assigned within divisions, which can create discrepancies in how units are housed under management. Under one Deputy Department Director, there is a division, a team, a section, a single person, and an unclassified unit.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should conduct a functional assessment to reorganize the department by functional responsibilities, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level.

**Observation 3:** The Department is predominantly focused on community service and public-facing programming and activities. As such, there are many opportunities to support other community activities, or expand their footprint to include additional programming, initiatives or activities. Leadership frequently introduces new initiatives, or expanded activities throughout the Department. This has resulted in mission creep and conflicting priorities throughout the Department, with staff often asked to step away from their primary functions to support other initiatives and efforts. This mission creep has also led to an increased reliance on volunteer labor, and has led to stretched resources and overextended staff.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department needs to work with County leadership to develop a refined, specific mission and scope for each of the divisions, as well as a way to refer requesters to other departments or community organizations. The Department also needs to formally and consistently evaluate staff workload, and identify a plan to either add additional staff and resources to support the current programming, or reduce programming to better reflect what can be reasonably accomplished with current staffing levels.

**Observation 4:** The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of lower-level directors or managers. This emphasis has led to delays in approvals, inconsistent treatment of issues, and less autonomy and authority granted to other directors and managers, eroding their authority and benefit.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the lower-level departments and managers and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.

**Observation 5:** In an effort to create consistency for all the divisions, the Department has created departmental policies, processes, and procedures. These policies, processes, and procedures do not reflect an understanding of the operating needs of each division, and have created inefficient processes and potential waste.

**Recommendation 5:** Department leadership need to work with each division to ensure that policies either allow adequate authority to modify them to provide efficient and effective operating practices for each division, or move towards developing division-level policies and procedures, rather than department-wide policies and procedures.

**Observation 6:** Public complaints, issues, or concerns that are made through or escalated to Section, Division, Department, or County leadership may be handled differently than complaints submitted through other methods. Leadership may intervene and request specific or expedited actions that are not the normal or standard operating practices, creating inconsistent treatment of similar complaints, issues, or concerns, and the perception of preference provided high visibility customers. The individual involvement in cases also creates a perception that staff are not given the authority to perform their jobs without specific approval from leadership.

**Recommendation 6:** As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff's understanding of specific issues and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all and understand the potential precedents that are set by responses to common issues. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with appropriate division staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific issue can do so.

**Observation 7:** The Department has recently prioritized a focus on customer service and service delivery strategy. Most of this strategy is internally driven and based on leadership's perceptions of customers and their needs. There has not been consistent efforts to engage different groups of customers and stakeholders to better understand their interests and needs. This has resulted in the inconsistent definition of customer and has often failed to gain customer insight or perspective on what they desire.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should identify and consistently collect customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions, needs assessments, and process evaluation.

**Observation 8:** The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism of certain divisions and staff. Leadership often appears to be most involved in those functional areas in which they have experience and knowledge, or those that are highly visible with the public and County leadership.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Many staff feel that leadership does not want to hear from them, unless their thoughts support or validate leadership's ideas. There is also perception that information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information due to fear of discipline or public humiliation.

**Recommendation 8:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Observation 9:** The Department does not allow any teleworking. Many other County departments offer at least some level of teleworking. This discrepancy frustrates staff and many feel that it reflects a lack of trust from leadership, and is indicative of senior leadership's desire to be hands-on and involved in the day-to-day of departmental operations.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should reassess its stance on teleworking and consider introducing teleworking to positions whose job functions could be performed from home at last part of the time.

**Observation 10:** The metrics and performance data reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department, and may not provide adequate context for the reported metrics to provide value. There are missed opportunities to effectively demonstrate the customer service and quality product provided by the Department.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

# 3.B Information Technology Services Department

## Information Technology at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Facilitate the use of technology throughout the Gwinnett County government
- 2 | Provide high-availability server and storage infrastructure and services with redundancy, failover, and load balancing for all mission critical applications
- 3 | Align information technology (“IT”) resources with the needs of business units to improve customer service
- 4 | Evaluate and implement emerging technologies to solve problems, enhance processes and services, and assist with definition the direction for the Gwinnett County government
- 5 | Provide and maintain secure and reliable IT to meet the County’s changing needs

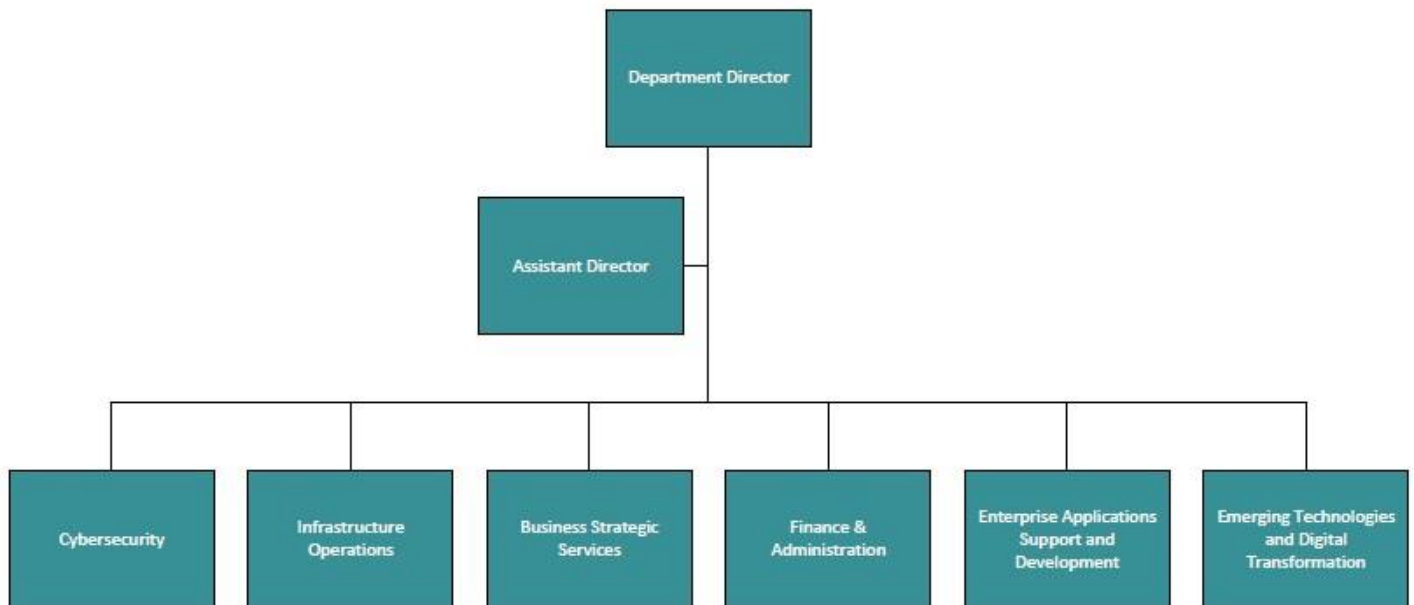
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$47,226,935</b>	<b>\$8,209,124</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through June 2022	IT Services
FTE	Filled	114
	Allocated	145

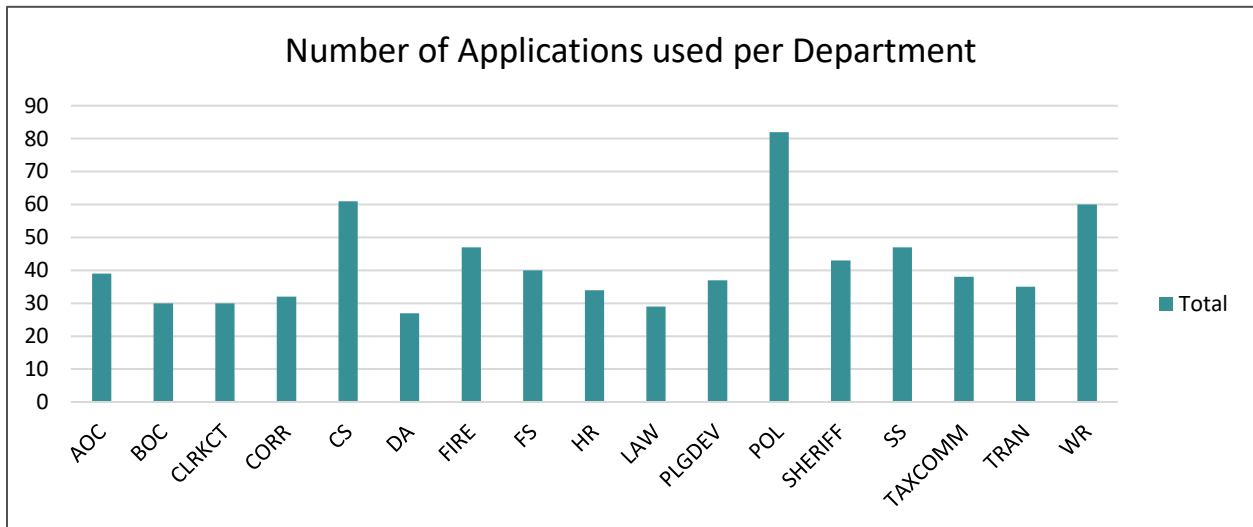
## Organization Structure



## Introduction

Information Technology Services (“ITS”) provides service to all County departments, including the Board of Commissioners, Community Services, Corrections, Courts, Elections, Financial Services, Fire and Emergency Services, Human Resources, Planning and Development, Police Services, Sheriff, Support Services, Tax Commissioner, Transportation, and Water Resources. ITS currently consists of 164 full-time, 19 part-time, and 72 contracted resources working across seven divisions.

The table below depicts the approximate number of applications and technologies the County Department supports.



ITS’s services include data center and network operations, end user computer support, information security and compliance, business application support, technology planning, and innovation, and project management and governance. Like other public sector information technology departments, Gwinnett County’s ITS has many outdated systems, applications, and infrastructure components. ITS recognizes these challenges and has developed a strategic plan to transform the Department’s organizational structure and update the County’s business applications and technology infrastructure for the future.

## Organization

The ITS is led by the County’s Chief Information Officer (“CIO”) and is organized into seven divisions:

- Office of the CIO (Director’s Office)
- Business Strategic Services
- Enterprise Applications Support and Development
- Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation
- Finance and Administration
- Infrastructure Operations
- Cybersecurity

### Office of the CIO (Director's Office)

The Information Technology Services Director's Office is responsible for providing strategic vision and planning for the technical direction of Gwinnett County by aligning IT industry standards and approaches with the County's goals. It is also responsible for IT training across the County. The CIO leads the Division. The Assistant Director, Public Safety Project Manager, and Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator report to the CIO. The Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator handles and coordinates training for the Department. One full-time Technical Trainer, two part-time Technical Trainers, and a part-time Administrative Assistant report to the Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator. Currently, the Assistant Director and two part-time Technical Trainers positions are vacant.

It should be noted that Public Safety Project Manager reports directly to the CIO instead of the Project Management Office in the Business Strategic Services Division. In addition, It should be noted that due to leadership vacancies within the Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division, the Geospatial Solutions Unit Manager, Public Safety Solutions Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Managers report directly to the Department Director (CIO).

### Business Strategic Services

The Business Strategic Services Division is responsible for providing business consulting, process improvements, project management, and the application of technologies to the County's internal Departments. The Business Strategic Services Division is comprised of the Business Relationship Management Unit and the Project Management Office. The Business Relationship Management Unit is the liaison between management and IT Departments. The Project Management Office ("PMO") is responsible for providing project management to the County's IT Projects. The Division consists of 10 full-time employee positions, four staff-augmented contractor positions, and five temporary contractor positions. There are several vacancies in the Division, including one project manager position, one business analyst, one PMO Financial Analyst, and one business relationship specialist position.

Due to the demand and workload of the existing project management staff, the Division is in the process of adding several contract project managers to augment the existing project management staff. To source the contract project managers, the County has issued a Request for Proposal ("RFP") for a Project Management Managed Service Provider ("MSP") that will provide the Division with a dedicated source for project management and business analyst resources. Once the new MSP is procured and the new project managers onboarded, it is expected that the new Project Managers will alleviate the workload of the current staff. Still, there is concern that managing the additional staff will increase the workload for Division managers who already have full workloads.

In addition, the Division is currently hiring contractors to fill the Business Process Analysts positions to support requirements definition for projects that require Agile development practices. Agile projects have specific needs and require specific business analyst skills to elicit requirements and write user stories. With such heavy workloads and a lack of Agile knowledge/training, it is difficult for current staff to analyze Agile projects thoroughly. It is anticipated that the Project Management MSP will be able to assist in sourcing Agile Business Analysts.

## Enterprise Applications Support and Development

The Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division is responsible for developing, maintaining, and supporting the Gwinnett County core business systems. The Division is comprised of The Business Solutions, Enterprise Resources Planning (“ERP”), and Data Services Units which focus on integrating, developing, and supporting core technical business systems. The Division Director is supported by the three Unit Managers. There Division is comprised of 53 positions consisting of 37 full-time employees, two part-time employees, 11 staff augmentation contractors, and two temporary contractors. Currently, there are 28 positions with 10 vacancies in the Enterprise Application Unit, 14 positions in the Business Solutions Unit with two vacant positions, and 11 positions in the Data Services Unit with two vacancies. Similar to other divisions within the Department, hiring has been challenging due to the lengthy hiring process, low pay, and lack of teleworking options.

## Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation

The Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division is a new division focused on digital automation and business optimization using new and emerging technological solutions. To create the new Division, the Geospatial Information Solutions (“GIS”), Public Safety Solutions, and Web Solution Units were moved from the Enterprise Applications Division into the new Division. To complete the Division, a New Technology Solutions Unit will be created.

Currently, the Division consists of 24 full-time employees, two part-time employees, three contractor employees, and three temporary contractor employees. There are seven vacant positions throughout the Division. Four of the vacancies are for the Department Director and Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Solutions Unit. It should be noted that due to leadership vacancies within the Division, the Geospatial Solutions Unit Manager, Public Safety Solutions Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Managers report directly to the Department Director (CIO).

## Fiscal and Administrative

The Fiscal and Administrative Division provides fiscal and administrative support services for the Information Technology Services Department. Services included contract management and oversight, asset management, human resources administration, and financial and procurement support. The Fiscal and Administration Division Director leads the Division, and the Financial Management Office Section is led by a Business Manager, who is supported by two full-time Financial Analyst IIs, three part-time Financial Analysts II, a Program Analyst III, and a Business Services Associate (“BSA”) II.

The Office Manager oversees the HR/Administration Section, which is comprised of an Administrative Associate IV, two Administrative Associate IIs, two part-time Receptionists, and a part-time IT Associate. The Asset Management Section was recently created and is led by the Asset Management Manager. In addition to being the Asset Management Manager, the Section has one full-time and one part-time position. The Division consists of 8 full-time employees, seven part-time employees, and four temporary contractors. There are four vacant positions throughout the Division, including the part-time Acquisitions Assistant and a Financial Analyst II, and two full-time Administrative Associates III.

## Infrastructure Operations

The Infrastructure Operations Division is responsible for providing continuous operation of the network infrastructure, the county data centers, Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”), physical & virtual servers, Microsoft Exchange, and various end-user computing technologies. The Infrastructure Operations Division is comprised of the Network Operations Division and the Unit the Systems & Storage Unit and the End User Support Unit. The Department is led by the Infrastructure and Operations Deputy Director. The Network Operation Division consists of 24 full-time employees, two part-time employees, and 15 staff augmentation contractors. The Systems & Storage Unit and the End User Support Unit consist of 30 full-time employees, three part-time employees, nine contractors, and six temporary contractors. There are five vacant positions throughout the Division and two additional positions that are being filled and awaiting a start date.

## Cybersecurity

The Cybersecurity Division is responsible for securing Gwinnett County’s IT assets. The division is responsible for defining, administering, and ensuring compliance with the County’s Information Security Policy and industry best practices. The Cybersecurity Division works with the other County departments to identify security risks, detect potential cyberattacks, and respond as necessary. The Division consists of nine full-time employees, six contractors, and one temporary contractor. There are four vacant positions: the IT Systems Supervisor, 2 Security Architects, and a Security Compliance Control Assessor.

## Leadership and Management

Most of ITS’s leadership and management team have been with the County for at least five to six years. There are several vacant leadership positions within the Department, including the Assistant Director for the Department, the Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Director, the New Technologies Solution Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Manager. Due to the leadership vacancy, the staff in the Divisions and Units report directly to the CIO, placing additional management responsibilities on the Department Director. In addition, the Department Director is involved in many detailed decisions and approvals, often resulting in process bottlenecks. While the Department Director’s involvement in tactical decisions may be attributed to leadership vacancies within the Department, the lack of delegating authority for tactical decisions uses time that could be more effectively used on ITS’s strategic initiatives.

As with other public sector information technology departments, Gwinnett County’s ITS has several outdated systems, applications, and infrastructure components. ITS recognizes these challenges and has developed a strategic plan to transform the Department’s organizational structure and update the County’s business applications and technology infrastructure for the future. ITS’s Leadership Team communicated its vision to the Department and is conducting a Road Show with the other County Departments to communicate the vision and report on progress against the strategic plan. However, full implementation of the strategic plan will require the support of County leadership and additional funding.

In addition to implementing the new organizational structure and strategic plan, Department Leadership is trying to change the Department’s culture to become more agile and results-oriented. As with any organization, culture change is difficult and is often met with resistance. Employees noted that, generally, they understand their roles, Employees do not feel, however, that leadership is consistently making decisions that are in the best interest of the County, nor are the decisions being made communicated to staff in a timely and effective manner.



Through our observations and analysis, it was observed that the staff is dissatisfied with the Department's telework policy. The current policy allows for non-management staff to telework one day per week. While the current telework policy is damaging employee morale, it is also prohibiting this Department from attracting new talent, as indicated by the reports of candidates that decline offers due to the lack of teleworking opportunities.

There is friction within the Business Strategic Services Division between the Division Director and PMO Manager over management styles and project management philosophy. These diverging opinions have led to a fractured organization and disfunction within the Division. As a result of the disfunction, the contract project managers and PMO Financial Analyst report to the Division Director rather than the PMO Manager, and the Division Director assigns the project managers to projects rather than the PMO Manager. When a new project starts, the Division Director assigns the next available project manager to the project regardless of the project manager's domain expertise within the project subject area. This method of assigning project managers has resulted in mismatched expectations, a lack of functional project management, and projects that do not meet customers' expectations.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Fifty responses were received, representing an approximate rate of 26%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Information Technology Services employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens
3. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role

The lowest three scores from Information Technology Services employees were in response to the following questions (two responses were tied for third-lowest score):

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner
3. I trust Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County
4. I have opportunities to advance within the County

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the staff's teamwork and technical skills as the biggest strengths of the Department. Respondents also appreciated the continuing education opportunities provided to the staff.

- Respondents identified low morale as the greatest detractor to productivity. According to respondents, morale issues stem from lack of communication, leadership, and trust from management. Respondents felt management is quick to blame staff rather than admit fault at a higher level or acknowledge changes are needed in processes.
- Respondents noted the Department's culture is one of demoralization due to lack of trust from management. Respondents suggested the demoralization limits innovation and improvements.
- Respondents recommended improving staffing levels, eliminating micromanaging, and creating a better work-life balance through a hybrid work model as means to improve morale and service delivery.
- Respondents suggested the Department relies on antiquated tools and processes, including software applications (like SAP) and wet signatures. Management does not embrace change and process improvements, according to respondents.

## Department Recommendations

Our fieldwork identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may apply to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following Department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities at the Department level rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for Department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains division-level recommendations.

Recommendations are grouped into three sub-sections: Governance and Risk Management, Operations, and Continuous Improvement. The Governance and Risk Management Unit focuses on management policy changes that would affect the Department's operation parameters and goals. Operations focus on process and practice changes in how the divisions perform daily business functions. The Continuous Improvement Unit focuses on new or additive technical/communication solutions that achieve improvement and aid in the day-to-day operations.

## Operations

**Observation 1:** The Department recognizes that much of the County's systems and infrastructure is outdated and needs to be upgraded. The Department will require continuous funding to achieve the desired outcomes. According to the Jabian Report, the Department's 2021 budget is \$12 million under industry benchmarks for state and local governments with similar total operation budgets. It is perceived by some staff that IT funding is often secondary to funding citizen services. However, today, technology is the foundation for customer service and operational efficiencies, and continual investment is required. In addition, the County's outdated technology increases the risk of the County's ability to provide network, infrastructure, and application service continuity, defend against cyber-attacks, and recover critical technical infrastructure in the event of disaster recovery.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should develop a multi-year budget aligned with the Department's Strategic Plan that considers ongoing operations costs with projects available to upgrade the County's technology applications and infrastructure. Develop in-depth business cases and presentations for County Leadership explaining the needs and services benefits of the technology initiatives and the risks to the County of remaining with the status quo.

**Observation 2:** Many of the Divisions are understaffed due to staffing challenges.

**Recommendation 2:** The number of unfilled vacancies, the difficulty in attracting appropriate technical talent, the long hiring timeline, the County’s ability to provide a competitive total compensation package, etc., all contribute to the divisions being understaffed. Some policies may have to be revisited to attract talent. Remote work has become ubiquitous since the pandemic, and the current technology workforce expects it for at least a few days of the week. A hybrid work policy should be developed for the Department.

Gartner’s 2021 Hybrid Work Employee Survey of more than 2,400 knowledge workers in January 2021 reveals that HR can increase employee performance and reduce fatigue by creating a hybrid work model that focuses on *“providing employee-driven flexibility - Employers should adopt an employee-driven approach to flexible working that empowers employees to choose where, when and how they work. To successfully make this shift, employers must destigmatize flexible working by making it the default – not the exception – and developing principles – not policies – around flexible working. Employee-driven flexibility enables individuals to integrate personal and professional obligations to achieve work-life harmonization. The Gartner survey found that organizations with high levels of flexibility are almost three times more likely to see high employee performance. (Gartner, 2021)”*

The time it takes to make offers also needs to be reduced so that the County does not lose great candidates after completing all the interviews. A market compensation study for the technology jobs needs to be completed to determine compensation gaps for the various positions. The Department continuously tries to hire top talent but struggles with funding for competitive salaries. The strategic theme to prioritize quality staff augmentation will address this issue.

A comprehensive analysis of the vacancies should be performed to determine if contracting or outsourcing certain functions strategically will address the issue.

**Observation 3:** A Managed Services Provider (“MSP”) will streamline procurement of IT contingent resources, project-based staff augmentation, and enhance transparency.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should evaluate and procure the services of a Managed Services Provider (“MSP”). The MSP will provide a Vendor Management System (“VMS”) that automates and supports the IT contingent labor lifecycle and the use of project-based resource services. In addition, the selected MSP can offer an extensive network of Georgia IT companies and staffing providers to supply much-needed temporary talent to the County.

The MSP program will provide the County with complete transparency by using a not-to-exceed price rate card model in the recruitment and selection of IT talent and by using service-level agreements to manage the acquisition, time reporting, and invoice processing. As earlier stated, the MSP program streamlines and standardizes IT procurement, utilizing an open network of IT staffing suppliers to meet the diverse IT needs of Gwinnett County.

To jumpstart this process, Gwinnett County should consider using the State of Georgia Contract for an IT Staffing Managed Services Provider managed by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services <https://doas.ga.gov/state-purchasing/it-temporary-staffing>. The contract is used by state agencies, the colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia, and many local governments. Information regarding the awarded vendor Computer is located at <https://www.cai.io/services/contingent-workforce-solutions/georgia>.

**Observation 4:** The metrics being tracked in Divisions are primarily tactical. We received feedback indicating that there are plans to enhance metrics for the Service Desk and other units. There does not appear to be any monthly trend analysis or programs to improve performance.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should develop a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.

## Governance and Risk Management

**Observation 5:** The Department has documented processes and procedures but needs to enhance them in key areas like Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity, and IT operations.

**Recommendation 5:** Implementing additional ITIL categories will enhance processes and procedures for service delivery. For example, following the Service Design process will mandate creating and updating Service Management Manuals. The ITIL Core, Enhanced, Performance, and Strategic categories are later defined in the Appendix of the report. A Service Organization Control SOC2 Type 2 certification journey will also greatly help identify and fix any weaknesses. A SOC 2 Type 2 report is an internal controls report capturing how an organization safeguards customer/user data and how well those controls are operating. The System and Organizations Control (SOC) offers the best way to demonstrate effective information technology controls.

The SOC report assures user entities that:

- The Department has the required security controls in place to protect customer/user data against known and emerging threats.
- The Department has set up alerts to detect anomalies and violations across the entire ecosystem easily.
- Besides preventing risky situations, the Department can quickly repair damage and restore normalcy in case a rare data breach or system failure occurs.

There are three types of SOC reports. They are SOC 1, SOC 2, and SOC 3.

- SOC 1 compliance focuses entirely on controls directly impacting the user entity's internal controls over financial reporting (ICFR).
- SOC 2 compliance offers reporting options beyond financial objectives. It covers controls relevant to the trust services principles (TSP): security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy.
- Lastly, SOC 3 has a similar look and feel to SOC 2. However, the SOC 3 report is truncated and has free distribution. It is more of a widespread use report as needed.

A SOC 2 report is broken down into two distinct types. There is SOC 2 Type I and SOC 2 Type II.

- The SOC 2 Type I report covers the suitability of design controls and the operating effectiveness of the Department's systems at a specific time. Typically, this is a single day. It affirms that the Department's security systems and controls are working as you have set them to at a particular point.

- The SOC 2 Type II report is like the Type I report but has a few significant differences. First, to prove SOC 2 Type II compliance, the Department undergoes rigorous auditing over a more extended period, usually up to 12 months.

A SOC 2 Type II report focuses on the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) trust service principles. It examines a service provider's internal controls and systems related to security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and data privacy. Moreover, SOC 2 Type II delves into the details of the Department's infrastructure service system throughout the specified period.

It focuses on the following areas:

- **Infrastructure:** The physical and hardware components (networks, facilities, and equipment) that support the IT environment and help the Department deliver services.
- **Software:** The operating software and programs (utilities, applications, and systems) that facilitate data and system processing.
- **People:** The personnel (managers, developers, users, and operators) involved in the management, security, governance, and operations to deliver services to customers/users.
- **Data:** The information (files, databases, transaction stream, and tables) used or processed within the service organization.
- **Procedures:** The manual or automated procedures that bind processes and keep service delivery flawless.

**Observation 6:** Although many of the components are in place, there does not appear to be an overall Enterprise Architecture that dictates all Infrastructure and application expenditure.

**Recommendation 6:** The County should hire an Enterprise Architect with one of the available vacancies, choose an architecture framework, and create an overall Enterprise Architecture framework that will establish governance and controls for all technology projects and investments.

**Observation 7:** From the interviews, it does not appear that there is an established hierarchical governance structure that rolls up to a forum that governs the enterprise. While an informal structure exists through daily status reports, a more formalized structure is needed.

**Recommendation 7:** The County should establish a hierarchical operations governance structure that is made up of forums for the IT towers of operation (Network, Storage, End User Support, Security, Enterprise Applications) and a Governance Board. Within the governance model, each tower of operation should meet periodically to review open tickets, technical environment changes, and upcoming events (projects, maintenance, patches, fixes, etc.). If issues and open items cannot be resolved in the lower forums, they are escalated and presented to the Governance Board. The Governance Board serves as the forum to resolve open issues, monitor service levels, and communicate technical environment changes across the Department. An IT operational governance structure improves the visibility of technical environment change impacts and provides leadership with a forum to intervene and resolve issues promptly.

**Observation 8:** The County changed its SAP support provider from SAP to Remini Street. While Remini Street offers a lower-cost alternative to SAP support and maintenance, Remini Street does not have access to the SAP's patches and fixes required to keep SAP current for application, technology, and security fixes. While many ERP customers move away from vendor support when selecting a new system, the switch is usually made within a year or two of the production cut-over when the transition to a new system is inevitable.

**Recommendation 8:** The County should reexamine the decision to discontinue maintenance and support from SAP. Should the County choose a different ERP vendor, contract staff may look for new opportunities. Having an outsourced support vendor like Remini Street can mitigate this risk. However, the risk of not having access to SAP support and maintenance may outweigh the cost savings if the County does not have access to critical applications, technology, and security fixes provided by SAP. By not having access to and not applying any of the recommended application security patches for a prolonged period, the Enterprise Operating Environment (EOE) risk level increases dramatically.

### Continuous Improvement

**Observation 9:** There do not appear to be independent customer satisfaction surveys from the Department's user base.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should conduct periodic (such as quarterly) anonymous surveys, aggregate the user responses, and use the results to improve customer service. Periodic (quarterly or semi-annual) user group forums can also be set up to communicate strategic plans, upcoming changes, training, etc., and obtain valuable user feedback.

**Observation 10:** From the interviews, executive leadership is involved in many decisions and approvals, resulting in process bottlenecks. The involvement in tactical decisions that can be delegated takes time away from working on the Department's strategic initiatives.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department Director should delegate certain decisions within a specific financial or risk tolerance to Division Directors or the Assistant Director once the position is filled. An alternative, an auto-approval procedure, can be implemented that triggers automatic approval after an agreed time. This can be implemented for non-financial decisions such as approval of standards, certain agreed-upon HR actions, etc.

**Observation 11:** There appears to be a lack of effective communication amongst all the Divisions regarding system implementations, upgrades, and maintenance.

**Recommendation 11:** The Department should arrange a monthly meeting with all relevant parties (including Service Desk representation) where strategic plans, upcoming changes, known impact of those changes, etc., are discussed so that all the Divisions are aware of the plans and any changes that may affect operations or service delivery. The Service Desk can plan and be prepared if they are aware of any significant changes that may increase the call volume.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.



**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

## Additional Observations and Recommendations Identified During Phase 4 Assessment

**Observation 12:** As County departments are developing succession plans and workload assessments, there is inconsistent consideration of the changes in generations, and the values and interests of the emerging workforce. Departments and division are often envisioning that new hires will be comparable replacements for tenured staff with institutional knowledge.

**Recommendation 12:** The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workload analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.

## 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations

County leadership should consider the following “quick win” recommendations extracted from the full report for each of the Phase 4 In-Scope Departments. These recommendations may provide an opportunity for executive leadership to make an immediate approval/decision or prompt action to provide rapid successes:

### Department of Community Services

#### Animal Welfare and Enforcement

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** The Division should work with the Community Engagement and Collaboration Division and the Communications Department to find a more appropriate title for the Pre-Adoption Application Form to eliminate any potential of users mistaking the form as means to reserve or adopt an animal.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider providing all new staff customer service, de-escalation, and other training on leading practices for interacting with the public.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** The Division should not remove any dead animals from roadways where GDOT maintains responsibility, unless Division staff have been properly trained and assigned equipment for performing animal removal services on densely populated roads (interstates and State Route 316).

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** The Division should improve its cross-training policy to ensure staff fully understand the duties, responsibilities, policies, and procedures of every team and section within the Division. While the Division may or may not consider mandated training for a set period of time in the Kennel, on the Day Shift, and on the Night Shift, the Division should ensure each staff member understands all three areas, as well as the Outreach Team, the Special Operations Team, and the duties of the Behaviorist.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The Division should improve its evaluation of candidates for ACO positions. While the Division does not need to fully implement the stringent practices previously employed by the Police Department, the Division should be mindful of the fact that personnel are hired to handle animals and controlled drugs, and should adequately communicate expectations to potential hires.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** The Division should review how the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Development Department tracks cases from initial complaint to final close-out, indicating the outcome of said cases, allowing the Code Enforcement Division to track against the goal of compliance over citation. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division should employ a similar model to track against their goal of education over citation.

## Business Management and Technology Services

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** The Division should work with Department leadership to assess the Prior Authorization Need (“PAN”) process and requirements, and update the requirements to require PANs only for purchases that are not within the current approved budget, or those that may exceed purchasing thresholds, such as those set by the Purchasing Division within the County’s Finance Department.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** The Division should review the practice of having all financial staff receive cross-training in all financial functions, and consider creating a more intentional set of cross-training, or create secondary internal reviews to ensure that the same employee did not approve or enter a budget transfer, approve a purchasing request, and also process that same request for payment.

## Community Engagement and Community Collaboration

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9:** The Division should move website management under the Digital Engagement Coordinator, and provide staffing to support this function. When marketing or promotional material is developed for use in both digital and traditional efforts, the Division should have a clear process for collaboration on developing and implementing these efforts.

## Health and Human Services

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** The Division should ensure that formal vendor performance evaluations are conducted to provide formal feedback to the vendors and help ensure that the expected service levels are being performed. The Division should also consider a formal open procurement to potentially alter or enhance the current contracted service providers.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11:** The Division should evaluate options for more formal data tracking and analysis tools for the OneStop 4 Help program.

## Parks and Recreation

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** The Division should establish policies for facility staff that clearly outline what should and should not be escalated to an emergency-level call. Coordinators should also be empowered to assess whether or not the call requires an urgent response, or whether it can be addressed during normal business hours. These policies should also provide clear guidance authorizing the Coordinator to determine whether the use of overtime or an on-demand contractor is the most efficient method for resolving the issue.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** The Division should consider developing more formal and consistent processes for Recreation to communicate with Grounds Maintenance about upcoming rentals and athletic events, to ensure that Grounds Maintenance can build in time to accommodate needed work. This should include reviewing Rec1 to determine if an internal events calendar could be shared with Grounds Maintenance to help them understand the full scope of upcoming projects. Alternatively, the Division should consider transferring responsibility to Recreation staff to create work orders for all grounds work needed related to athletic events or other rentals.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** The Division should standardize pavilion rental timeslots of either four or eight hours. This will allow Recreation Park Attendants adequate time to clean the pavilions between the rentals, and would also free up some of the Rental Park Attendant's time to provide other grounds maintenance efforts, and potentially assist coordinators in responding to emergency call issues. Alternatively, the Division should consider assessing budgeted personnel funds that have not been spent due to unfilled positions. The Division should consider using these funds to offer overtime, as funding permits, to allow Grounds Maintenance staff to work weekends assisting with needed grounds maintenance, or to assist in pavilion rentals.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 15:** The Division should continue to develop formalized mentoring and training programs to develop candidates for promotion and growth. The Division should speak with the Department of Water Resources about the programs they have developed, which include management training for all level III technicians, including management training and understanding of County processes and policies related to timesheet review, budget and financial management, and similar responsibilities that tend to increase as staff are promoted.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 16:** The Division should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 17:** The Division should also assess the data points currently being collected, to ensure that the data being collected is value-add and assists in program development or performance assessment. The Division should, as part of a more holistic asset management strategic initiative, develop and implement consistent asset-level condition assessments, with regular reviews of condition levels, and utilization of this information to inform funding decisions around rehabilitating, repairing, or replacing existing assets versus constructing new assets or facilities.

### Voter Registration & Elections

**Quick-Win Recommendation 18:** The Division should talk to other County departments about solutions for handling calls as a call center, such as the IVR and switchboard systems utilized by the Support Services Department's Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division, the Communications Department's Fiscal and Administration Division, and the Department of Water Resources' Fiscal and Administration Division.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 19:** The Department should consider identifying a permanent location for the Division to host training. The Division should consider reserving certain units for training and leave those units at the training facility to avoid unreasonable delays due to set-up and break-down.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 20:** The Division should develop a standard for new hire orientation and onboarding. Leadership and administrative staff in the Division should either be responsible for offering these orientations or providing training to Division staff to ensure consistent onboarding and information is provided to all new hires.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 21:** Divisional leadership should ensure their weekly or daily leadership meetings are being used for effective planning of staff workloads, schedules, and other resources. When leadership conducts planning of resource utilization, leadership should communicate expectations to staff in a timely enough manner to avoid last-minute requests and inefficient uses of resources as much as possible.

## Department of Information Technology Services

### Office of the CIO

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** The Department should continue the search to fill the Assistant Director and vacant position within the Emerging Technology Division or promote from within and backfill one of the Division Director positions.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Department should expand the information provided on the daily network operations and enterprise application reports to be consistent with the daily information security report. Determine which metrics provide the information to monitor performance and identify areas of improvement. Develop a program to collect the metrics required for the new performance indicators with a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** The County should expand the Road Show concept to create more forums for discussion with County departments that are less presentation and more collaborative conversation. This concept could be implemented at multiple levels within ITS, such as an executive forum or a forum focused on a specific business application or technology.

### Business Strategic Services

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** The Department Director, Department Human Resources Administration staff and the County's Human Resources Department should coach the Division Director on managing the Division's workload and repairing the fractures within the Business Strategic Services Division. The Department Director and the County's Human Resources Department should monitor progress and intervene if necessary.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The Division should revisit the existing project management standards, tools, and templates. The PMO Unit should work as a team to update the standards to account for multiple project management methodologies (Waterfall, Agile, and Waterfall/Agile Hybrid) and require the use of the method for all projects.

### Enterprise Applications Support and Development

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** The County should create user communities for standard business functions (finance, HR, procurement) or applications (Lucity, eBuilder, Asset Works) that includes end-users, Business Relationship Managers, Business Analysts, Enterprise Application Staff, and the Office of Strategic Excellence to provide a single forum to gather business requirements, agree on standard business process and identify and prioritize the resulting system enhancements.

## Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** The Department should continue to work towards completing the build-out of the new Division. Without staffing the key position, the County is not making any advances in Emerging Technologies. If staff cannot be recruited externally, consider promoting from within as the new positions will offer growth opportunities for existing staff.

## Fiscal and Administrative Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** The HR and Administrative Services Unit should work with Departmental leadership to create an inventory of all equipment and/or materials assigned to Department employees. This should include a form that employees should sign during the onboarding process to acknowledge receipt of the equipment and materials and their responsibility to return the materials to the Department upon separation.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9:** The HR and Administrative Services Unit should develop forms to ensure that complete and timely information is provided consistently for all changes in employment status. Division leadership should assist in ensuring consistent adoption of the forms.

## Infrastructure Operations

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** The Division should accelerate the move to onsite spare management. This will reduce Mean Time To Repair (“MTTR”) and improve customer satisfaction.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11:** The Division should develop, implement, and maintain a knowledge base to help Service Desk Agents. Provide incentives to enhance the knowledge base by making it a part of performance appraisals of Service Desk Agents.

## Cybersecurity

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** There does not seem to be a contractual obligation on the part of the contractors to stay in their roles without leaving after having been trained at the County’s expense. These contracts should be reviewed and enhanced with contract clauses to protect the County’s investment by obligating the individual to stay in the role for a certain period or the contracting company to provide an equally skilled person if their employee resigns or leaves the account.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** The Cybersecurity Division (with appropriate input from all departments) should create a stated policy for email retention. We suggest that retention (deletion) policies be designed to automatically delete once the emails are no longer required to be kept legally.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** Leadership should communicate that Security Awareness Training is mandatory for all users of the Enterprise Operating Environment. Proofpoint Wombat can be leveraged to assign and administer timely security modules periodically (quarterly/monthly) to all employees, including contractors.

## 6. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.





**Phase 4 Operational and Performance  
Assessment – *Department of  
Community Services and Information  
Technology Services Department***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

July 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1**
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 3**
- 3. Departments ..... 5**
- 3.A Department of Community Services ..... 6**
- 3.A.1 Department of Community Services – Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division ..... 29
- 3.A.2 Department of Community Services – Business Management and Technology Services Division ..... 43
- 3.A.3 Department of Community Services – Community Engagement and Community Collaboration Division ..... 49
- 3.A.4 Department of Community Services – Health and Human Services Division ..... 62
- 3.A.5 Department of Community Services – Parks and Recreation Division ..... 70
- 3.A.6 Department of Community Services – UGA Extension Gwinnett ..... 86
- 3.A.7 Department of Community Services – Voter Registration and Elections Division ..... 91
- 3.A.8 Department of Community Services – Tech. Observations and Recommendations .... 106
- 3.A.9 Department of Community Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 111
- 3.B Information Technology Department ..... 114**
- 3.B.1 Department of Information Technology – Office of the CIO ..... 129
- 3.B.2 Department of Information Technology – Business Strategic Services Division ..... 131
- 3.B.3 Department of Information Technology – Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division ..... 136
- 3.B.4 Department of Information Technology – Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division ..... 143
- 3.B.5 Department of Information Technology – Fiscal and Administrative Division ..... 147
- 3.B.6 Department of Information Technology – Infrastructure Operations Division ..... 152
- 3.B.7 Department of Information Technology – Cybersecurity Division ..... 159
- 3.B.8 Department of Information Technology – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 166
- Attachment A: ITIL Categories and Capabilities ..... 171
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 173**
- 5. Conclusion ..... 177**
- 6. Strategic Roadmap ..... 178**

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police Services
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This report represents the work product of Phase 4 which includes the following departments:

- Community Services
- Information Technology Services

Phase 4 fieldwork began in May 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 4 scope included the following departments:

- Community Services
- Information Technology Services

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well,” “what needs improvement,” and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

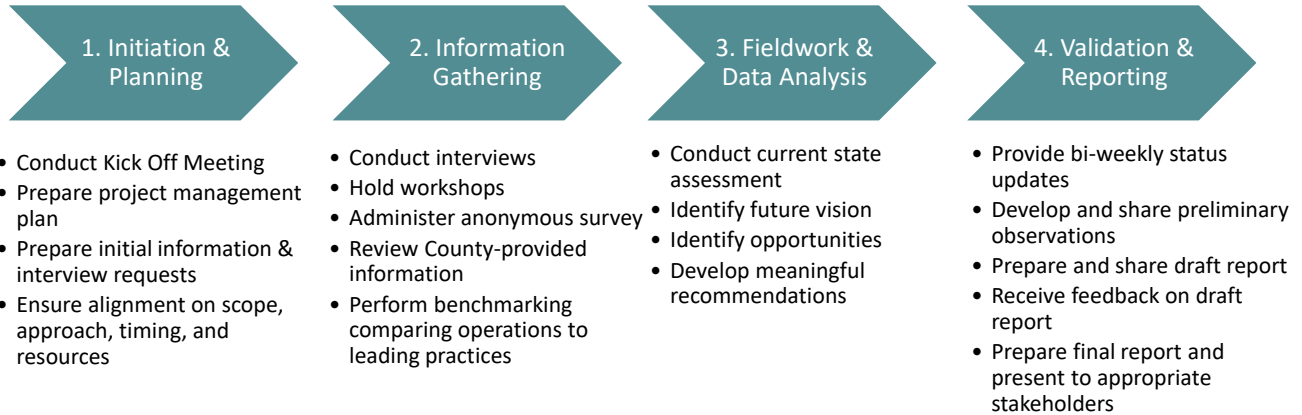
### Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 125 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This report represents the culmination of our Phase 4 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between May and July 2022.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Community Services
- B. Information Technology Services

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Strategic Priorities
- Leadership and Management
- Technology
- Customer Service
- Survey
- Technology Observations and Recommendations
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

Also within each departmental section, divisions are described and contain the following divisional attributes:

- Introduction
- Key Functions
- Communications
- Strategic Initiatives
- Systems and Applications
- Data and Performance Analysis
- Division-specific Observations and Recommendations

# 3.A Department of Community Services

## Community Services At A Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 Provide wrap-around services for residents of Gwinnett County ranging from health, wellness, recreation, and education programs to elections, community art displays, and animal welfare
- 2 Involve Gwinnett County residents in volunteer activities associated with County government
- 3 Build collaborative efforts between Gwinnett County residents and the County government, as well as between Gwinnett County departments
- 4 Engage, embrace, and unify the communities that make up Gwinnett County
- 5 Develop a safe and healthy environment for the residents of Gwinnett County

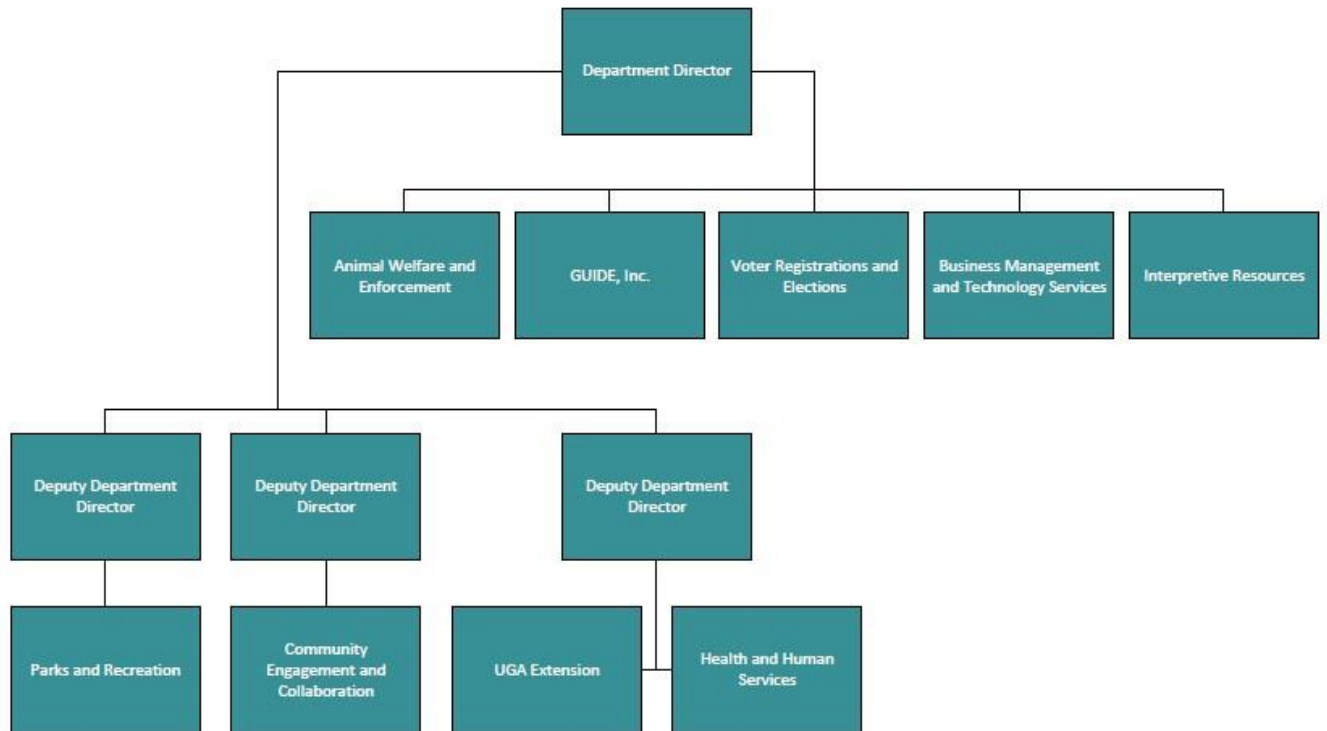
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$69,935,185</b>	<b>\$17,743,073</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through June 2022	Community Services
FTE	Filled	341
	Allocated	381

## Organization Structure





## Commendations

### Developing Strategic Partnerships



The Department has sought to develop intentional partnerships and bring together a variety of resources. This includes partnerships with other County departments, community organizations, and others within the County to provide a variety of services and programming throughout Gwinnett County.

### UGA Extension Gwinnett Recognition



UGA Extension Gwinnett has won multiple recent national and state recognitions for Agriculture and Natural Resources. These recognitions have highlighted performance and program delivery.

### OneStop 4 Health



Health and Human Services formally created and began the OneStop 4 Health program – an initiative designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various health and human services.

### Parks and Recreation Recognition



Parks and Recreation has won multiple recent national and state recognitions for both individual performers and program delivery.

## Introduction

The Department of Community Services is responsible for providing events, services, and activity spaces throughout Gwinnett County. This includes aquatic, recreation, athletic, electoral, wellness, and other resident services throughout the County.

## Organization

The Department of Community Services is led by a Department Director. The Department has nine primary functions, organized under three Deputy Department Directors, two Division Directors, two Managers, and a Project Coordinator. The nine primary functions are:

- Animal Welfare and Enforcement
- Business Management and Technology Services
- Community Engagement and Community Collaboration
- GUIDE, Inc.
- Health and Human Services
- Interpretive Resources

- Parks and Recreation
- UGA Extension Gwinnett
- Voter Registration and Elections

In addition to these nine primary functions, there is also an Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III who reports directly to the Department Director. The ASA assists the Department Director and also oversees an ASA I and a part-time Clerk.

### Animal Welfare and Enforcement

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division provides resources and support for the animal population of Gwinnett County, as well as the residents of Gwinnett County as it pertains to their interactions with both domestic and feral animals. The Division maintains a shelter, provides medical services, and enforces Chapter 10 of the Gwinnett County Code of Ordinances – the Animals Ordinance. The Division is responsible for the whole of Gwinnett County, including all incorporated areas.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Manager (“Manager”) oversees the Division and reports directly to the Department Director. Two section heads and a team head all report to the Manager. The Manager also oversees the contract for on-site medical services, currently provided by Planned PETHood of Georgia.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Assistant Manager for the Kennel (“Kennel Assistant Manager”) reports to the Manager and oversees the Kennel Section, which is responsible for maintaining the wellbeing of the animals housed at the Gwinnett County Animal Shelter (“Shelter” or “Kennel”) and conducting intake, triage, and adoptions. Three Kennel Section staff report directly to the Kennel Assistant Manager: the Animal Control Supervisor for the Kennel (“Kennel Supervisor”), the Resources and Marketing Coordinator (“Outreach Coordinator”), and an Animal Care Specialist responsible for behavior assessments and modification.

The Kennel Team, led by the Kennel Supervisor, is most directly responsible for kennel operations. The Kennel Supervisors manage one Animal Care Specialist responsible for training and a selection of Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”) of varying levels. According to the position control report provided to M&J on June 30, 13 Animal Control Officers I, six Animal Control Officers II, one Animal Control Officer III, and two part-time Animal Control Officers report to the Kennel Supervisor. The organizational chart provided to M&J indicates a slight difference as it is not uncommon for ACOs to transition between the Kennel Section and the Enforcement Section.

With more than 20 direct reports, the Kennel Supervisor relies on the Animal Care Specialists and Animal Control Officers III to assist with instruction of new ACOs and oversight of the Team. The Animal Care Specialist and Animal Control Officer III positions are graded the same and are viewed as interchangeable by Division staff.

In addition to full-time and part-time staff, Gwinnett County inmates previously provided assistance in the Kennel. With the shuttering of the inmate assistance program, the Kennel Team essentially lost about a half dozen pairs of hands on any given day that were not supplemented by additional staff allocations.

The Outreach Team, led by the Outreach Coordinator, manages the Division’s messaging and events, volunteer program, foster program, and rescue program. The Outreach Coordinator is supported by an Animal Care Specialist responsible for the rescue program, an ACO II responsible for the foster program, and up to three part-time employees responsible for day camps.

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Assistant Manager for the Road (“Road Assistant Manager”) reports to the Manager and oversees the Enforcement Section, or the Road Section, which is responsible for responding to calls and enforcing the Animal Ordinance throughout Gwinnett County. Three teams report to the Road Assistant Manager: the Day Shift, the Night Shift, and the Special Operations Team.

The Day Shift is the team responsible for responding to calls between 8 am and 4 pm. The Day Shift is led by the Animal Control Supervisor for the Day Shift (“Day Shift Supervisor”), who oversees one Animal Control Officer I, three Animal Control Officers II, and two Animal Control Officers III, according to the position control report.

The Night Shift is the team responsible for responding to calls between 3 pm and 11 pm. The Night Shift is led by the Animal Control Supervisor for the Night Shift (“Night Shift Supervisor”), who oversees three Animal Control Officers I, one Animal Control Officer II, one two Animal Control Officer III, according to the position control report.

Again, because ACOs are occasionally transferred between the Kennel, the Day Shift, and the Night Shift, position counts are approximate.

Animal Control Officers III in the Day Shift and Night Shift are generally considered Training Officers and oversee the instruction of all ACOs who are new to the Enforcement Section.

The Special Operations Team is comprised of three ACOs who report directly to the Road Assistant Manager. The ACO III for Cruelty and Neglect (“Cruelty and Neglect Officer”) manages all cases of cruelty and neglect reported by the public or another ACO. The ACO III for Bites (“Bites Officer”) manages all cases of animal bites by both domesticated and feral animals in public, private residences, and the Kennel. The ACO II for Quality Control (“Probation Officer”) oversees the Division’s court cases and ensures animal-related probation sentences are enforced. Usually, all three members of the Team are Animal Control Officers III, however, the previous Probation Officer returned to the Day Shift as a Training Officer. The Division has a limited number of ACO III allocations, and the lack of an open ACO III position resulted in the new Probation Officer retaining their ACO II designation.

The Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III is the final position reporting directly to the Manager. The ASA III performs the financial, HR, and other administrative duties for the Division. The ASA III also oversees the Customer Service Team, which is comprised of three Administrative Support Associates I and a part-time Clerk. The Customer Service Team interacts with the public in-person and over the phone – responding to questions, processing leash law and barking dog complaints, and processing adoptions. The Customer Service Team informally reports to the Outreach Coordinator and Kennel Assistant Manager.

### Business Management and Technology Services

Business Management and Technology Services is responsible for financial support of all the units within Community Services. The Division is led by a Division Director, who oversees a Deputy Division Director and a Community Services Manager.

The Community Services Manager for Operations and Performance Management provides support for some of the technology systems. Specifically, the Community Services Manager is the system administrator for CivicRec, and can assist with Lucity and eBuilder as needed.

The Division Director oversees the financial and human resources administrative functions for the Department.

The Division has a Business Officer over Purchasing and Contracts. This position oversees a Business Services Associate (BSA) III, along with four part-time Clerks. This Unit is responsible for all procurement for the Department, including assisting in developing bid specifications and shopping cart transactions. This unit also performs purchasing card audits, and tracks contracts to assist with renewals.

The Business Officer over Operating Funds is responsible for managing the operating budgets for all 86 of the cost centers within Community Services. The Business Officer is supported by a BSA III and a part-time Clerk.

The Division also has a Business Officer over Capital, who is responsible for budgets and purchases associated with capital fund budgets. The Business Officer is supported by a BSA III.

The Division recently created a new Business Officer position, who will be responsible for all HR and administrative functions for the Division. HR and administrative functions will be supported by a part-time Clerk and an Administrative Support Associate (ASA) III.

To support grant financials, reporting, and tracking, the Division has a newly created Program Analyst position. This position is also responsible for overseeing the “Career Starts Here” intern program.

### Community Engagement and Community Collaboration

The Community Engagement and Community Collaboration Division was created in the last three years to combine all marketing, outreach, and public engagement efforts into a single group. This Division is overseen by a Deputy Department Director.

The Deputy Department Director has six direct reports.

The Digital Engagement Coordinator is responsible for digital media development, social media management, and coordinating film permits for filming within Department parks and facilities. The Digital Engagement Coordinator is supported by two part-time Recreation Leaders.

The Engagement Manager oversees traditional media development and printing, as well as the website, press releases, public relations for events, and other marketing and outreach-related duties. The Engagement Manager oversees two Resources and Marketing Specialists, who serve as liaisons with the non-Community Engagement and Collaboration end-user divisions, such as UGA Extension, Parks and Recreation, Animal Welfare and Enforcement, with the production and dissemination of their marketing requests.

The Engagement Manager also oversees a Resources and Marketing Coordinator, who is the graphic designer for the Department. The Resources and Marketing Coordinator oversees three part-time staff. One is titled as a Recreation Leader, one is a Staff Assistant II, and one is Publications and Marketing. These three staff assist with processing marketing material requests by entering the requesters information into approved templates, and assisting with larger projects where appropriate. This Unit predominantly supports Community Engagement and Collaboration with their requests.

Volunteer Gwinnett is responsible for coordinating volunteers throughout the Department as well as volunteer opportunities for Gwinnett County employees. Volunteer Gwinnett is led by a Collaboration Manager with the support of a Program Coordinator and a part-time Recreation Leader.

Live Healthy Gwinnett is a healthy living and wellness initiative that incorporates other more specific initiatives, such as Harvest Gwinnett and Be Active Gwinnett. The Live Healthy Gwinnett Project Coordinator is responsible for overseeing this initiative. There is a Program Supervisor over Be Active Gwinnett, with three part-time Recreation Leaders. Harvest Gwinnett is supported by a Program Supervisor, a Recreation Program Leader, and a part-time Recreation Leader.

There is a Deputy Division Director over the Building Brains Anywhere program, which includes early learning, educational and after-school programming for youth. The Deputy Division Director oversees a Project Coordinator, as well as an Administrative Associate II who supports program registration and scheduling. The Administrative Associate II oversees four part-time staff.

The Project Coordinator oversees two staff: a Program Coordinator and a Program Supervisor. The Program Coordinator is over educational programming and early learning programming, and oversees three program supervisors: one who oversees History programming, one who oversees Science programming, and one who oversees the Building Brains Anywhere early learning program. The Program Supervisor over the Building Brains Anywhere early learning program also oversees a Program Leader.

In addition, the Program Coordinator over educational programming and early learning programming supervises the part-time teachers, education leaders, and seasonal staff who work the summer day camps.

The Program Supervisor over the afterschool programming oversees the Afterschool Program Directors. There are currently seven Afterschool Program Directors. The Afterschool Program Directors oversee the Afterschool Program Leaders, with, on average, between two and four assigned to each location.

#### GUIDE, Inc.

Gwinnett United in Drug Education Inc. ("GUIDE, Inc.") is a 501c3 effort founded in 1986 as a proactive initiative to address substance abuse through prevention and wellness activities. This program is supported by both the County and the Gwinnett County Board of Education. GUIDE, Inc. has three employees whose pay is funded in part by Gwinnett County, and are considered Gwinnett County employees.

GUIDE Inc. provides a number of statewide programs, as well as program specifically within Gwinnett County. Within Gwinnett County, GUIDE Inc. provides community level prevention, engagement, and awareness initiatives. This includes coordinating with city and County Police on vendor compliance checks to ensure that no alcohol or tobacco products are sold to minors, public service announcements, and education efforts for both students and parents about positive social norms. GUIDE Inc. also hosts the Georgia Teen Institute, a four-day residential summer leadership program that integrates positive youth development efforts with prevention efforts. Attendees learn prevention information and develop action plans for re-engaging and sharing what they've learned within their communities.

GUIDE, Inc. frequently collaborates with the Department on strategic efforts and initiatives, including using GUIDE, Inc. for camp counselor training and engagement at health fairs and other community events.

GUIDE Inc. is expanding their mental health promotion and suicide prevention programs. These programs focus on providing training for adults on how to recognize a crisis, and how to respond and engage with children and teens in crisis. This also includes specific training for parents about engaging and talking with children about mental health. At the community level, GUIDE Inc. has coordinated with the Department to provide Question, Persuade, and Refer (“QPR”) suicidal ideation recognition and prevention training to all Gwinnett Fire Academy completers within the last several years; currently, all Gwinnett firefighters are trained in QPR.

Gwinnett County has an appointed position on the GUIDE, Inc. Board of Directors.

### Health and Human Services

The Health and Human Services Division partners with various County and community organizations to provide and connect service opportunities that are designed to improve the health and well-being of County citizens and stakeholders. The Division operates three senior centers and three combined “One Stop” and senior centers. One Stop centers or locations house multiple service organizations (County and external to the County) in a single building or complex designed to provide varying services at a single location.

The Health and Human Services Division is led by a Department Deputy Director/Division Director who has three direct reports – two Human Services Managers (one for Senior Services, and one for Senior /One Stop Centers) and one Project Coordinator.

The Division’s Human Services Manager for Senior Services oversees Senior Services for the Division which is responsible for providing Case Management, Transportation, In Home Services, and Food Services.

Case Management is led by a Program Specialist who oversees seven positions including Case Managers, a Referral Specialist, and a Clerk. Case Management is the entry point for users/clients of the Division and helps to coordinate service offerings based on eligibility and need.

Transportation is led by a Program Specialist who oversees six positions (Administrative Support Associates and Staff Assistants) that focus on the administration and management of transportation contractors used by the County. Transportation provides transit assistance to seniors and disabled adults for medical appointments, therapy sessions, or health-indicated treatments.

In Home Services is led by a Program Specialist who oversees five positions including a Case Manager, three Adult Day Care Associates, and a Clerk. In Home Services provides Homemaking, Caregiving, and Respite services either on a fee basis or for free depending on eligibility.

Food Services is led by a Program Coordinator who oversees 13 positions including a Program Leader, a Supervisor, an Administrative Support Associate, five Drivers, and six Cooks. Food Services also leverages part time temporary Cook positions as needed. Food Services provides frozen meals to seniors' residences and the Senior/One Stop Centers.

The Division's Human Services Manager for Senior/One Stop Centers oversees the Senior Centers and the Senior/One Stop Centers for the Division. There are two Senior Centers – Lawrenceville Senior Center, and Snellville Senior Center; and three combined Senior/One Stop Centers – Centerville One Stop/Senior Center, Buford One Stop/Senior Center, and Norcross One Stop/Senior Center.

Each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center is led by a Program Supervisor or Program Specialist. The one exception is the Snellville Senior Center, which operates as a satellite center and has limited hours.

There are a total of 52 positions under the Human Services Manager for Senior/One Stop Centers, with each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center having numerous positions based on size and the service levels for each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center. The positions at each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center varies, but include Specialists, Program Leaders, Program Supervisors, Program Assistants, Recreation Leaders, Facility Assistants, Clerks, and Cooks.

The Division's Project Coordinator is a new position designed to lead the OneStop 4 Help program. The OneStop 4 Help program is designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various services. The Project Coordinator oversees four Community Navigator positions located in various Senior Centers and One Stop/senior Centers. The Community Navigator positions help locate agencies that can assist with food security, homelessness, emergency housing, utility and rental assistance, and other social needs. The Project Coordinator also oversees one Program Analyst who supports the OneStop 4 Help program.

### Interpretive Resources

Interpretive Resources is responsible for artifact and historic site management throughout the Department. The Section is led by a Project Coordinator, with one additional full-time employee. The Section will get four additional part-time staff in the coming year.

This Section is responsible for four primary tasks, and additionally is responsible for coordinating with the Historic Restoration and Preservation Board for the County, as well as other historical societies and local community organizations, as appropriate.

Artifact Management includes processing and preserving more than 1,000 historical artifacts owned by Gwinnett County. All artifacts are tracked through PastPerfect, an online collections management software.

Historic Site Support and Preservation includes assessing all historic sites that are owned by Gwinnett County. There are currently six active sites, two sites in development, and two sites that are managed by local nonprofit organizations. The Interpretive Resources Unit is responsible for assisting with property management for the two sites managed by the nonprofit organizations.

All sites received monthly monitoring using a checklist; the Section is working to upload these checklists into Lucy.

Exhibit Management includes developing and installing exhibits, as well as monitoring permanent exhibits and coordinating with contractors for the development and installation of certain exhibitions. The Section uses a calendar to ensure rotation of artifacts and other content in non-permanent installations.

Oral Histories includes managing the oral histories collected during the County's 200th Anniversary oral history project, as well as developing and implementing a plan to continue to collect and expand the County's oral history collection.

### Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation includes all parks, recreational facilities, athletic fields, aquatics facilities, as well as the Lucy support team, volunteer resources coordination, and natural resource management.

The Deputy Department Director over Parks and Recreation and Project Administration has, as of our fieldwork, six direct reports.

A Program Analyst III oversees the IT Services Team which serves as the primary support team for Lucy, as well as supporting GIS. The Team is comprised of two IT Associate IIs, a GIS Associate II, and a part-time IT Associate.

A Program Coordinator leads the Volunteer Resources Section. This Section is responsible for coordinating community service volunteer hours, as well as Eagle Scout project oversight. The Program Coordinator is supported by a Program Leader, Administrative Support Associate (ASA) I and two vacant part-time Recreation Leaders.

There is also a Program Coordinator over conservation projects and other natural resource management programs.

The Program Coordinator over Natural Resource Management and the Environmental Heritage Center (EHC) Operations is charged with building and grounds maintenance at EHC, as well as supporting the trails and other natural resources in the parks. Currently, the Program Coordinator has three Grounds Maintenance Associate IIs assisting in this work. There are also four Parks Crew Member positions approved and not currently filled.

The Project Administration Division is in the process of being transitioned to a Division. At the beginning of our fieldwork this has not been completed, so Project Administration is reflected as a Section throughout our assessment. This Section is responsible for park design and construction management. The Section is overseen by a Section Manager and is staffed with three Planner IIIs, and two Construction Manager Is.

Parks and Recreation is managed by a Division Director who has three direct reports responsible for aquatics, recreation, and parks.

Recreation is led by a Deputy Division Director, and is divided into three geographically assigned districts. Each district is led by a Community Services Manager. The Community Services Manager over the West District is also responsible for large event planning and coordination, and oversees the Historic Courthouse.



All three districts are responsible for coordinating with park-level athletic associations on the administration of athletic leagues. There are more than 30 athletic associations representing approximately 45,000 league participants.

Each district has a mixture of Program Coordinators and Program Supervisors. Program Coordinators typically oversee several sites, while Program Supervisors are responsible for a single site. They may have responsibility for small, unstaffed sites as well. Sites are staffed with a combination of Program Leaders, Program Assistants, and part-time Recreation Assistants. For athletics support, some sites, may have specialized staff, such as Adult Athletic Specialists or Tennis Attendants.

Recreation also includes seasonal staff that operate the summer camps and other summer programming. These positions include Day Camp Directors and Day Camp Counselors, including Inclusion Counselors for some parks.

The Aquatics Manager is responsible for the 9 aquatic facilities throughout the County, which include 17 pools and two splash pads. The Aquatics Manager oversees two Program Coordinators, with each Program Coordinator assigned the management of several of the aquatic centers. Each Program Coordinator also oversees one or more part-time recruiter trainers.

Each aquatic facility is overseen by a Program Supervisor, who oversees Program Leaders, Grounds Maintenance Associates II, and part-time Pool Managers, Assistant Pool Managers, Aquatic Service Leaders, Aquatic Specialists Lifeguards, and seasonal Pool Managers through Lifeguards. Staffing levels vary by the size and programming available at the facility. When fully staffed, there are nearly 500 full and part-time employees across the County's aquatic facilities.

The Deputy Division Director over Parks is responsible for grounds and facilities maintenance across all of the County's parks and recreation facilities, with some of the aquatics facilities maintenance assigned to the GMA IIs within the Aquatics section.

The Deputy Division Director supervises the Grounds Maintenance Manager, who oversees four Program Coordinators. For parks and grounds maintenance, the County's parks and facilities have been organized into four grounds districts: East, West, North, and South. Each district is led by a Program Coordinator. Each Program Coordinator oversees the staff assigned to a park or location. Some crews may be assigned to two parks, or may have "sister parks" to help share the workload.

Grounds Maintenance Crews are supervised by either a Senior Foreman or a Grounds Maintenance Associate III, and each crew has between three and six staff, depending on the size of the park and the needed maintenance.

The Deputy Division Director over parks also oversees a Community Services Manager who over Support Services, which is responsible for skilled trades support services and staffing the warehouse for the Department. The Community Services Manager oversees two Program Coordinators.

One Program Coordinator oversees four crews of skilled trades technicians, with one dedicated to each of carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and construction. Crews will collaborate on more complex projects. Each crew is led by a Trades Technician IV, with crews of between one and three Trades Technicians of varying levels.

The other Program Coordinator oversees a Trades Technician IV who provides specialized support for pools and HVAC, a part-time Trades Technician who provides support to the Park Operations Center, and a Warehouse Supervisor.

The Warehouse Supervisor oversees the warehouse that provides support to the entire Department, with the primary user Parks and Recreation. The Warehouse Supervisor oversees a Warehouse Technicians II, a Trades Technician II, and a part-time Parks Crew Member.

### UGA Extension Gwinnett

UGA Extension Gwinnett is a partnership among the County, the University of Georgia, the State of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that offers educational programs in the areas of horticulture and agriculture, food safety and nutrition, and leadership and citizenship for youth.

UGA Extension Gwinnett consists of both County and University of Georgia employees. The Division consists of three main organizational pillars – 4H, Agricultural and Natural Resources (“ANR”), and Family and Consumer Sciences (“FACS”). The Division is led by a County Extension Coordinator who has four direct reports – County Extension Agent for 4H, County Extension Agent for ANR, County Extension Agent for FACS, and an Administrative Support Associate III. The County Extension Coordinator and the three County Extension Agents are all University of Georgia employees.

The County Extension Agent for 4H oversees two Program Assistants. 4H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4H programming exists in and out of County schools for youth from pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The County Extension Agent for ANR oversees a Program Assistant and a Clerk. ANR’s goal is to assist and educate hobby farmers, businesses, homeowners, gardeners and Master Gardener Extension Volunteers with information about plant identification, plant diseases, insect identification, pest control, and soil and water testing.

The County Extension Agent for FACS oversees a Program Assistant and a Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (“EFNEP”) Specialist. FACS helps people extend their income, improve their health, and strengthen their personal and family relationships through education, training, and programming.

The Administrative Support Associate III provides administrative support to the Division and oversees two Administrative Support Associate positions, a Program Assistant, and two Clerks.

### Voter Registrations and Elections

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division maintains Gwinnett County’s voter rolls and conducts elections within Gwinnett County for County, State, and Federal-level offices. The Division is jointly overseen by a Division Director, hired through the Department, and an Elections Supervisor, appointed by the Gwinnett County Board of Registrations and Elections (“Elections Board”). The Division Director primarily manages the administrative side of the Division, as well as owns special projects assigned by the Department Director, including managing the Department’s open records requests. The Elections Supervisor manages the operations of the Division; however, because the Elections Supervisor is the only employee appointed by the Elections Board with all other staff hired by the Department, lines of authority are not always clear.

The Division recently established a Deputy Elections Supervisor role which oversees the three sections within Voter Registrations and Elections. The Deputy Elections Supervisor's duties and responsibilities had not been formally codified in a written job description as of the time of our Assessment. The *de facto* duties of the Deputy Elections Supervisor include assisting the Elections Supervisor with day-to-day operations of the Division, ensuring compliance with state and local codes, and serving as an intermediary between the sections and the Elections Supervisor, especially during the election cycle when external demands for the Elections Supervisor's time are higher.

The Outreach, Education, Staffing, and Training Section is headed by an Assistant Elections Supervisor and comprises two teams. An Elections Coordinator oversees the Outreach and Education Team consisting of two Elections Associates II, one Elections Associate I, one Administrative Support Associate I, and one part-time Clerk. A second Elections Coordinator oversees the Staffing and Training Team consisting of three Elections Associates II, two Elections Associates I, and two part-time Clerks.

The Elections Operations Section is headed by an Assistant Elections Supervisor and comprises two teams. An Elections Coordinator oversees the Elections Operations Team, which is responsible for oversight of Election Day activities, voting equipment, and coordination of polling locations. In addition to the Elections Coordinator, the Elections Operations Team consists of four Elections Associates II and two Elections Associates I. The Warehouse Team is led by a Warehouse Manager and includes a Warehouse Supervisor, two Warehouse Technicians I, and two part time Clerks.

Both Assistant Elections Supervisors report to the Deputy Elections Supervisor.

The Elections Coordinators who lead the teams comprising the Voter Registrations and Absentee/Advanced Voting ("VRAA") Section also report directly to the Deputy Elections Supervisor.

The VRAA Section consists of four teams. The Voter Registrations Team, responsible for voter list maintenance, includes an Elections Coordinator and an Elections Associate I. The Records Team, responsible for compiling regular voter registration reports and open records requests, includes an Elections Coordinator, two Elections Associates II and one Elections Associate I. The Absentee by Mail Team includes an Elections Coordinator, two Elections Associates II, and one Elections Associate I. The Advanced in Person Voting Team includes an Elections Coordinator, an Elections Associate II, an Elections Associate I, and a part-time Clerk. The VRAA Section was only recently split into separate teams - previously all personnel reported to the flexible number of Elections Coordinators and were responsible for the same duties and responsibilities. Because the teams within the VRAA Section are still new, the position counts per team were still somewhat in flux as of our Assessment.

Administrative support for the Division is provided by an Administrative Support Associate III, an Administrative Support Associate II, one part-time Staff Assistant II, and two part-time Clerks. The Administration Team helps prepare and oversee the budget; performs HR functions as required; and works with Business Management and Technology Services on purchases, service requests, contracts, and vendor services. The Administration Team also assists the Elections Board maintain compliance with open meetings requirements and prepares and publishes the Elections Board's meeting agendas and minutes.

The Division does not have automatic promotions for any positions.

In addition to the full-time and part-time staff, the Division regularly contracts dozens to hundreds of temporary staff at any given time to work in the Division's offices, the Elections Warehouse, or polling locations.

### Overall Hiring and Retention Challenges

Many divisions throughout the Department have noted challenges related both to recruitment and retention of employees.

Department staff feel that there has been a lot of turnover and many divisions are struggling to maintain employees in roles that require specific skills or certifications.

Hiring is complicated by the limited set of available titles in use throughout the Department. This can create some confusion in understanding the differences in how titles are used in different divisions. The use of somewhat generic titles may also cause issues in the hiring process, as the titles and general descriptions may not accurately describe the role to be performed, or the skill sets that may be necessary. Additionally, the use of a consolidated list of titles has resulted in application of requirements to all employees within that position even though it may not be applicable to all roles. For example, within the Trades Technicians, certain skilled trades require licensure to advance to a level III position. Carpentry does not have comparable licensure, so currently Trades Technicians within the carpentry team are not eligible to be Trades Technician III, limiting their promotional opportunities, and failing to recognize their skills and experience.

Another example is inconsistent recognition of credentials. For plumbing and electrical licensures, for example, employees with those licenses receive a small pay incentive based on holding a relevant license. For other licenses, such as pesticide applicator licenses, or turfgrass certifications, the same pay incentives are not made available.

The use of a limited set of titles also poorly reflects the differences in skillsets and experience required to hold different roles. Program Coordinator, Program Supervisor, etc. have different meanings within different divisions, and fails to highlight the difference in skills needed across these positions.

The Department and the County have made some efforts to correct some of the low pay issues noted throughout the Department, and has recently raised pay for lifeguards, as an example. These efforts have not been consistently applied – increased wages for new hires may mean that inexperienced new hires may be earning the same, and sometimes more than, experienced staff. Additionally, within some units there are disincentives to promote from staff to coordinator level positions, since the coordinator level positions do not always qualify for on-call and overtime pay. This could result in an employee taking a functional pay cut to take on more responsibilities.

Several of the programs and initiatives are heavily reliant on volunteers and interns to meet basic program expectations, so an additional job component that takes time and isn't necessarily part of the designed job responsibilities, is volunteer and intern coordination and management. As many positions are not exempt, this creates additional challenges in completing the required work, putting on the programs and activities, and still managing volunteers/interns. For younger volunteers and interns, staff may be asked to wait with them for a guardian to pick them up after completing an event, which further reduces hours available for work completion.

Many divisions also cited challenges with County HR's timeline for hiring, especially for part-time and seasonal employees. Several staff noted that quality candidates withdrew offers, or withdrew themselves from consideration, having received another offer while the County was still working through the hiring process. For seasonal workers, the timeline delays have resulted in some positions not being filled until well into the summer season. There are also concerns with the County's HR system, Neogov, not being mobile-friendly and a potential deterrent for potential applicants.

### Strategic Priorities

Given that the Department is charged with a diverse set of programs and functions, strategic priorities have been stretched and diluted throughout the Department. Staff in many divisions noted expectations to assist with other division's events and programming, to the perceived detriment of their own primary functions and priorities. Staff feel that senior leadership prioritizes opportunities that create positive public image and goodwill, which has resulted in the acceptance of additional initiatives and programs, and overstretching of staff. Staff perceive that initiatives and functions that are not seen as positive public interactions are not prioritized, and receive less attention from senior leadership unless there is an issue or concern.

This focus on increasing and improving positive public interactions has resulted in acceptance of projects and initiatives that may not directly align with the stated mission of the Department or division. Our fieldwork noted several instances of mission creep, where program intent has been stretched in response to community interest, ideas from leadership, or potential availability of temporary funding or support. Department efforts feel haphazard and disjointed, and staff feel that the efforts don't always reflect a strategic, intentional assessment of the diverse communities and needs within Gwinnett County, nor a complete understanding of the resources and programs that are already available through community partners and other organizations throughout the County.

The Department strives to identify funding and resources that can support the growth and expansion of programs and initiatives, but there is not a strategic goal or underpinning to these efforts. Most of the funding or resources that the Department identifies does not include staffing support, so staff are being asked to do more. Additionally, there isn't a single grants coordination position for the Department, so there is potential for multiple programs to reach out to corporate or community partners, or apply for the same funding.

There is also a perception that not all information is shared timely from senior leadership in the Department, especially about additional events, activities, or initiatives that may have been accepted or created by senior leadership. This lack of timely and proactive information can create confusion and unnecessary urgency at the front-line level, and may cause conflict in prioritizing between the new instructions and existing priorities and activities.

Employees in several divisions and within Departmental leadership cited the need to move towards more proactive models for asset management and preventative maintenance as a strategic priority. The Department is still somewhat short-sighted in its capital asset and space planning and management.

The Department has sought to better leverage technology to assist in automating workflows and processes, and improve efficiency and customer service. This has been successful in several divisions, although others note that trying to make current systems and applications work for their needs feels convoluted and non-productive.

## Leadership and Management

Employees in the Department acknowledge that leadership has been making changes that leadership believes are the right changes to move the Department forward and improve efficiency. Many employees feel, however, that decision-making is not based on leadership engaging with Department staff to understand the current needs and workloads of all divisions. Often, decisions are being made without input or understanding of how decisions made to assist one division may impact another division. There is also a perceived lack of understanding of how “small” changes are magnified given the size of the Department, the differences in division’s missions and operating environment, as well as the magnitude of sites that are impacted. Staff also feel that once leadership has made a decision about a policy, process, or program, that decision is finalized, and input from subject matter expert staff is not relevant, nor wanted by leadership.

Our fieldwork noted two common mindsets related to Department leadership. There were employees who supported leadership’s vision for the Department, and appreciated leadership’s passion for the work, noting that it helps the department succeed and is driven by a commitment to the citizens and community. Other employees’ perception is that either you accept and support leadership’s ideas and requests, or you get blacklisted. Some staff noted that many employees had become “yes men” in the interest of self-preservation and mental health.

This perception of biased decision-making is coupled with leadership’s efforts to create a single set of policies, forms, processes, and requirements that must be uniformly applied to all divisions.

One example noted during fieldwork is the requirement that all purchases should utilize available County contracts. In theory, this practice should assist with cost-savings and efficient purchases. What staff have found, however, is that many of the contracts were procured by other departments with significantly different needs, so on-contract purchases are not cost-advantageous. There were several noted instances of consumables expiring because the minimum quantity available for purchase on contract was significantly larger than the quantity needed by that division or section, which resulted in wasted consumables and funds.

As part of the perceived leadership focus on decision-making without consideration of staff, leadership often says yes to every potential grant, initiative, program, or activity that could be provided by the Department. Often these are accepted without full planning and implementation preparation, and are handed to staff to “make it happen.” This heightened sense of expectations has created a culture of staff who are “afraid to fail” where staff push themselves beyond what is reasonable because they fear retribution if they don’t succeed. Many staff also feel taken advantage of - because their programs and services are public facing and designed to have positive community impacts, there is an expectation that people will always go above and beyond to meet the challenges set forth by leadership, even at personal cost.

This culture of unilateral decision-making and criticism of program issues or concerns has also created a sense among staff that they cannot afford to suggest ideas, or be innovative, because if it isn’t immediately successful, or doesn’t align with the Director’s vision, that they may be penalized, disciplined, or publicly humiliated.

This is coupled with a Department leadership that is very hands-on and involved in day-to-day operations, and nearly all decision-making. The Department Director reviews every employee performance evaluation, is involved in the majority of purchase requests. Department leadership is actively involved in and supports many of the Department's initiatives, but many staff feel that this is less indicative of interest and engagement, and more representative of a culture of mistrust. As an example, the Department does not allow any telework, which many still feel that this policy implies a mistrust of the staff's ability to manage workload and perform without direct oversight from leadership.

As the Department has grown, the Department has focused on the creation of additional middle management roles to manage workload and ensure more equitable distribution of work. These new roles do not always feel strategic, and may have been introduced without a proper evaluation of workload, workflow, and the opportunity for more efficient processes rather than additional levels of management. This has created some inconsistency in how titling is used throughout the Department, and some disparities in roles and responsibilities within the same title band. There is also a perception that some of the current managers have not relinquished their responsibilities and fail to delegate managerial and decision-making authority down the line, so there are levels of middle management that lack true authority for decision-making.

In our time with staff throughout the Department, staff noted inconsistent visibility of leadership, and a perception of inconsistent treatment of divisions. Employees in divisions that tend to be more visible with the communities and receiving accolades and acknowledgements noted frequent, proactive engagement with Department leadership. Staff in other divisions cannot recall seeing Departmental leadership in their area for anything other than Departmental events or to publicize negative performance or issues.

There is also a perception that senior leadership defers to elected officials and County leadership, instead of trusting staff experience and expertise. Staff feel that incidents and requests receive inconsistent treatment based on whether or not County leadership (at either the Division, Department, or County levels) is involved or interested, and that Department leadership does not consistently advocate for the staff nor encourage County leadership to allow the process to work as intended.

## Technology

The Department has sought to identify and leverage technology that meet a need, as well as review existing systems and determine how they could meet division needs without requiring the purchase of additional applications or software.

### Systems Overview

#### *CERVIS*

CERVIS is a volunteer management software that allows Volunteer Gwinnett to create and promote a variety of volunteering opportunities throughout the County. CERVIS also allows volunteers to create individual profiles, designating their skills and interests, and allows them to register for specific volunteering opportunities, or ask questions of the department offering the opportunity.

#### *SAP and Associated Modules*

The Department uses SAP, the County's ERP, for all financial management. In addition to Business Management and Technology Services use, other divisions use SAP modules for p-card management, and shopping cart creation for purchasing requests.

### *Rec1*

Rec1, also known as CivicRec, is a recreation management software platform for local governments. Rec1 includes point-of-sale, activity registration, activity calendar management, and reporting. The Department uses Rec1 to manage all fee collections throughout the parks, registration for non-athletic association recreation activities, camps, pavilion rentals, and other programming.

Rec1 can also send customer service satisfaction surveys to program and activity registrants.

### *eBuilder*

e-Builder is the primary core business system used by the Project Administration Section within the Parks and Recreation Division to manage the design of parks and facility construction and renovation projects. The Division is working to better leverage e-Builder to receive and complete initial review of all vendor invoices associated with construction and capital renovation projects.

### *Lucity*

Multiple Gwinnett County Departments use Lucity, a public works software featuring tools to manage and maintain assets and coordinate maintenance management. Although the Community Services Department uses Lucity for managing work orders and asset management, the Department has expanded its use of Lucity and added additional functionality for tasks such as:

- Uniform ordering
- Warehouse material delivery
- Work order management
- Marketing projects
- Inspections

The Community Services Department has won an award for its innovative use of Lucity, which can be attributed to an employee within the Department with Lucity expertise.

For asset management within the Department, Lucity is used by the Parks and Recreation Division to manage how assets perform, track their useful life and replacement costs, and report. Lucity is also used for ordering staff uniforms and work order tasks, and resource reporting.

Lucity provides reports that track work order number, status, resource type, location, and time calculation for projects like park inspections and related tasks, such as removing graffiti and repairing/replacing stolen items from vandals.

### *FileNet*

FileNet is used by the County to transfer approved invoices from end-user departments to Finance for payment processing. Finance Department staff may upload invoices directly received within Finance to the appropriate end-user department for review and approvals for processing. Business Management and Technology Services uses FileNet to download invoices and coordinate with end-user divisions for appropriate approvals for payment processing.

Voter Registrations and Elections uses FileNet to store voter registration, ABM, and other applications and voter records.



### *ShelterBuddy*

The Department uses ShelterBuddy as its animal shelter management software to track animals, volunteers, violations, and adopters. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division uses ShelterBuddy to build custom reports and push live updates on adoptable animals and Division data to the Gwinnett County website.

### *Tiburon MobileCAD*

Along with other public safety and code enforcement agencies in Gwinnett County, the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division uses MobileCAD as its computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) for assignment of calls, reporting on cases, and researching historical actions taken at specific addresses.

### *ElectioNet*

ElectioNet is the Georgia Secretary of State’s system for managing elections and voter registration. The Voter Registrations and Elections Division uses ElectioNet for checking in voters during elections, processing absentee ballots, and publishing live results throughout Election Night.

### *EasyVote*

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division uses EasyVote as its comprehensive election management platform to collate information on polling locations, manage inventory, track poll officials’ training and performance, and scan and check-in ABM ballots.

### *NeoGov*

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division uses NeoGov for managing temporary employees, including poll officials.

### *ArcGIS*

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division uses ArcGIS to identify where current and new properties are located in order to determine the district and precinct for each voter.

### *WhenToWork*

WhenToWork is an employee scheduling application used to schedule shifts for seasonal and part-time workers within Parks and Recreation, as well as within Community Engagement and Community Collaboration. WhenToWork assist in managing schedules, providing app-based availability of current and future scheduling.

## **Customer Service**

Most of Community Services considers all Gwinnett County residents their customers, and strive to identify programming and services that can reach a variety of populations within the County. The Department prides itself on customer service and flexibility in working with county residents and other customers. Many staff cited “pride in their work” and “willingness to go above and beyond” as their division or team’s strength, and share how important it is to them to be able to provide a meaningful service to County residents.

The Department takes a lot of pride in being a customer service-oriented organization, infusing consideration of customer service throughout all levels of operations, maintenance, and internal functions. All staff receive customer service training as part of their initial onboarding and orientation, and the training identifies ways that staff in a variety of roles can provide quality customer service, even if their primary function is not interacting with residents.

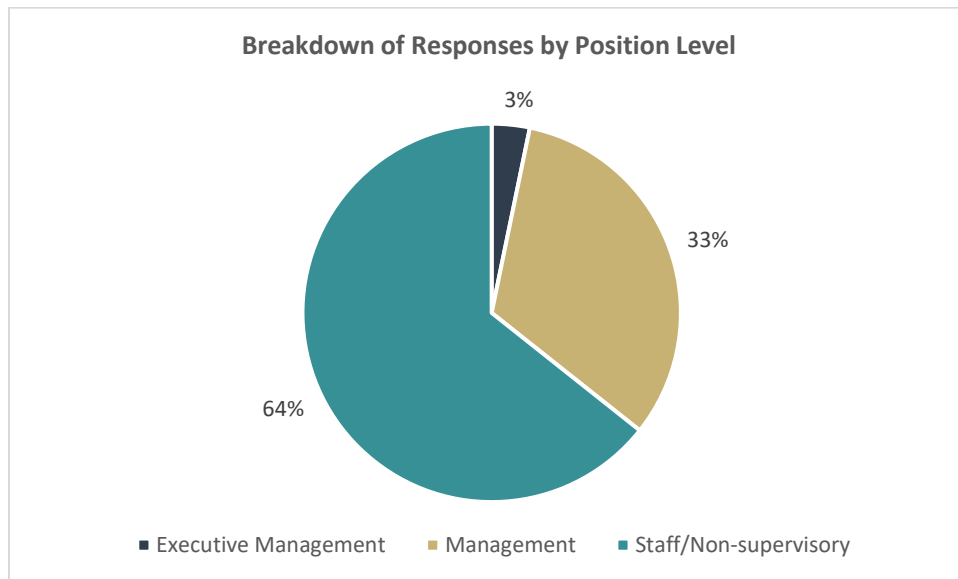
What the Department’s customer service strategy currently lacks, however, is consistent assessment of customer needs, and ensuring that programs and initiatives are designed to meet those needs, and are not duplicating services or resources that may be provided by other organizations. While several programs and divisions conduct customer engagement and/or customer satisfaction surveys, these are not conducted consistently, nor always used to improve program focus and efforts.

### Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

One hundred and thirty-five responses were received, representing an approximate rate of 19% permanent full-time and part-time employees. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The following chart shows the breakdown of response by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

**1 = strongly disagree**

**2 = disagree**

**3 = neither agree nor disagree**

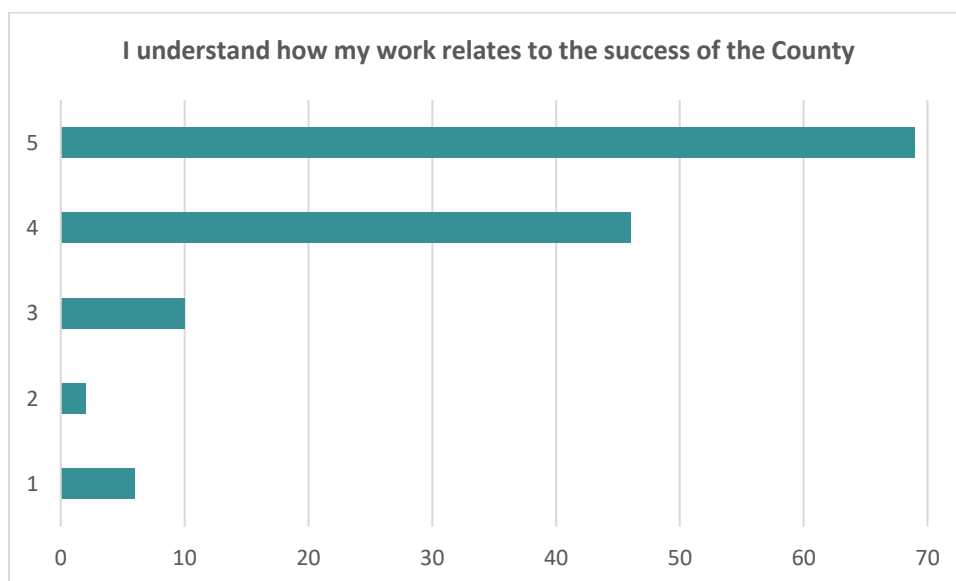
**4 = agree**

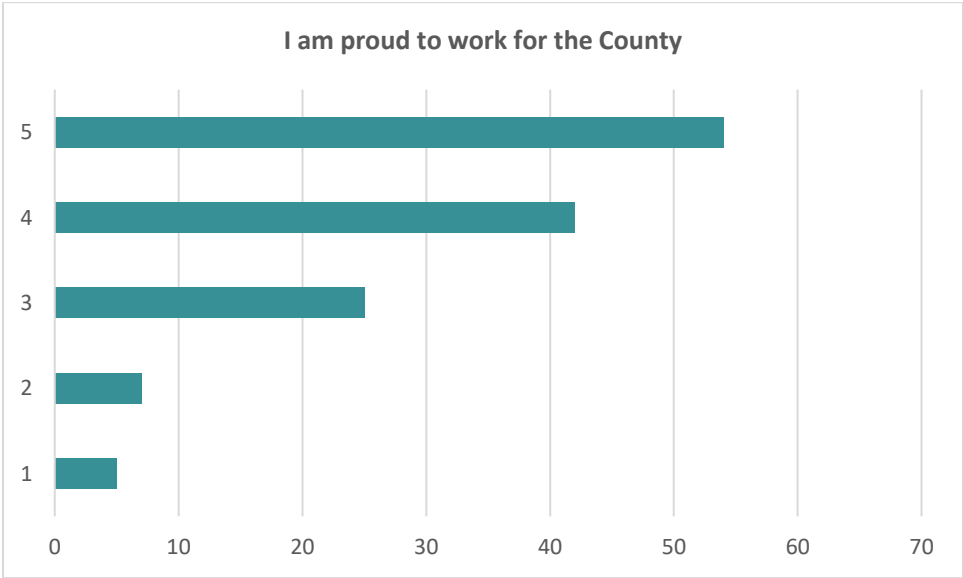
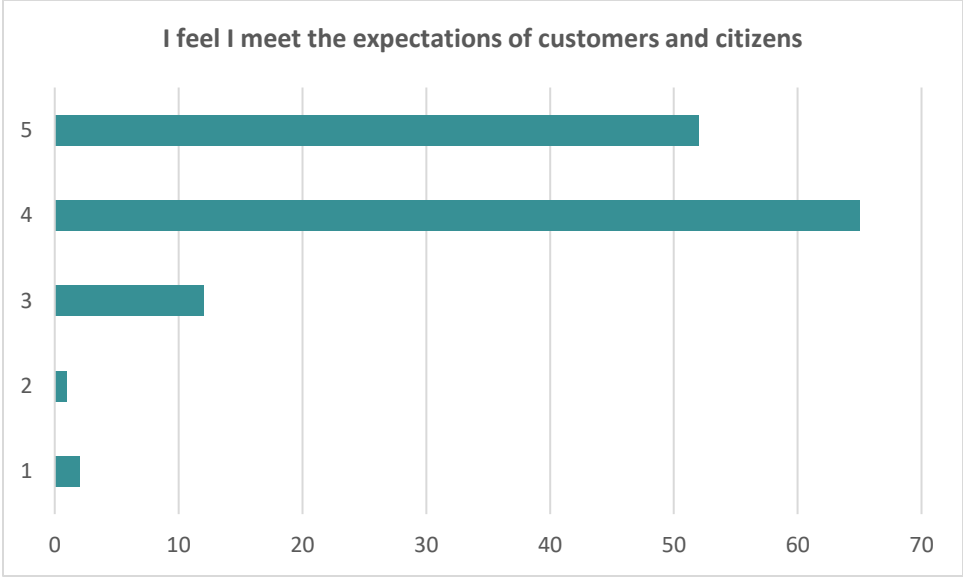
**5 = strongly agree**

Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.50
I understand my mission and vision of my department	3.81
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.28
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	3.81
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.17
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.15
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.24
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.49
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.41
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.29
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.30
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.26
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.64
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.73
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.09
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	2.81
I am proud to work for the County	4.00
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	3.64

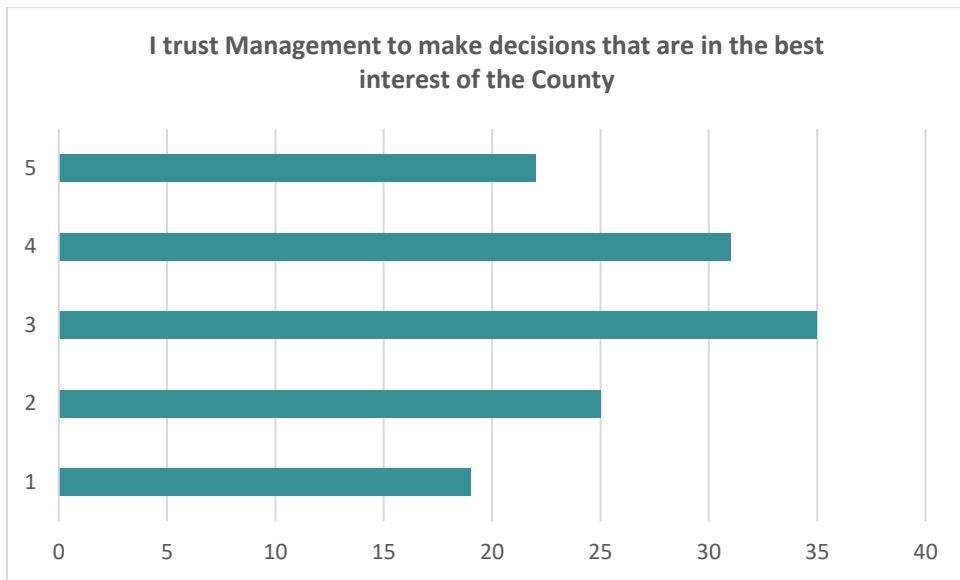
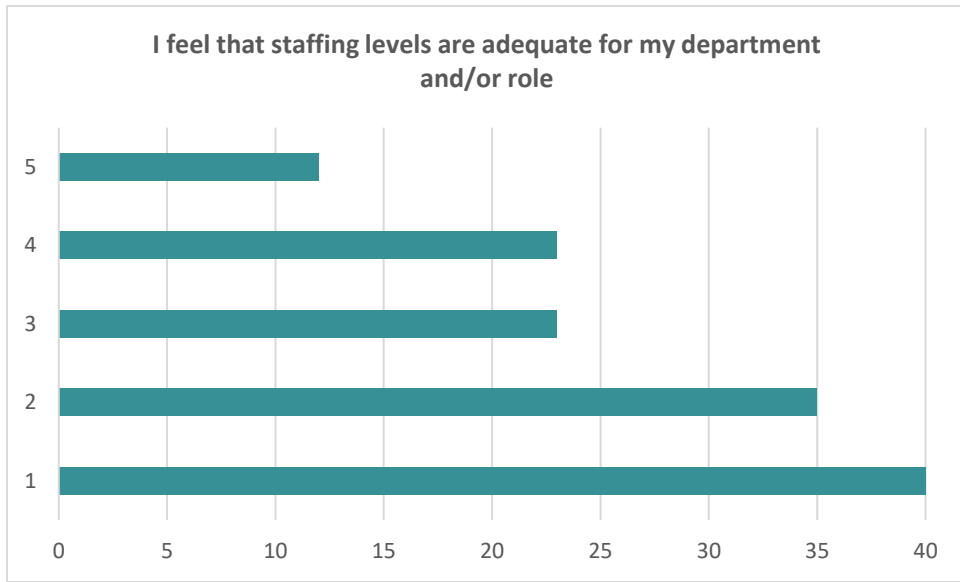
The average score for all the survey statement is 3.48. The highest score is 4.28 and the lowest score is 2.49.

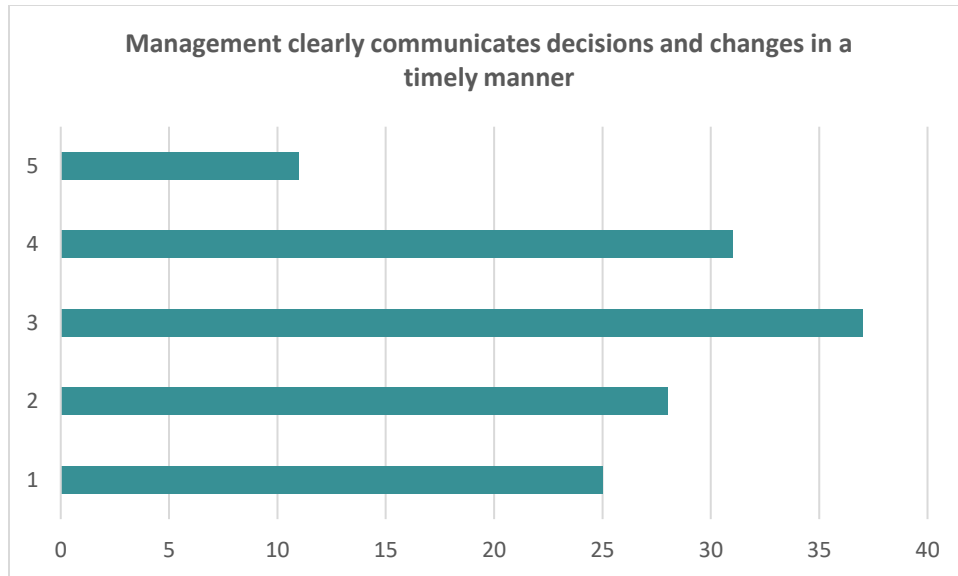
The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the Department’s staff as its greatest asset – staff work well together, bring a high level of experience to the job, and are committed to serving the community.
- Respondents identified low morale caused by executive management as the greatest detractor. Micromanagement, lack of effective communication from the top down, a perceived lack of trust (for example, the use of physical time clocks), and a perceived dismissal of input has created a culture of fear, according to staff.
- Respondents suggested hiring and staff retention practices are inefficient and ineffective. The hiring process is drawn out, orientation and training are insufficient, and advancement opportunities are non-existent or not merit based for most staff, according to respondents.
- Respondents recommended investing in new and updated technology and equipment, improved employee training, and slimming down the current approval processes (such as purchasing, discipline, and procedural changes) would help improve service delivery in the Department.
- Respondents requested management take the time to understand daily operations across the Department so as to better understand how decisions affect processes.

## 3.A.1 Department of Community Services – Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division

The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division (“Division”) provides resources and support for the animal population of Gwinnett County, as well as the residents of Gwinnett County as it pertains to their interactions with both domestic and feral animals. The Division maintains a shelter, provides medical services, and enforces Chapter 10 of the Gwinnett County Code of Ordinances – the Animals Ordinance. The Division is responsible for all of Gwinnett County, including the incorporated areas.

The County founded the Division under the jurisdiction of the Gwinnett County Police Department in 1993. In 2017, management of the Division shifted from the Police Department to the Department of Community Services.

With the rapid growth of Gwinnett County, the demands upon the Division have grown exponentially. Each new subdivision brings numerous new domestic animals into the County and brings new residents closer to wild animals.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Kennel Operations
- Adoptions
- Outreach
- Enforcement
- Special Operations

### Kennel Operations

The Gwinnett County Animal Shelter (“Shelter” or “Kennel”) accepts animals found in Gwinnett County, surrendered by Gwinnett County residents, or impounded by the Enforcement Section, as room in the Kennel permits. The Kennel Section (“Section”) oversees operations in the Kennel, from intake and triage through the ultimate departure of the animal. While the Kennel is primarily set up for dogs and cats, the Kennel does include a barn for livestock and spaces for birds, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, fish, arachnids, and other exotic animals, as needed.

When animals are brought to the Kennel, the Animal Control Officer (“ACO”) managing intake obtains information from the individual surrendering the animal (whether or not the animal is theirs) and registers the animal into the Division’s shelter management software, ShelterBuddy. The individual has to be a resident of Gwinnett County to surrender their own animal or has to have found the wild/loose animal in Gwinnett County. If the surrenderer knows the animal, the ACO will input all known owner and medical information into the system.

After intake, an ACO will triage all new animals to the Kennel. The ACO performs a quick health assessment of the animal and scans for a microchip. For any animal with a known owner – identified either by ShelterBuddy records or microchip records – an ACO or a member of the Customer Service Team will contact the owner. Animals with known owners are held for 10 days, while animals without known owners are held for three days, prior to becoming available for adoption.

Shelter ACOs maintain the health and wellbeing of the animals in the Kennel. Each morning, ACOs feed all animals, walk the dogs, and clean the cages. Throughout the day, ACOs continue to exercise animals as possible, and ACOs and volunteers do laundry and clean dishes. ACOs participate in intake, adoptions, and preparing animals for medical care.

Animal Control Officers are often unable to specialize or focus on any particular part of the animal care process due to limited staff and high turnover rates. For example, ACOs specialized in intake or adoption support are common in the industry. The ACOs III positions are generally responsible for intake, though, are commonly pulled away leaving intake understaffed.

A third-party vendor, Planned PETHood of Georgia, provides on-site medical care for the Kennel. Previously, the Division rotated several part-time veterinarians and veterinarian technicians/technologists. In 2017, Planned PETHood of Georgia submitted a response to the Division's request for proposals and was awarded a one-year contract, potentially renewable up to four times. A full-time medical staff performs surgery and provides ongoing healthcare to the animals housed in the Kennel. The medical director for Planned PETHood of Georgia serves as the medical director for the Division. As necessary, ACOs will quarantine sick animals per medical staff's instructions to avoid outbreaks in the Kennel.

### Adoptions

Animals deemed healthy and outside the reclaim window (or surrendered by their owners) are made available for adoption by the public. ShelterBuddy automatically populates information about adoptable animals on the Division's webpages, alerting the public to available animals. The website includes a form titled "Pre-Adoption Application" on an Adoption/Foster Application webpage. This application misleads users into thinking their completion of the form results in their adoption of the requested animal, even though the website does include several notices that adoptions are on a first-come/first-serve basis and the form does not place the animal on hold. Users often come to the Kennel – some from several counties or states away – expecting a specific animal.

Individuals who do come to the Kennel to adopt an animal are shown to the public side of the facility, where dogs and cats are divided into pods. The cat pods include cats under a year of age, cats over a year, and shy cats. The dog pods include two large dog areas, two medium-to-large dog areas, and a small dog and puppy area. Potential adopters can interact with the animals in bonding rooms before making a final decision.

Throughout their interactions with potential adopters, ACOs ask questions intended to understand what the members of the public are looking for in a pet and try to match those individuals with the right animal. The Division's staff, however, do not receive training in leading customer service practices or de-escalation when members of the public become irate at not being able to adopt the animal they believed themselves to be applying for through the website.



The Division does not require adopters to fill out an application in order to adopt the animals housed at the Kennel due to the County's open adoption policy. The Division instead relies on past knowledge of repeat customers and the ACOs' conversations with the potential adopter. If ACOs express uncertainty about a particular adoption, they can locate a supervisor who will speak with the adoption requester and decline the adoption as they deem appropriate. Open adoption policies and conversation-based adoptions allow for more equitable and inclusive treatment of potential adopters. Lengthy applications and stringent requirements, such as landlord checks and home visits, disproportionately affect the underserved communities the Division strives to reach.

Most adoptions require payment of an adoption fee, as well as a microchip fee. Reclaims by an owner are assessed a reclaim fee and boarding fee. After the adopter or owner has paid the required fees, the animal is sent home with the individual, along with microchip, rabies vaccination, and other medical information. The Customer Support Team updates the animal's status in ShelterBuddy, which removes the animal from the website.

### Outreach

The Outreach Team hosts and participates in events at the Shelter and in the community, promoting adoptions, vaccines, and volunteer opportunities, while also working to shift public perception of the Division from animal control to animal welfare with an enforcement component. In addition to events, the Team also conducts outreach through the County's communications channels, including a Division-specific Facebook page.

The Outreach Team also manages the rescue and foster programs, which are two of the non-adoption means by which an animal leaves the Shelter. The Animal Care Specialist responsible for behavior ("Behaviorist") conducts a behavior assessment on all animals that come through the Kennel. Animals determined not to have behavior issues are put up for adoption. When the Behaviorist determines an animal has behavior issues that prevent it from being immediately adoptable, but aren't so severe as to require euthanasia, the Outreach Team will attempt to place the animal with a rescue group. The same goes for animals with minor medical concerns. The Outreach Team maintains a list of local rescue organizations and the types of animals they support.

Less urgent medical or behavioral concerns are more often assigned to fosters, along with other animals that need more attention, such as bottle-fed kittens or dogs that have been in the Kennel for more than 100 days. Similar to rescue organizations, the Team maintains a list of fosters and the types of animals they will take. Fosters, like all County volunteers, are required to submit a formal application through the Division. The Outreach Team will contact the potential foster, who has to complete a more specific application, submit to a background check, and then the Team will conduct a house visit to determine whether potential fosters have an appropriate environment for a foster animal.

Animals released to rescue groups no longer remain in the Gwinnett County system for adoption. Fostered animals, however, are adopted through the Division and may return to the Kennel depending on the agreement with the foster regarding length of stay.

Placement decisions for animals with behavioral concerns were previously made by a committee comprised of leadership from the Kennel Section, as well as the Outreach Team and the Special Operations Team. According to staff, these placement meetings have decreased due to staff vacancies. Through these placement meetings, staff would determine whether specific animals were best suited for adoption, foster care, release to a rescue group, or were aggressive to the point of requiring euthanasia.

Staff vacancies and high turnover have additionally required the members of the Outreach Team to step in and help out in other areas of the Kennel, rather than focusing on the foster and rescue programs. While other leading animal welfare departments have foster/rescue units with multiple staff focused on each program, Gwinnett County's programs often fall to the wayside in order to maintain normal operations in the Kennel.

### Enforcement

The Enforcement Section responds to calls and enforces the County's Animal Ordinance. Calls from the public regarding potential violations come into the Gwinnett County Police Department dispatch. Each ACO assigned to the Road during a particular shift is assigned a number of Police Department zones depending on the number of ACOs on the Road during that shift. On average, three ACOs are on the Road during any given shift, each responsible for two zones. Whenever one or more ACOs call out during a shift, the remaining ACOs have to pick up additional zones to ensure complete coverage. Due to low staffing numbers, supervisors are generally out on the Road with ACOs and the Night Shift ACOs often respond just to emergency calls. The more zone an ACO has to cover, the longer the drive time between calls, which can cause issues during emergency calls (such as serious bites) or for other public safety departments. The Division's vehicles don't have sirens, so are limited in their ability to move quickly during periods of heavy traffic.

The Division has included four new Road ACO positions in its requested decision package for 2023 to alleviate the workload on each individual ACO.

Dispatch enters calls into the computer-aided dispatch ("CAD") system, MobileCAD, which ACOs assign to themselves based upon zone. Communications with dispatch occur through the CAD and over the radio. The Division shares a channel with the Sheriff's Office and one Police Department zone.

Upon arrival at the call location, the ACO will research history on the location through CAD and perform an inspection of the vicinity. ACOs try to speak with witnesses, when available, and attempt to contact the animal's owner. ACOs exercise judgment in whether to impound the animal in question and issue a Notice of Violation ("NOV") to owners explaining any violations occurring and detailing required mitigation actions and timelines. If a violation is serious enough, the ACO can issue a citation, requiring the owner to appear in court.

After completing a call, the ACO enters results of the call into both the CAD and ShelterBuddy. Impounded animals are returned to the Kennel for intake, where they are triaged and are held for the required reclaim period.

The weekly schedule for ACOs rotates every month in order to limit how often ACOs are required to work weekends. However, the schedule rotations often result in ACOs working eight or more days in a row. ACOs also rotate through an on-call schedule, which can fall on days off or in the middle of a series of eight or more workdays in a row. As a result, ACOs are often coming into the office with limited rest, putting themselves and others at risk.

### Special Operations

The Special Operations Team consists of three Animal Control Officers responsible for specific types of cases. The Cruelty and Neglect Officer is an ACO III responsible for addressing all cases of potential cruelty as defined in the Animal Ordinance. The Bite Officer is an ACO III who oversees all cases of animal bites in the County, including by both domestic and feral animals. The Probation Officer is an ACO II or III who ensures the Division maintains appropriate records and evidence for court cases and works with probation officers to ensure individuals convicted of animal-related crimes comply with the terms of their probation.

ACOs report all potential cases of abuse to the Cruelty and Neglect Officer via email after completion of a call regardless of whether the ACO impounded the animal and issued a citation. The Cruelty and Neglect Officer is also responsible for potential cases of abuse within the Division, ensuring staff properly feed, clean, and care for the wellbeing of the animals in the County's care. All ACOs are supplied with standard operating procedures ("SOPs") for various policies, including reporting potential cases of abuse by members of the public. The SOPs do not include explicit mention of reporting potential internal cases.

All bite cases are reported to the Bites Officer, including those that occur within the Kennel. Animals responsible for bite cases are quarantined in specifically designated areas of the Kennel and the bite is notated in their history. Anyone looking to adopt an animal with a history of aggression, including bites, is informed by ACOs of that animal's history prior to adoption. If the Division has concerns of rabies, especially with feral animals, the Bites Officer or another ACO will perform a decapitation of the animal to send for testing.

During interviews, it was noted that there are inconsistent practices for reporting potential abuse cases and bites as per the SOPs. Without proper adherence to SOPs, the Division risks the safety and wellbeing staff, the public, and the animals involved.

Animals impounded as part of potential abuse cases or quarantined due to bites are not available for adoption until their case has been completed. Animals impounded as part of abuse cases are often temporarily released to rescue groups for monitoring and specialized care, with fosters taking in these animals as well.

The Probation Officer monitors the citations issues by the Division, ensuring each citation is properly filed in court. For those convicted and assigned probation, the Probation Officer conducts probation checks to ensure ongoing vet care, that there is no contact with animals, and that there are no new violations, depending on the terms of the probation.

Outside of the three members of the Special Operations Team, a fourth special operations officer reports to the Day Shift Supervisor. The ACO I or II responsible for dead animal pickup (“Dead Animal Officer”) responds to dead animal calls – those calls reporting a dead animal on public property, such as the side of the Road. These dead animals are returned to the Kennel where they are incinerated. The Dead Animal Officer is responsible for pickup along all public Roads in Gwinnett County except interstates and State Route 316, for which the Georgia Department of Transportation (“GDOT”) have responsibility. The Division Dead Animal Officer does, at times, remove dead animals on roadways for which GDOT has responsibility.

## Communications

Leadership in the Division primarily share important information and updates with staff during daily “roll call” meetings. The two Assistant Managers conduct roll call each day. The Kennel Assistant Manager conducts roll call each morning with the Kennel Supervisor and other senior Kennel staff, and the Road Assistant Manager conducts roll call each morning with the Day Shift Supervisor and each afternoon with the Evening Shift Supervisor. Leadership uses roll call to share the day’s schedules, assignments, and updates as necessary.

During interviews, staff acknowledged having regular access to their direct supervisors up to the Assistant Manager level. Staff feel, however, they rarely see the Manager or Departmental leadership, unless admonishing staff. Our fieldwork validated the concern that the staff has limited visibility of the Manager and of Departmental leadership.

While communications within teams and sections are generally effective, communication is often non-existent between the two sections. Under previous leadership, especially that of the Police Department, all ACOs were cross-trained on both the Kennel and Road operations of the Division. ACOs would spend a set period of time training in the Kennel before transitioning to spend a set period of time on the Road, often split between Day Shift and Night Shift. After training with both sections, each ACO could decide which team they wanted to work on with the understanding that assignments might change based upon current workloads and needs. Currently, cross-training is limited between the Kennel and the Road Sections, with many ACOs unfamiliar with the other section’s duties and responsibilities. As a result, tensions occasionally arise between the two sections, between the Kennel Team and the Outreach Team, and between the Day/Night Shifts and the Special Operations Team. Without better cohesion in the Division, ACOs don’t uniformly communicate animals’ conditions and conversations with members of the public, or express frustration at other ACOs for how they carry out their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to lack of cross-training, communications between staff suffer due to a high turnover rate. While the high turnover rate can be attributed to a multitude of factors – including workload, the physical demands of the work, long hours, etc. – part of the issue stems from hiring practices not fully laying out the expectations for potential employees and ensuring employees are suited for the position. Many applicants view the job as an opportunity to play with animals all day, while in reality Kennel ACOs spend most of their time cleaning up after the animals in their care. When the Police Department managed the Division, hiring practices for ACOs included a background check, psychological evaluation, and lie detector examination due to staff being responsible for the safety of animals, controlled drugs, and vehicles. While the Division does not necessarily need to implement such stringent hiring practices again, there should be some consideration for means in which leadership can help ensure those hired will have the right understanding of and temperament for rigors of the job.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division recognizes much of the public views animal welfare and enforcement agencies as animal control or dogcatchers – a profession often demonized in television and movies. The Division strives to educate the public on the duties, responsibilities, and benefits of the Animal Control Officers and other Divisional staff, while also providing education on how to best care for the County’s animal population and, by extension, human population. ACOs recognize certain habits, such as hoarding, can be indicative of larger problems in the resident’s life, and work with other divisions and departments to provide resources to those residents, ranging from mental health services to free pet food for those with limited means. Certain beliefs, such as a hesitancy to sterilize an animal, stem from cultural differences, so ACOs focus on reaching out to the County’s many communities and providing education when possible. Overall, the Division focuses on education over citation.

When the Division was housed under the Police Department, there was a greater emphasis on enforcement. Currently, under the Department of Community Services, there is a greater focus on animal welfare and an initiative to have ACOs look less like law enforcement. While this shift in strategy is certainly reasonable and commendable, much of the traditional enforcement-type equipment (bulletproof vests, gloves, harnesses, utility belts, etc.) has become aged and deteriorated.

The Division has also heeded the call, led by rescue groups in the community, to embrace no-kill policies. In conjunction with the third-party medical services provider, the Division has implemented the Return to Community Cat Program – a Trap-Neuter-Return (“TNR”) program for the County’s feral cat population. TNR programs allow members of the public to capture feral cats, bring them into the Kennel to be sterilized and vaccinated, and then return the cat to where it was found. National studies by universities and leading animal advocacy associations have found TNR programs the most effective and humane means to controlling feral cat communities.

As a result of embracing no-kill policies, the Division has improved its live release rate. According to the Humane Society of the United States, one of the largest nonprofits dedicated to promoting and improving animal welfare, live release rate is the number of live outcomes of an animal leaving a shelter (through adoption, return to owner, release to a rescue organization, return to the community, etc.) as a ratio of all outcomes (including shelter-initiated euthanasia, but not owner-requested euthanasia or other deaths in the shelter or during transfer). As evidenced in the Data and Performance Analysis section, the Division’s live release rate has risen from 85.17% in 2015 to 95.56% in 2021, with a high of 96.94% in 2019. Conversely, the euthanasia rate has decreased from 14.83% in 2015 to 4.25% in 2021, with a low of 3.06% in 2019. Best Friends Animal Society, a national leader in the no-kill movement with a regional program in the metro Atlanta area, sets the live release rate benchmark for shelters to define themselves as no-kill at 90%. The Division has achieved this benchmark through new programs like the Return to Community Cat Program, as well as changes in internal policies and increased focus on existing programs, such as the foster and rescue programs.

The emphasis on live release rate as the Division’s primary performance metric, however, can be a double-edged sword. Live release rate only compares outgoing animals – the calculation doesn’t consider the number of animals that have been impounded and are continuing to live in the Kennel. Dogs living in the Kennel for more than 100 days begin to develop behavioral issues that can limit their adoptability. These dogs don’t contribute to the live release rate, but instead limit the Division’s ability to take in other animals through owner surrenders or residents bringing in strays, increasing the risk of abandonments in the County for those unable or unwilling to surrender to a rescue group. The Division should ensure that its initiatives and actions do not stymie its ability to best serve the County in order to present favorable statistics.

## Systems and Applications

### ShelterBuddy

Gwinnett County uses ShelterBuddy as its animal shelter management software. The Division uses the system to track all animals that have come into and gone out of the County’s care; all persons interacting with the Division; all calls, complaints, and violation reports; and all Divisional volunteers and donors. The Division also uses ShelterBuddy to build custom reports and push live updates to the website about adoptable animals and Division data.

### Tiburon MobileCAD

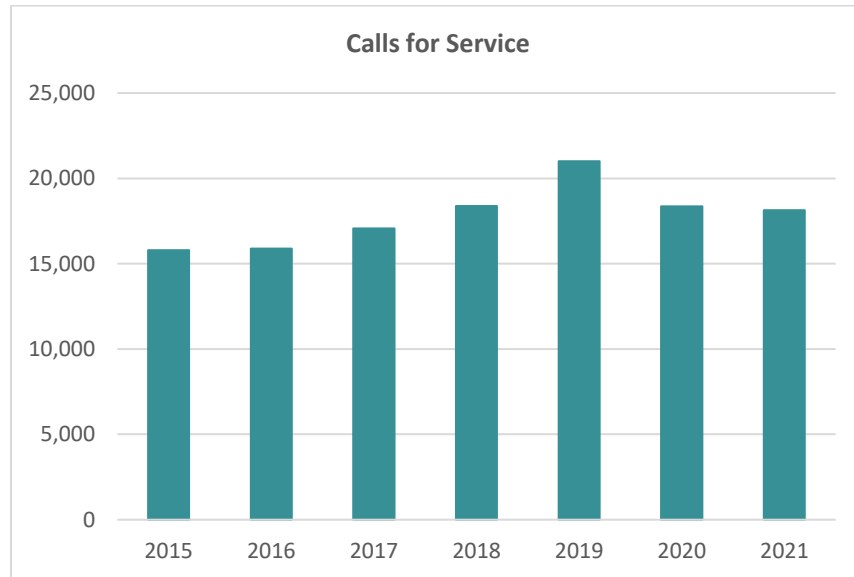
Along with other public safety and code enforcement agencies in Gwinnett County, the Division uses MobileCAD as its computer-aided dispatch. The Road ACOs assign themselves to calls, provide updates on cases, and research historical actions taken at specific addresses by all public safety agencies through the CAD.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks a series of monthly and annual metrics related to both Kennel and Road activities. Two monthly reports share a number of these data points, including:

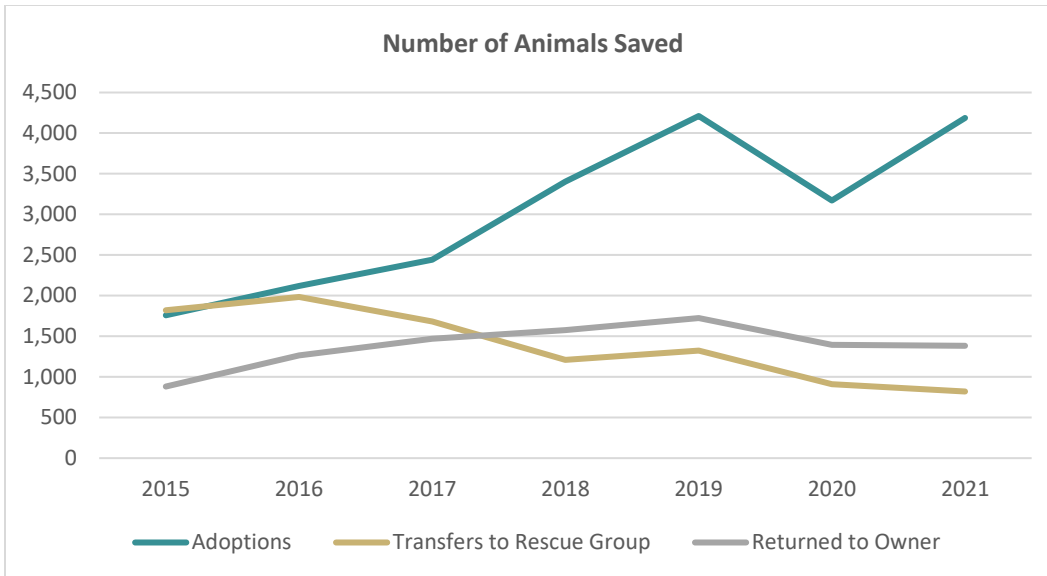
- Animal bites
- Quarantined animals
- Animals taken in
- Animals returned to the community
- Dead animal pick-ups
- Animals born in the shelter
- Animals that died in the shelter
- Animals saved (adopted, reclaimed, or transferred to a rescue organization)
- Revenue generated, including adoption fees, microchip fees, court order fees, donations, etc.
- Volunteer and foster hours
- Calls for service
- Shelter visitors
- Rabies cases identified
- Animals impounded
- Animal euthanized

While this data provides a comprehensive overview of the activities occurring at the Kennel and on the Road, the data is almost exclusively output data rather than outcome, or performance, data. For example, the following graph shows the number of calls for service each year from 2015 to 2021. While this data can indicate the workload of the Road ACOs, more information is necessary to fully understand the picture.



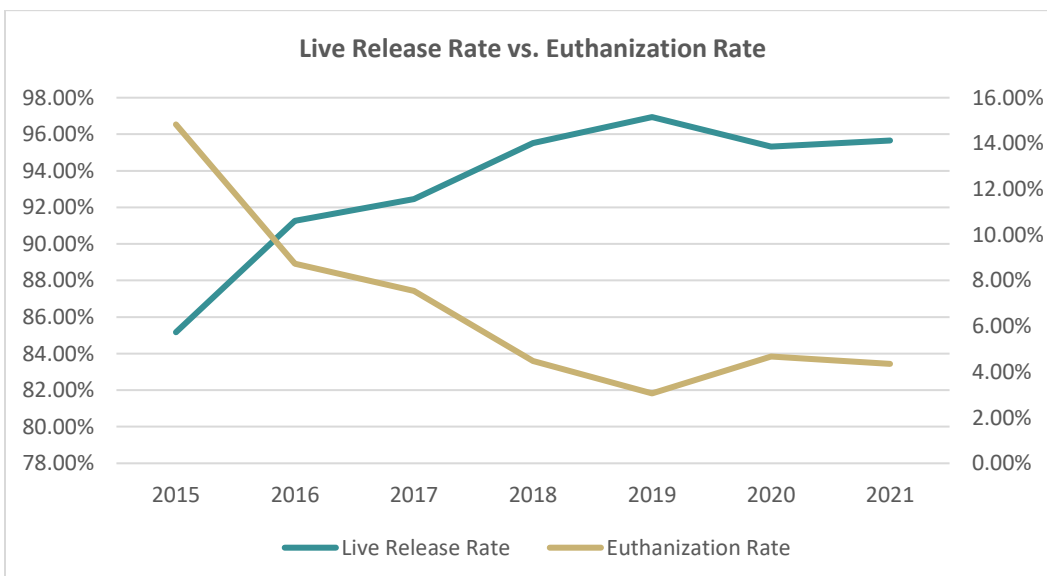
This data doesn't indicate the types of calls for service, the amount of time ACOs spent onsite, or the outcomes of these calls. If a large percentage of these calls resulted in citations rather than compliance, the Division is not achieving its strategic initiative of education over citation. The Division might consider reviewing how the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Development Department tracks cases from initial complaint to final close-out, indicating the outcome of said cases, allowing the Code Enforcement Division to track against their similar goal of compliance over citation.

Another set of data points tracked by the Division relates to the number of animals saved. The Division tracks the number of animals adopted, transferred to rescue groups, and returned to owners, as well as animals euthanized, on a daily basis and posts those daily reports to the website. The daily data is then compiled into the monthly reports produced by the Division. The following graph shows the number of animals saved each year from 2015 to 2021.



Again, though, this data is output data, not outcome data. This data doesn't show how the Division's efforts affected the number of animals saved. The Division should set specific goals, perhaps related to community service efforts, such as vaccine or spay and neuter clinics. The Division can track the number of adoptions, vaccinations, or sterilizations as a result of an event or a promotion to determine whether outreach efforts are successful. Setting community-specific goals and tracking against those will let the Division measure whether efforts are reaching those communities. The number of adoptions, transfers to rescue groups, and returns to owners are important metrics to know – but without context don't assist the Division in acting strategically.

The Division also tracks live release rate, or the percentage of animals saved as compared to the number euthanized. This metric can be used for performance tracking, if the Division sets a specific goal to benchmark against and provides appropriate context, as discussed in the Strategic Initiatives section. The following graph shows the Division's live release rate as compared to the euthanasia rate from 2015 to 2021.





The Division should be sure to contextualize these rates with comparisons to intake and impound data; the number of potential intakes turned away and redirected to rescue groups; the average, minimum, and maximum lengths of stay for animals; etc. The Division should also consider highlighting other strategic initiatives, such as the Return to Community Cat Program – the Division could partner with universities or local groups to measure the impact of the TNR program through changes in annual birth rates and infectious disease patterns. Currently, the Division is not tracking against the strategic initiatives and goals it has established in order to report on program performance.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Kennel Supervisor manages an average of 25 full-time staff members representing four different position levels, as well as part-time and volunteer staff. The role is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations in the Kennel, but with high staff turnover and only one Training Officer, the Kennel Supervisor is often being pulled away from oversight responsibilities to assist with training and help perform the duties of Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”).

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should evaluate staffing models to determine if additional Training Officer allocations are available for the Kennel Team. The Division should consider an additional degree of supervision in the Kennel Team to decrease the number of direct reports for the Kennel Supervisor.

**Observation 2:** ACOs in the Kennel are often unable to specialize or focus on any particular part of the animal care process due to limited staff and high turnover rates. For example, ACOs specialized in intake or adoption support are common in the industry. The ACOs III generally responsible for intake, though are commonly pulled away leaving intake understaffed. Similarly, all ACOs participate in adoptions, potentially resulting in inconsistent customer experiences.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should evaluate staffing models to determine if more specialized positions would help provide a better customer experience for all members of the public participating in the animal welfare process. The Division could hire or promote Animal Control Officers specifically for intake or adoptions to provide additional consistency in those processes. The Division might need to consider increasing the number of Kennel positions in order to allow ACOs to focus on intake, adoptions, or other specialties without being constantly pulled away.

**Observation 3:** The Gwinnett County website includes a form titled “Pre-Adoption Application” on the Adoption/Foster Application webpage. This application is often misunderstood by users who believe their completion of the form results in their adoption of the requested animal, even though the website does include several notices that adoptions are on a first-come/first-serve basis and the form does not place the animal on hold. Users often come to the Kennel – some from several counties or states away – expecting a specific animal.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should work with the Community Engagement and Collaboration Division and the Communications Department to find a more appropriate title for the Pre-Adoption Application Form to eliminate any potential of users mistaking the form as means to reserve or adopt an animal.

**Observation 4:** The Division’s staff interact regularly with the public, but do not receive customer service or de-escalation training.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider providing all new staff customer service, de-escalation, and other training on leading practices for interacting with the public.

**Observation 5:** The Division has historically decided the outcomes of animals with behavioral or medical concerns through placement meetings. These meetings gather Kennel leadership, the Outreach Team, and the Specialty Operations Team to determine whether animals should be made available for adoption, go into foster care, be transferred to a rescue group, or be euthanized. Recently, these placement meetings have been infrequent due to lack of staff.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should ensure placement meetings are consistently held by appropriate staff to ensure equitable treatment for all animals. If staff are not able to regularly attend these placement meetings due to staffing concerns, the Division should evaluate its staffing model to reinforce these positions or free up these positions to focus on their own tasks.

**Observation 6:** The Outreach Team, especially the rescue and foster programs, is a means by which the Division works toward achieving its strategic initiative of a high live release rate. The Outreach Team, however, is often unable to focus on their specific roles and responsibilities due to being pulled away to assist other staff.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should evaluate its staffing model to ensure enough teams have adequate staff allocated to complete their responsibilities without drawing resources from other teams. The Division should consider increasing the number of staff dedicated to the rescue and foster programs, similar to animal welfare agencies of comparable size and mission.

**Observation 7:** Each ACO assigned to the Road Section during a particular shift is assigned a number of Police Department zones depending on the number of ACOs on the Road during that shift. On average, three ACOs are on the Road during any given shift, each responsible for two zones. Whenever one or more ACOs call out during a shift, the remaining ACOs have to pick up additional zones to ensure complete coverage. Due to low staffing numbers, supervisors are generally out on the Road with ACOs and the Night Shift ACOs often respond just to emergency calls. The more zone area an ACO has to cover, the longer the drive time between calls, which can cause issues during emergency calls (such as serious bites) or for other public safety departments. The Division has included four new Road ACO positions in its requested decision package for 2023 to alleviate the workload on each individual ACO.

**Recommendation 7:** Departmental leadership should support the Division's request for four additional Road ACO positions in 2023. The Division should continue to make incremental increases over the next few years to ensure each zone has adequate coverage from ACOs and cut down on ACO windshield time.

**Observation 8:** During and at the completion of each call and case, ACOs enter duplicative information into the CAD and ShelterBuddy. This duplication results in less efficiency from ACOs and often results in ACOs needing to take overtime in order to complete all required reporting.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division should work with the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to integrate the CAD and ShelterBuddy to eliminate duplication of reports.

**Observation 9:** The weekly schedule for ACOs rotates every month in order to limit how often ACOs are required to work weekends. However, the schedule rotations often result in ACOs working eight or more days in a row. ACOs also rotate through an on-call schedule, which can fall on days off or in the middle of a series of eight or more workdays in a row. As a result, ACOs are often coming into the office with limited rest, putting themselves and others at risk.

**Recommendation 9:** In addition to increasing the number of Road ACOs, the Division should consider different schedule and staffing models to ensure no staff member is working eight or more days in a row on a recurring basis. The Division should better align the on-call schedule with regular working schedules to ensure staff are not risking working the equivalent of three shifts in under 48 hours.

**Observation 10:** The Division's Dead Animal Officer, at times, removes dead animals on roadways for which GDOT has the responsibility to remove dead animals.

**Recommendation 10:** The Division should not remove any dead animals from roadways where GDOT maintains responsibility, unless Division staff have been properly trained and assigned equipment for performing animal removal services on densely populated roads (interstates and State Route 316).

**Observation 11:** Members of the Division, including leadership, do not consistently adhere to standard operating procedures ("SOPs") governing the proper reporting of potential abuse cases and bites resulting both from public complaints and actions in the Kennel. Without proper adherence to SOPs, the Division risks the safety and wellbeing of staff, the public, and the animals involved.

**Recommendation 11:** Divisional leadership should reinforce expectations that staff always follow SOPs, especially for serious matters such as potential abuse cases and bites.

**Observation 12:** Communications in the Division suffer due to a lack of understanding of roles, responsibilities, and policies between the different sections and teams. Previously, all ACOs trained in the Kennel, on the Day Shift, and on the Night Shift for set periods of time in order to fully understand the full responsibilities of the Division.

**Recommendation 12:** The Division should improve its cross-training policy to ensure staff fully understand the duties, responsibilities, policies, and procedures of every team and section within the Division. While the Division may or may not consider mandated training for a set period of time in the Kennel, on the Day Shift, and on the Night Shift, the Division should ensure each staff member understands all three areas, as well as the Outreach Team, the Special Operations Team, and the duties of the Behaviorist.

**Observation 13:** Many applicants have an unclear picture of the realities of an ACO position. Current hiring practices do not adequately prepare applicants for the rigors of the job, exacerbating the Division's high turnover rate and negatively affecting interpersonal communications.

**Recommendation 13:** The Division should improve its evaluation of candidates for ACO positions. While the Division does not need to fully implement the stringent practices previously employed by the Police Department, the Division should be mindful of the fact that personnel are hired to handle animals and controlled drugs, and should adequately communicate expectations to potential hires.

**Observation 14:** Currently, under the Department of Community Services, there is a greater focus on animal welfare for the Division and an initiative to have ACOs look less like law enforcement. While this shift in strategy is certainly reasonable and commendable, much of the enforcement-type equipment (bulletproof vests, gloves, harnesses, utility belts, etc.) has become aged and deteriorated.

**Recommendation 14:** The Division should conduct an assessment of all equipment utilized by ACOs both in the Kennel and on the Road to ensure equipment is up to date and adequate for its intended purpose. Departmental leadership should support the Division in this effort and incorporate input from members of the Division into the procurement process for replacing worn and outdated equipment.

**Observation 15:** The Division stresses live release rate as an important strategic initiative and performance metric for the Division's operations. While live release rate can indicate an animal welfare agency's emphasis on providing no-kill solutions for the animals in its care, the rate can be misleading and singular focus on the rate can affect the agency's ability to best serve the County's residents and animal population.

**Recommendation 15:** Whenever the Division presents the County's live release rate, the Division should include appropriate context, including a comparison to animals taken in, animals turned away, and animals with inordinately long stays in the Kennel. The Division should ensure services provided to the community do not suffer in order to maintain a high live release rate.

**Observation 16:** Divisional data on number of calls for service received does not provide adequate measurement of the Division's performance, instead providing only output data. Currently, the Division does not provide reports on the results of calls and cases handled by Road ACOs.

**Recommendation 16:** The Division should review how the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Development Department tracks cases from initial complaint to final close-out, indicating the outcome of said cases, allowing the Code Enforcement Division to track against the goal of compliance over citation. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division should employ a similar model to track against their goal of education over citation.

**Observation 17:** The Division tracks a large amount of output data related to Kennel operations, including intakes and how animals leave the County's care. The Division does not currently track performance metrics or use performance data to make strategic, proactive decisions.

**Recommendation 17:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions.

## 3.A.2 Department of Community Services – Business Management and Technology Services Division

The Business Management and Technology Services Division provides back-end operational and administrative support to the other divisions throughout the Department of Community Services.

### Key Functions

The Business Management and Technology Services Division maintains the following key functions:

- Contract Management and Purchasing Support
- Budget Management and Support
- Human Resources Support
- Grants Support
- Information Technology Support
- Asset Management Support
- Fleet Support

### Contract Management and Purchasing Support

The Purchasing and Contracts Unit (“Unit”) is responsible for coordinating all purchasing for the Department. This includes working with end-user divisions to develop bid specifications and processing all shopping carts, an online tool within SAP used for making purchases. This Unit also reviews purchases to ensure that the Prior Authorization Need (“PAN”) forms are properly completed. Currently all purchases, including those on the p-card, must have an attached PAN to document the appropriate levels of prior approval. Most purchases \$1,000 or more require the approval of the Division Director; anything over \$2,500 requires the involvement of the Purchasing and Contracts Unit.

Most requests for purchases come to the Unit via email, which may require several back-and-forth exchanges between the requester, other supervisors or managers within the requesting division, and staff within the Purchasing and Contracts Unit. For invoices, most come through the Finance Department to the Purchasing and Contracts Unit. If the end-user division responsible for the purchase didn’t upload documentation to support the purchase, then the Unit must reach out to the end-user division to confirm receipt of goods or services.

The Unit also supports contract management, coordinating with end-user divisions to ensure that the contract spend, timeline, and deliverables are all in compliance with the agreed-upon scope. The Unit also works with end-user divisions to ensure that the agreed-upon deliverables are being received and utilized within the division.

The Unit serves as a liaison with the Purchasing Unit within the Finance Department to coordinate the renewals of contracts, as applicable. The Unit has an internal spreadsheet tracking all active contracts and corresponding expiration dates. SAP’s Supplier Relationship Manager (“SRM”) module doesn’t consistently track contracts in the manner that the Unit needs, so internal tracking is the best way to assess expenditures against contract, ensuring that the current contract rate is being charged, and that the current scope and deliverables are being met.

The Unit also provides p-card training to p-card holders, to ensure that all cardholders understand County and Departmental expectations for p-card management and use. The Business Services Associate) BSA) III within the Unit also performs regular p-card audits. P-card transactions are reviewed daily and randomly selected for audit, to confirm eligibility of purchase, appropriate PAN, and supporting documentation. The Business Officer over the Unit, as well as the Deputy Division Director, also perform secondary audits of p-card purchases.

### Budget Management and Support

There are two units that provide support to the other divisions for budget tracking and management. The Operating Funds Unit is responsible for all cost centers related to operating costs across the Department.

The Capital Funds Unit is responsible for the cost centers associated with capital fund expenditures. The Capital Funds Unit will also review expenditures to ensure that the scope was appropriate for the contract that was used, that the appropriate fund was used for expenditures, and that the fund was eligible for use with the specific expenditure type. The Capital Funds Unit can approve shopping carts with a value under \$5,000; anything that is \$5,000 and more must be reviewed by the Purchasing and Contract Business Officer or the Deputy Division Director.

The Capital Funds Unit also uses spreadsheets for project level tracking within the capital fund budgets that may be funding multiple projects simultaneously.

Both the Operating and Capital Funds Units are reviewing and ensuring that revenue is correctly recorded to the appropriate cost center, and that expenditures do not exceed recorded revenue for cost centers. The part-time Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all revenue recorded through Rec1 is recorded as the appropriate deposit type, that the deposits successfully cleared the bank, and that all checks clear the bank. Both Units also assist with budget amendments and fund transfers between cost centers, as appropriate.

Both Units also review expenses that are posted to the budgets to ensure that expenses are posted to the correct cost center. This may be proactive review as well as at the request of an end-user division or cost center manager who cannot identify a discrepancy in their available budget. The most common issues are charges that are posted by other County Departments, who may have different requirements for entry detail or supporting documentation, which may make it challenging to review and understand whether the expenses are posted to the correct cost center. The Units can also issue journal vouchers to correct erroneous charges and move the expenses to the correct cost center.

The Capital Funds Unit also assists with fixed asset tracking, coordinating with finance for disposition of assets, and assists in completing the asset in progress reports for the County's Finance Department.

The Operating Funds Unit also processes subsidy payouts and other payments based on MOU relationships.

### Human Resources Support

The Human Resources and Administration Unit ("Unit") is responsible for all personnel action requests for the Department, including hiring, transfers, separations, terminations, FMLA and short-term disability.

The Unit is also responsible for assisting in coordinating performance evaluations and ensuring that all Department employees receive a timely performance evaluation. The Department Director reviews all employee performance evaluations.

The BSA II within the HR & Admin Unit is responsible for processing payroll for the entire Department, including all part-time and seasonal workers. This includes reviewing time entry for completeness, ensuring that there are no zero-hour entries, and assisting with time entry for some seasonal and part-time workers.

This Unit is also responsible for ensuring that the appropriate organization and cost center distributions are updated for employees' payroll, including those who may transfer between divisions or units, as well as those that may be on intermittent or full time FMLA.

The Human Resources and Administration Unit is also responsible for coordinating the two-day Departmental onboarding for all new employees. The two-day onboarding includes introduction and familiarization with GCWorkplace, time entry, and other administrative job-related duties. The onboarding also includes discussion of customer service strategies (including a roleplaying activity for customer service, based on actual customer requests), branding standards, overview of all of the Department's functions and responsibilities and other general information.

#### Grants Support

The Division recently created a new Program Analyst position to support grants management throughout the Department, with a current staff member being trained for this position during our fieldwork. Responsibilities will include reviewing shopping carts for all grant purchases, assisting in tracking grant-specific budgets, and assisting with purchasing and procurement as applicable, to ensure that purchases are in compliance with grant requirements.

The Program Analyst will also attend meetings with grantors and assist recipient divisions or units in preparing reporting to the grantor organization.

#### Information Technology Support

The Community Services Manager is responsible for providing IT support throughout the Department. The Community Services Manager, along with the Deputy Division Director, are the power users for the Department for GCWorkplace, and manage information and resources available on the Department's landing page, as well as other Departmental resources available to County employees.

The Community Services Manager is the system administrator for Rec1 within the Department, as well as responsible for all payment card industry ("PCI") compliance for Rec1. The Community Services Manager is also a secondary system administrator for eBuilder and Lucity. The Community Services Manager also serves as the internal liaison for Remydforce tickets submitted to ITS that may require their assistance or troubleshooting of specific applications.

The Community Services Manager is also responsible for maintaining the security cameras and coordinating with the vendor for support and repair. This may include some ad hoc review to ensure cameras are online and recording properly, as well as responding to open records requests, or assisting law enforcement in determining if there are videos that may assist with an investigation.

## Asset Management Support

The Capital Funds Unit is also responsible for assisting in fixed asset management, which includes tracking and ensuring that anything with a unit value over \$5,000 has an asset tag and its location and condition is tracked.

## Fleet Support

The Community Services Manager also serves as the Department's liaison with the Support Services Department Fleet Management Division. This role includes monthly meetings to review concerns, issues, or discuss equipment damage to determine if the equipment can be repaired or should be replaced. Responsibilities also include tracking the location of the vehicles, as appropriate, using geotag sensors placed in the vehicles.

## Communications

Communications with the Division from other divisions vary on the end-user divisions preferred communication style, which makes it challenging to create consistent processes that work for all communication styles and timing of information.

The Department holds monthly communications meetings, which unit members use to stay updated on activities and issues in other divisions that may impact their workload or timing of specific activities.

The Division is also working to reintroduce quarterly visits to the end-user divisions that they support to facilitate better relationships and an understanding of the business processes and functional responsibilities within those divisions, and to enhance customer service and improve communications. These visits will also be used to provide additional training and reminders to Division staff.

Division staff feel that they are not consistently involved in the development of programs or initiatives, which can cause frustration and issues when budgeting and processing invoices related to a new program or initiative are submitted with minimal understanding of the new program or initiative. Generally, there appears to be frequent decision-making within end-user divisions that don't always engage the Business Management and Technology Services Division, creating last-minute emergencies and requests.

## Strategic Initiatives

Customer Service is a key priority of the Division, which views itself as an internal service function, with all other divisions as end-users. The Division has worked to develop processes that are friendly to the end-user divisions while still achieving the business needs of the Department. Division leadership is also working to improve relationships, so that Division staff have a deeper understanding of the work of the divisions they support, and end-user divisions are more aware of the workload of the Business Management and Technology Services Division.

While the Division has moved to fully paperless processing, there are still manual steps and processes involved in invoice requests and shopping cart creation. Invoices come to the Purchasing and Contracts Unit through email, which must then be imported into the system and a shopping cart created. If there are issues or missing documentation, Purchasing and Contract Unit staff must email the requester for additional information, which creates a secondary process and set of details that must be tracked.



There have been efforts to provide cross-training across all of the budgetary and financial functions within the Division. Cross-training can help with cyclical workload stress, but can also create mixed messaging about primary responsibilities and priorities within the Division.

## Systems and Applications

### Rec1

Rec1, also known as “CivicRec”, is a recreation management software that is used for point-of-sale payment processing, activity registration, schedule tracking, and other related functions associated with recreation functions. The Community Services Manager serves as the system administrator for Rec1. The Operating Funds Unit also uses Rec1 to review and balance all revenue collected from the system to ensure appropriate posting in SAP.

### SAP

Business Management and Technology Services uses the County’s current ERP system, SAP, for all financial management, budgeting, purchasing, and forecasting. The Division uses many of the system’s modules, such as the Supplier Relationship Management module to create shopping carts and make purchases, along with WorkBench for p-card management.

### FileNet

FileNet is used by the County to transfer approved invoices from end-user departments to Finance for payment processing. Finance Department staff may upload invoices directly received within Finance to the appropriate end-user department for review and approvals for processing.

### Lucity

Lucity is a core business system for managing assets, customer requests, work orders, preventative maintenance, and resources and inventory. The Community Service Manager serves as a system administrator for Lucity.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Business Management and Technology Services does not track many specific performance measures, although there is some informal tracking of “time to pay”, which captures the time between when an invoice is received and when payment is approved and sent to the County’s Finance Department for payment processing. The County’s standard is that all invoices should be paid within 30 days of receipt.

The Division is also hoping to leverage data from EnergyCap, an energy utilization and tracking program housed in the Department of Support Services. EnergyCap can help track utilization and costs of electricity, water, gas, and other utilities in all County buildings and facilities, to help understand average cost of operations, as well as more proactively identify outliers in utilization that may indicate a need for maintenance or repair services.

As the Human Resources and Administration Unit grows and shifts priorities, there are opportunities to continue to track information related to the number of personnel actions that are being processed each month. This information can also be used to understand trends in separations, transfers, and other personnel change, to better inform recruitment and retention efforts in non-seasonal positions. As the Human Resources and Administration Unit works to merge payroll and HR functions, additional effort should be taken to collect and understand themes and patterns in payroll exceptions, timecard audit results, and delayed approvals. This information should be used to develop instruction and follow-up to end-user divisions. This information should also be used to assess whether the onboarding process should include additional training on timecard entry, or if a training class should be developed and implemented to provide specific instructions to newly promoted supervisors.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Currently, all purchases made throughout the Department require the completion of a Prior Authorization Need (“PAN”) approval. These PANs may require multiple levels of approval, and are required even for normal operating needs and those that have already been approved through the budgeting process. The PAN process is time-consuming, both for end-users as well as Division staff who must reach back out and request proof of PAN. The PANs also create a duplicative purchase process, especially for budgeted, regular operating expenses.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should work with Department leadership to assess the PAN process and requirements, and update the requirements to require PANs only for purchases that are not within the current approved budget, or those that may exceed purchasing thresholds, such as those set by the Purchasing Division within the County’s Finance Department.

**Observation 2:** The Human Resources and Administration Unit offers two-day Department-specific onboarding for all full-time hires within the Department. This onboarding covers a range of topics, from timecard entry and purchase approval processes to general overviews of several of the Department’s divisions, and customer service guidance. Currently this is a “one-size fits all” approach, which may miss opportunities for more tailored information and training that is specific to certain roles, such as supervisors, and may result in staff attending sessions that are not relevant to their position.

**Recommendation 2:** As the Human Resources and Administration Unit becomes fully staffed and fully defines their role, the Unit should consider creating more customized onboarding breakout sessions that ensure appropriate information is provided relative to the new hire’s role.

The Unit should also consider recording these trainings to make available to staff as a refresher once they are in their roles.

**Observation 3:** The Division has cross-trained many of the Division staff that are involved with financial processes to assist with all of the financial functions of the Division. While this has assisted in workload management and ensuring that there are always staff available to assist in completing critical job functions, it may also create risks related to internal controls where someone could potentially be involved in all steps in a purchasing action.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should review the practice of having all financial staff receive cross-training in all financial functions, and consider creating a more intentional set of cross-training, or create secondary internal reviews to ensure that the same employee did not approve or enter a budget transfer, approve a purchasing request, and also process that same request for payment.

### 3.A.3 Department of Community Services – Community Engagement and Community Collaboration Division

Community Engagement and Community Collaboration is responsible for a variety of community services and initiatives focused on improving the health, wellness, and educational opportunities available to Gwinnett County residents.

#### Key Functions

Community Engagement and Community Collaboration maintains a variety of community-facing key functions:

- Live Healthy Gwinnett
- Volunteer Gwinnett
- Building Brains Anywhere
- Program Marketing, Media, and Outreach
- Filming and Photography Permits

#### Live Healthy Gwinnett

Live Healthy Gwinnett was launched in 2014 as a broad-based community health initiative, with the intent of increasing positive engagement with activity, healthy eating, and other lifestyle changes. Live Healthy Gwinnett operates four specific initiatives under the “Live Healthy Gwinnett” banner:

- Be Healthy Gwinnett
- Get Checked
- Harvest Gwinnett
- Be Active Gwinnett

Two of the initiatives, Be Healthy Gwinnett and Get Checked, do not have dedicated full-time staff. The Live Healthy Gwinnett Project Coordinator oversees these programs with support from interns, and the two Recreation Program Leaders as appropriate.

Be Positive Gwinnett focuses on mental health and emotional awareness. The Program Coordinator is a certified training in the Question, Persuade, Refer (“QPR”) model for suicide ideation identification and intervention, and provides training throughout the County in collaboration with GUIDE, Inc., including all County firefighters last year.

Be Positive Gwinnett also includes monthly “walk the talk” programs, which are led by health professionals during a walk through one of the County parks. There are also other timely events, such as Yoga in the Park on National Yoga Day, or other health-focused events in health awareness months.

Get Checked helps host health fairs and attends other awareness events throughout the County. This may include coordinating with community partners to provide blood pressure and glucose checks. A recent event promoted full biometrics screenings for participants provided by a corporate partner.

Live Healthy Gwinnett is heavily reliant on the use of volunteers and interns to support their mission and maintain their activity levels. The use of volunteers and interns requires an additional level of administrative oversight, planning and coordination to ensure that adequate volunteers are available for all events, and that volunteers and interns are always supervised by a County employee.

### *Harvest Gwinnett*

Harvest Gwinnett is an initiative designed to expand nutrition awareness and food access. Harvest Gwinnett is responsible for managing nine community gardens throughout parks within the County, with the goal of opening an additional three gardens within the current year. Two of the gardens also have high-tunnels, a tunnel system set above a bed which allow for extended growing seasons through a covered area and the tunnel's ability to retain heat.

Each garden has approximately 30 4x8 plots available for residents to rent for \$35 annually. Harvest Gwinnett provides tools, and soil to residents who rent plots. In addition, each community garden has shared rows, which are maintained by the staff in addition to volunteers. Residents must contribute twelve hours of volunteer work in their community garden each year. All produce harvested from the shared rows are donated to community food partners.

The Harvest Gwinnett Unit ("Unit") seeks to schedule three two-hour workdays each week, rotating through all the community gardens and engaging resident gardeners and volunteers. The Unit also tries to complete a site visit for each garden each week.

Harvest Gwinnett also provides a variety of education and outreach opportunities. The community gardens provide education about planting seasons, watering techniques, mulching, staking, and cleaning and food use about different plants from the gardens.

In addition to maintaining the gardens, the Program Supervisor and Recreation Program Leader coordinate nutrition education activities throughout the County. This includes using mobile kitchens for cooking demonstrations and cooking activities. The Unit leverages the UGA Extension program and volunteer chefs to expand program activities, and works to ensure culturally appropriate recipes and meals are incorporated.

Harvest Gwinnett also uses ambassadors to help manage the community gardens. Ambassadors are resident gardeners in each community garden. Ambassadors assist in watering the gardens each week, providing communication and information about each garden back to the Harvest Gwinnett Unit, as well as providing insight about what plants should be considered for the shared rows, and local organizations that may benefit from the shared row harvests.

### *Be Active Gwinnett*

Be Active Gwinnett is a mobile program, with two vehicles that can be used to host regular play activity throughout the County, with a focus on areas that may not have access to parks or other traditional play areas. These play activities are predominantly designed for youth ages 4 - 21, and work to schedule activities in unique areas of the County, such as mobile home parks, extended stay hotels, parks, and other locations. Currently, there are biweekly play activities scheduled. Be Active Gwinnett also supports after school program and summer camps with play activities.

All Be Active Gwinnett activities are recorded in Rec1, and have marketing information customized for each event.

For all new sites that are proposed for play activities, the Program Supervisor completes a site visit to review the site for appropriateness for play, the ability to park the vehicle, and to determine the logistics of play events in that location.

There is also Program Application, a link on the Gwinnett County website, which allows the public to directly request Be Active Gwinnett activities. The Live Healthy Gwinnett Unit reviews all requests to ensure that they meet with the mission of the program and are appropriate programming opportunities.

### Volunteer Gwinnett

Volunteer Gwinnett is the County's volunteer coordination effort, including both resident volunteers as well as employee volunteers. Volunteer Gwinnett's Collaboration Manager coordinates with liaisons in each County Department and Elected Officials' Offices about those departments' need for volunteers, as well as provides opportunities for County employees who want to volunteer.

Volunteering is tracked on [volunteergwinnett.net](http://volunteergwinnett.net) which is a volunteer management platform driven by CERVIS. The CERVIS system allows for the tracking of volunteer hours, both for events as well as for individual volunteers and each County department. County department liaisons are provided user accounts with limited administrator permissions so they can create their own events and respond directly to potential volunteers.

For external events that the County promotes, the Collaboration Manager is responsible for posting the events and coordinating with the hosting partner regarding registrants and any potential questions.

All volunteers must sign a waiver to volunteer, with an additional form for riding in County vehicles. There are also several levels of background checks, based on the type of volunteering, such as opportunities to work with animals, seniors, or children. The Department Liaison for the hosting department is responsible for ensuring the forms are completed and the appropriate level of background check is performed.

Volunteer Gwinnett partners with Junior Achievement to volunteer at programming for 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders throughout the County, with the volunteer day counting as a paid workday for volunteering employees.

Volunteer Gwinnett also supports several food distribution efforts and initiatives. These include Tuesday food distribution and summer meal distribution in collaboration with a variety of community partners, etc. For many of these events, Volunteer Gwinnett partners with other divisions or County departments to provide additional resources, such as pet food, car seat checks, or sign-ups to have smoke alarms tested and updated.

Volunteer Gwinnett may also transport coordination to assist local nonprofits in receiving food for distribution, such as food distribution from the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

### Building Brains Anywhere

Building Brains Anywhere is an early learning initiative that includes several educational components.

The Building Brains Anywhere Early Learning teams are under a Program Coordinator and include educational supplements as well as early learning initiatives.

All programs are tied to Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (“GELDS”), Georgia Accrediting Commission (“GAC”), and Gwinnett County Academic Knowledge and Skills (“AKS”) standards, as appropriate. To ensure that the standards are met and programming is updated as curriculum and classroom practices change, Building Brains Anywhere has a teacher advisory group that meets quarterly to ensure that the standards are met, and programming aligns with classroom practices.

Building Brains Anywhere also has Administrative Associate II to coordinate the scheduling of school field trips, homeschool programs, and camp registration, plus payment processing for all of these activities.

Building Brains Anywhere programs are offered across the County, and the program is hosted out of the Gwinnett County Environmental Heritage Center (“EHC”). The EHC does not have enough storage space to support all of the programs administered from the site, so Building Brains Anywhere stores materials in a variety of locations throughout the County, which can create logistical challenges and increased windshield time in coordinating all of the needed materials for each scheduled event.

#### *Early Learning Mobile Units*

The Building Brains Anywhere Early Learning Unit is charged with bridging the gap between early learning and kindergarten. This includes literacy, stem activities, letter recognition, as well as information for the parents about engaging with children and use of wording and phrasing when engaging with children. The Early Learning Unit is also responsible for the Gwinnett Reading Exchange and Art Transformations (“G.R.E.A.T.”) Little Minds free little libraries program, which provides 57 freestanding structures with children’s’ books available at no cost to citizens.

#### *Summer programming*

Building Brains Anywhere also develops a variety of week-long summer camp programs that are provided throughout the summer. Currently, the program can accommodate up to 120 participants each week. The Unit is also able to offer one 20-person spring break camp. The programming is designed to be supplemental to AKS standards, but also be relevant and interesting to students, such as art programming, theatre programming, and programming related to pop-culture trends. Different sessions for different age groups are offered each week.

All summer camp participants also get to attend the Treetop Quest as part of their weekly activities.

#### *Afterschool programming*

There is a Program Supervisor who oversees afterschool programming in eight of the Gwinnett County schools. The program plans to expand to four additional programs in the next school year, including one Head Start program.

Each site is staffed with a director, plus several program leaders based on the size of the programs.

Many of the programs are supported by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning’s Childcare and Parent Services (“CAPS”) program, which provides subsidies for the costs of childcare. CAPS has additional compliance requirements and CAPS sites may be subject to additional inspections. CAPS billing is submitted weekly to the state in combination with program reporting.

In addition to administering the afterschool programming, the Program Supervisor is also responsible for all summer programming CAPS compliance and billing oversight.

### *Educational programming*

Educational programming is primarily enrichment activities to support regular classroom or homeschool education. This includes field trip curriculum, homeschool days, and adult field trips and tours at the Environmental Heritage Center as well as some of the County historic sites. Educational programming staff may also provide programming at the parks, such as prehistoric popup and swing into science.

Educational programming staff also supports the afterschool programs, the summer camp programming, tours, reenactments, etc. at parks as appropriate.

Building Brains Anywhere has two subject matter experts who assist in developing the curriculum; one Program Supervisor specializing in history while the other specializes in science.

Most of the educational programming is coordinated from EHC, although some of the events may be provided through the Department's 5 historical sites.

### *Program Marketing, Media, and Outreach*

There are two Sections that are responsible for community engagement through program marketing, media, and outreach efforts – Digital and Traditional.

#### *Digital*

The Digital Engagement Coordinator oversees the Section which is responsible for digital program marketing, media, and outreach. The Digital Coordinator, along with two part-time staff, are responsible for all online listings, marketing, and promotional efforts. This includes maintenance of social media, customer and public engagement and surveys as well as obtaining quotes for promotional material purchases. For some divisions, this Section is responsible for drafting much of the media and promotional messaging. For other divisions, such as Voter Registration and Elections, that Division drafts their own messaging, and the Digital Media Section coordinates with Communications for messaging approval, then provides to the County for dissemination throughout the County's media channels.

Messaging and promotional efforts are managed using a social media calendar, which helps in planning the timing of release, and ensures each message is effective and stays at the top of the page for an appropriate amount of time. Animal Welfare and Enforcement has a contractor who is responsible for adoption-related social media. The Digital Engagement Coordinator drafts materials and sends to the contractor for inclusion on that social media account. Digital Engagement also handles photography and videography for the department, documenting events, locations, and amenities available throughout the County.

The Digital Media Section tracks analytics for all Department digital engagement, including page views, likes and comments, and other relevant engagement data. Responsibilities also include reviewing Department park and facilities listings online, such as Yelp, Google, and TripAdvisor. Staff review the listings for completeness and accuracy of data, such as maps, address, hours, etc. The Section also reviews Google maps, Apple maps, and Waze to help ensure that the directions are accurate for citizens to access the parks.

Staff in this Section collaborate with other divisions to develop and promote surveys to assess customer satisfaction. These surveys are deployed through Survey Monkey as well as Rec1 for program participants who register through Rec1.

This Section is also responsible for processing advertising requests for the InGwinnett magazine and the athletic scoreboards in the parks and recreation facilities throughout the County.

### *Traditional*

The Engagement Manager for the Traditional Section is responsible for traditional media marketing, media, and outreach. This includes signage related to Department facilities and parks throughout the County, as well as flyers, print brochures, promotional items, graphic design, etc. This Section is also responsible for coordinating public relations at events such as ribbon cuttings, ground-breaking and other events at Department parks and facilities.

This Section also oversees the Department website, including working with end-user divisions on content development, creating the banners, galleries, etc. and drafting and publishing news releases.

The Resources and Marketing Specialist within this Section is currently overseeing a comprehensive Parks and Recreation signage update project, ensuring that all signage throughout County parks and recreational facilities are updated to reflect the current branding standards and logos for the County.

End-user divisions can submit requests for materials through Lucity. The Section produces the requested material through Adobe, InDesign, or other similar graphic design programs, and then may use Teams, Outlook, or even hard-copy review and editing with the requestor, as Lucity does not allow for in-system edits and updates. All materials must also go to the County's Communications Department for review and editing. This may include several rounds, as some of the Communications Department changes may impact the intent or meaning of the material, and may also impact some of the logistics of time, location, instruction for enrollment, etc.

The Section has service level agreements for some content development, but there is minimal adherence by end-user divisions in submitting requests in the specified timeframe.

### *Filming and Photography Permits*

The County has a strong demand for the use of parks and recreation facilities for filming and other photography. Coordination of permits, space or facility rental, and liaising with the impacted park or facility, is the responsibility of the Digital Engagement Coordinator.

The County has a filming request application that must be completed, and all requests must be reviewed by the Digital Engagement Coordinator, who works with the requested park or facility to determine if the request can be accommodated, and tracks all issued permits and collected revenue.

### **Communications**

The Deputy Department Director over Community Engagement and Community Collaboration holds meetings every other week with direct reports. The direct reports are responsible for drafting the agendas for these meetings and leading discussions.

The Marketing and Digital Engagement Units both have engagement group meetings each month with other divisions to discuss upcoming activities and events and understand the division's marketing and promotional needs.

The Department hosts monthly communications meetings, with each division providing an update on recently completed activities and upcoming events and activities.



Externally, this Division uses a variety of strategies to promote programs and initiatives with the public. All of the Division coordinates with the Engagement Section to place ads on social media, as well as local magazines to promote the activities, as well as solicit potential sponsors and partners.

Some sections are working to create planning calendars for the entire year, both to ensure timely promotion and time management, but also to provide to other divisions, and to coordinate with the marketing and promotional staff on the production and delivery of needed marketing materials.

Harvest Gwinnett hosts bimonthly Zoom meetings with ambassadors to discuss the community gardens, upcoming planting or harvesting needs, and to collect their input on operations.

There are some challenges with communications, as this Division is responsible for public-facing promotion and outreach. Given the County's process for reviewing and approving all social media postings, the need to respond quickly to provide public updates about event cancellations, inclement weather, or other time-sensitive information can be challenging to provide in a timely manner.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Community Engagement and Community Collaboration's Deputy Department Director is also responsible for coordinating the Safety Committee, which is currently chaired by the Program Supervisor within the Live Healthy Gwinnett Unit. The Safety Committee meets monthly to review safety and workplace injury-related incidents within the Department to determine if the incident was preventable or non-preventable, and decides on disciplinary action, if applicable. The Committee may also review current practices and procedures to determine if additional practices could prevent future incidents from occurring.

Current staffing levels means that all focus is on completing program activities, which limits time for strategic growth, initiative development, and community engagement and outreach about available programs.

The Division is suffering from scope and mission creep. Community Engagement and Community Collaboration has become somewhat of a catch-all for variety of public-facing initiatives throughout the County that may not have obvious homes within other departments or divisions. These initiatives or activities are often added to the workload of existing employees, and there is not consistent assessment of whether the initiatives or programs fit within the larger Gwinnett County mission, may represent a duplication of available resources or programs, nor how these programs will be staffed, funded, and sustained past initial inception and kickoff.

### **Systems and Applications**

In addition to the systems and applications included below, several of the employees within the Division noted challenges with the lack of consistent Wi-Fi availability throughout all County buildings. For events that may be hosted near Gwinnett County buildings, the lack of Wi-Fi may limit the ability to help participants with Rec1 registration for future events, or even offering surveys to assess customer service and programming satisfaction.

Additionally, many of the staff who are often in the field are not assigned smartphones. Several have been provided flip phones, but these are unable to access email or the internet if needed.

## Rec1

Rec1's primary purpose is for use within the Parks and Recreation Division, but it is also used to provide customer surveys for some of the Building Brains Anywhere programming, such as summer camps and afterschool surveys. Rec1 also provides general program overview and schedule information for the programs and activities offered through Building Brains Anywhere.

Rec1 is used to maintain activity and program listing for several divisions within the Department. The information cannot be exported directly into content development for aggregated promotional material, such as the County Calendar and InGwinnett, so the Digital Media Unit must manually duplicate this information to provide comprehensive updates.

## CERVIS

CERVIS is a volunteer management software that allows Volunteer Gwinnett to create and promote a variety of volunteering opportunities throughout the County. CERVIS also allows volunteers to create individual profiles, designating their skills and interests, and allows them to register for specific volunteering opportunities, or ask questions of the department offering the opportunity.

The Collaboration Manager over Volunteer Gwinnett is the CERVIS system administrator and responsible for creating and managing all user accounts, and ensuring that the correct inputs are created to capture all necessary information.

## Lucity

The Division predominantly uses Lucity to track all marketing and promotional material requests for the Community Collaboration Section. Currently, Lucity does not include any recurring or regularly occurring work orders. Lucity is also limited in that it doesn't allow for attachments of graphics and other files in progress, to allow for live editing and workflow management, which may require external email chains in addition to the Lucity work order.

Lucity can track time for short-term projects, but can be challenging to use for tracking time related to extended projects that may stretch over weeks or months.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Department of Community Services collects a large volume of data points and regularly reports on these data points to the Board of Commissioners. The Community Engagement and Community Collaboration Division supplies many data points related to outputs. Given that many of the Division's initiatives are related to intervention and health promotion activities, it can be challenging to develop and use outcome-based analysis, as there are multiple programs and partners contributing to these efforts, as well as external factors which may impact overall results.

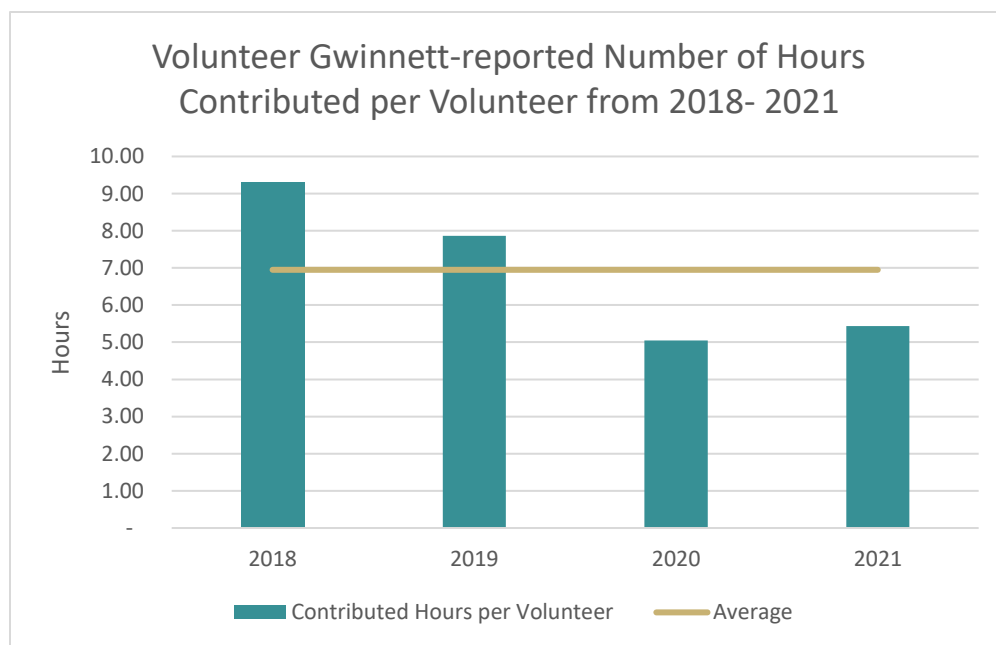
What seems to be missing from the current data collection is consistent feedback from the communities throughout the County, to ensure that the programs and activities are meeting the needs of these communities and approaching them with the correct strategy and activities. The Division notes many anecdotal stories of the impact, which are important and valid reporting points, but these anecdotal stories do not represent consistent assessment or demonstration of how the programs are designed and updated to ensure they are relevant to the communities' needs.

## Food Distribution

Food distribution programs, which have been housed in both Parks and Recreation and Community Engagement and Community Collaboration over the past few years, represent a significant effort and output on the part of the Department. As there are a variety of initiatives that distribute food, there are multiple data points related to food and meal distribution. Some of the data points collected are more concrete, such as the number of pounds of food harvested and donated from the community gardens. Others, such as mobile food distribution programs, are reliant on recipient self-reporting of number of households and household sizes, which are then combined and reported. While these numbers still provide important data about the need for and response to the program, they should be leveraged in combination with other data, such as pickup location, time of day and day of the week, to provide more comprehensive understanding of program impact, and use of data to strategically plan for future events.

## Volunteer Gwinnett

Volunteer Gwinnett uses CERVIS to track several data points, including the number of volunteers, the number of volunteer events, and the number of volunteer event registrations events each year. On average, between 2018 and 2021, each volunteer contributed 7 hours of service annually, as demonstrated in the following table.

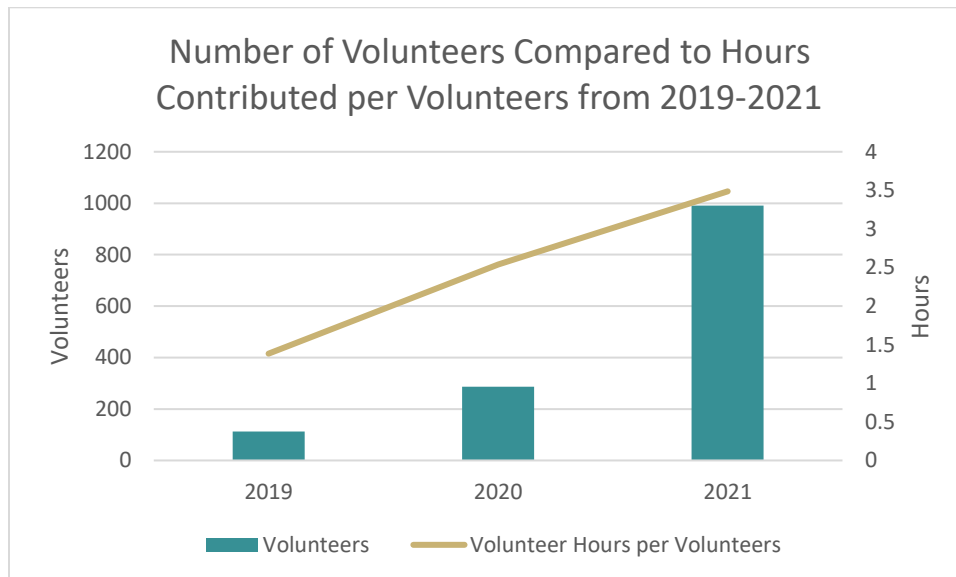


Longer term, it may be beneficial to start tracking sustained engagement of volunteers, to determine if they enjoyed or appreciated the volunteer activity and choose to support additional activities. If there is a significant decline in repeat volunteers, there may be value in obtaining volunteer feedback to understand the cause of the decline. Conversely, if there is an increase or sustained repeat volunteer count, it may be beneficial to gain feedback about what types of activities or engagement helped impact that data point.

## Live Healthy Gwinnett

Live Healthy Gwinnett tracks 11 different data points annually to provide a comprehensive depiction of the Section’s activities for each year. Data metrics collected help the Section understand the use of volunteers and interns, the management and development of partnerships and relationships, and the community impact, through programs, classes and events – both those hosted by Live Healthy Gwinnett as well as those hosted by partners where Live Healthy Gwinnett was invited to participate.

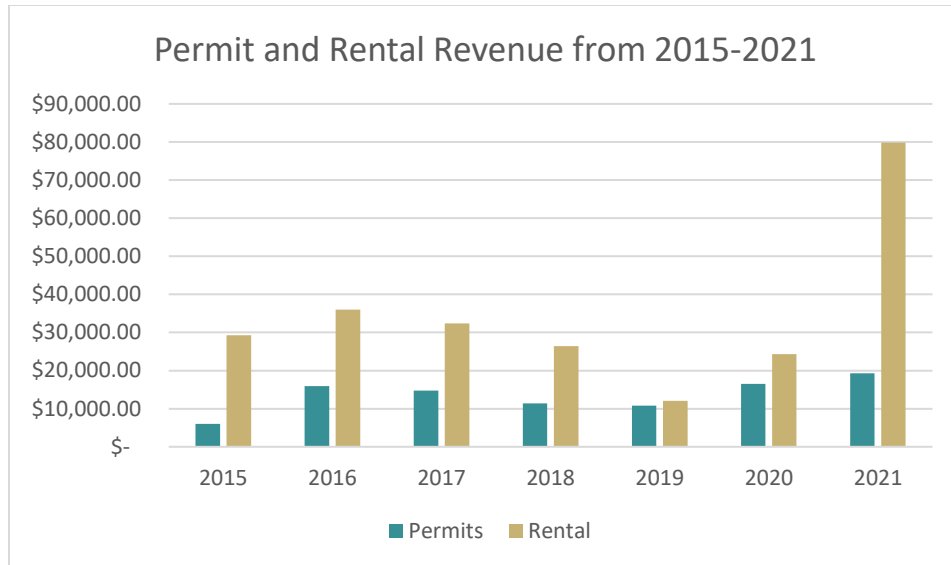
As noted in the following table, Live Healthy Gwinnett saw a significant increase in the number of volunteers and interns for 2021.



As noted for Volunteer Gwinnett, Live Healthy Gwinnett collects data on the number of volunteers and volunteer hours, as well as event participation counts. There is neither proactive engagement with the communities served to understand their needs, nor consistent feedback from these communities about the events or their relevance to the communities. Anecdotal data suggests that there is a high value and appreciation for the events, and there is high external demand for Be Active Gwinnett programming, but nothing formal that could be used to understand the staffing needs for sustaining the current programs, nor for potential program growth needs relative to demand and interest in programming. More data could be collected and analyzed to understand the requests for programming, the number or percent of programming requests that were eligible or appropriate programming opportunities, and the number of eligible/appropriate programming requests that were fulfilled with current staffing levels. Data around demand should be used by Department and County leadership to make decisions about program sustainability and potential growth or expansion.

## Filming and Photography Permitting

The Digital Engagement Coordinator tracks information about the dates, locations, and revenue generated from filming permits and rentals. The following table illustrates the annual revenue for both permits and rentals from 2015 through 2021. Within this period, the Department has averaged a little over \$48,000 in revenue annually.



### Building Brains Anywhere

Building Brains Anywhere tracks many output measures on the programs and activities offered including:

- Early Learning Programs Offered
- Field Trips
- Virtual Learning Impacts
- G.R.E.A.T Little Minds book placement

As with several other data points collected by the Division, additional context would be beneficial to placing these data points within a broader framework. Assessing the number of books placed relative to the County’s population within the targeted age range, for example, provides better context for the potential impact of the program.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** A number of sections and units collect information on the use of volunteers and volunteer hours. There appear to be several sections or units that are heavily reliant on volunteer labor to subsidize an undersized workforce, such as Live Healthy Gwinnett. This reliance on volunteer and intern workforce may limit the program’s growth and adds an additional level of oversight and time management to current program staff.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should regularly review and assess volunteer hours, to determine if additional program staff would allow for program expansion, or more strategic development of program efforts, partnerships, and activities.

If additional program staff is not a strategic priority for the County, the Department should consider creating volunteer management and coordination positions within each Unit, or consider reevaluating workload for current staff to reflect the time needed for program management and volunteer/intern oversight.

**Observation 2:** This Division is primarily a community service oriented and public-facing component of the Department. As such, it is subject to lots of requests for additional support, participation, and engagement in community activities. This has resulted in mission expansion and mission creep throughout the Division, with staff being pulled in a variety of different directions to provide needed or desired community services. Mission creep has led to stretched resources and overextended staff.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division needs to work with County leadership to create a refined and clearly defined mission and scope for the staff and programs within the Division. Staff workload should be evaluated on a regular basis, and either supplemented with additional staff and resources for new or expanded programming, or the County needs to develop a process for the Division to refer requests to other departments or community resources to assist in meeting resident needs.

The Division also needs to create a formal planning and program launch process, to ensure that all program logistics and needs are developed in advance of program kickoff. This should include staffing, equipment, materials, consumables, media and other promotional materials. Program or project success should be defined at the beginning of the program/project, and the Division should ensure that baseline data is identified and measures, so that program outputs or outcomes may be assessed.

**Observation 3:** Currently, CAPS compliance oversight and reporting to DECAL is the responsibility of the Program Supervisor who oversees the Division's Building Brains Anywhere afterschool programming. CAPS programs extend to summer programming and require time to inspect a variety of sites to ensure compliance with CAPS requirements.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should consider moving CAPS compliance oversight and reporting into the Business Management and Technology Services Division, as this division has already assumed responsibility for grants management and reporting assistance. Separately, the Department should consider assigning the Program Analyst over grants support to assist the Program Supervisor in preparing and submitting these reports.

**Observation 4:** While program media, marketing, and outreach is officially organized into digital and traditional media, the website is currently managed by the traditional media section. This may create confusion and overlap in responsibilities, as the Digital Engagement Coordinator tracks the digital engagement analytics, but has no ability to change practices to impact these analytics.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should move website management under the Digital Engagement Coordinator, and provide staffing to support this function. When marketing or promotional material is developed for use in both digital and traditional efforts, the Division should have a clear process for collaboration on developing and implementing these efforts.

**Observation 5:** The Division collects a large volume of data, but doesn't always provide appropriate context for the data, which means that some data points are not meaningful as independent data points.

Additionally, the Division does not consistently collect feedback from the communities where many programs and activities occur. While the Division collects and provides anecdotal stories about service impacts, they do not provide consistent demonstration to support the need for the programs, or the potential for expansion or growth.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments. The County may want to consider conducting process evaluations, to ensure that the methods and approaches are appropriate for the communities being served.

The Division should also assess the data points currently being collected, to ensure that the data being collected is value-add and assists in program development or performance assessment.

## 3.A.4 Department of Community Services – Health and Human Services Division

The State’s Division of Aging Services provides assistance to older Georgians to help them live safely, healthily, and independently in their homes and communities. The State’s Home and Community Based Services program is mandated through the Older Americans Act which assists individuals age 60 and older and their caregivers. The State contracts with 12 Area Agencies on Aging (“AAA”), to regionally manage the program and provide case management.

The Atlanta Regional Commission’s (“ARC”) Aging Division administers Older Americans Act services for Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties. Gwinnett County’s Health and Human Services Division works closely with the ARC to deliver Older Americans Act services to the eligible users within the County.

The Health and Human Services Division partners with various County and community organizations to provide and connect service opportunities that are designed to improve the health and well-being of County citizens and stakeholders. The Division operates three Senior Centers and three combined Senior/One Stop centers. One Stop centers are locations that house multiple service organizations (County and external to the County) in a single building or complex designed to provide varying services at a single location.

### Key Functions

The Health and Human Services Division maintains the following key functions:

- Senior Services
- Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center Operations
- OneStop 4 Help

### Senior Services

The Senior Services Section provides support and connects Gwinnett County seniors’, age 60 and older to resources and opportunities that help improve health and well-being. The services provided are either free or low-cost dependent on eligibility criteria. The Division provides Senior Services through coordination with ARC – the regional administrator for the Older Americans Act. The ARC performs annual monitoring of the Division’s Senior Services.

Seniors must apply for the services and are placed on a wait list, however, seniors facing economic need, social need, or fragility/institutional risk may receive priority first. Once the application has been placed, a Care Manager will conduct an assessment to evaluate the applicant’s situation and needs. The Care Manager will then proceed, based on the assessment, to make an individualized care plan and provide available services. Senior Services offers and provides the following core programs/services:

- Care Management
- Transportation
- In Home Services
- Food Services



### *Care Management*

The Care Management Team acts as intake and case managers for the Division's services offered to seniors. Care Management is the first step to receiving Senior Services through the application process. Care Management is led by a Program Specialist who oversees seven positions including Care Managers, a Referral Specialist, and a Clerk. Care Managers, who determine eligible individuals' needs for services, support, and resources help develop a care plan that is tailored to each senior's needs and eligibility. Care Managers conduct an initial assessment that collects information to evaluate the seniors' situation, functioning, and needs. Care Managers reassess the care plans after 60 days and at least annually to provide ongoing service evaluation. Responsibilities for Care Managers include:

- Assessing applicant's needs and eligibility
- Developing individualized care plans
- Building and strengthening clients' family and community support
- Educating and supporting seniors' and caregiver(s)
- Enabling seniors to remain in the most appropriate and safest environment
- Identifying and enhancing seniors' knowledge, skills, and assets
- Increasing and improving their access to and quality of service
- Helping to maintain seniors' independence and dignity

The Care Management Team utilizes WellSky DAS, which is the State's case management system for documenting assessments, creating individual care plans, and ongoing monitoring. When applications are received, Care Managers assess the needs, living environments, and risks of the applying seniors based on the applications and conversations. Due to COVID, Care Managers have been performing their roles in a remote environment. Care Managers began offering in-person meetings again July 1, 2022.

When Care Managers review received applications and speak with the applicants, the Care Managers make a determination as to whether the applicant needs Tier 1 (more immediate services) or Tier 2 (less urgent services relatively speaking). There is currently a waiting list for Tier 2 services that can extend to multiple years. Care Managers perform many functions similar to social workers, and generally speaking, social workers often have very heavy case loads not allowing for consistent diligent management of cases. As part of this Assessment, we did not assess workload and performance of Care Managers, but based on numerous interviews, Division personnel cited the need for additional Care Managers. With the average human lifespan increasing, the mental and financial impacts of COVID on individuals, and the current wait list for services, it is reasonable to conclude that additional Care Manager and/or direct service provider positions within the Division would assist the Division in keeping up with demand.

### *Transportation*

The Transportation Team provides transportation services to seniors and disabled adults, 18 and older for medical appointments, therapy sessions, and/or health-indicated treatments. The Transportation Team is led by a Program Specialist who oversees six positions that focus on the administration and management of transportation contractors used by the County. The Transportation Team oversees third-party vendors or contractors who maintain formal County contracts to provide Division-related transportation services to seniors and disabled adults. Currently, all transportation services are outsourced through contractors with user rates either being mileage-based or income-based cost share. Transportation services include Assisted and Unassisted services.

Assisted transportation provides services to eligible users who need assistance to and from the vehicle. Participants receive door-through-door transportation for either scheduled non-emergency medical appointments or non-medical activities. The fee for Assisted transportation is based on mileage.

Unassisted transportation provides services to eligible users who do not need assistance to and from the vehicle. Users receive curb-to-curb transportation within Gwinnett County for scheduled non-emergency medical appointments. The fee for Unassisted transportation is based on an income-based cost share.

### *In Home Services*

The In Home Services Team is responsible for providing Homemaking, Caregiving, and Respite services to seniors either on a fee basis or for free depending on eligibility. The Team helps to coordinate basic cleanliness, care, and caregiver relief services to help enhance the home environment and quality of life. The Team is led by a Program Specialist with the support of a Care Manager and two Adult Daycare Associates. In addition to County employees, the Program Specialist manages two contract agencies that provide multiple workers for Caregiving and Respite services. The contracted workers consist of Certified Nursing Assistants. During multiple interviews it was noted that the contractors were having difficulty in keeping up with the demand for services.

Seniors receive up to four hours of temporary relief services a week, dependent on their specific care plan. Clients pay an income-based cost share for the services.

The two County Adult Daycare Associates provide Homemaking services to seniors who cannot fully care for themselves which consists of light housekeeping and basic home management assistance. Clients pay an income-based cost share.

Contract agencies provide the Caregiving services which consists of light housekeeping, bathing, personal care, simple meal preparation, and social/leisure activities. Contract agencies also provide the Respite services which consists of temporary accompaniment and supervision so the primary caregiver can be temporarily relieved.

### *Food Services*

The Food Services Team is responsible for preparing and providing home delivered meals to eligible seniors. The Team leverages County employees and volunteers for the work and does not leverage third-party professionals for service delivery. Food Services is led by a Program Coordinator who oversees 13 positions including a Program Leader, a Supervisor, five Drivers, and six Cooks. Food Services also leverages part time temporary Cook positions as needed. The Food Services Team provides services to homebound, ill, or incapacitated seniors who cannot prepare their own meals. Participants receive up to five days of nutritious frozen meals that are dietitian approved.

The Team accepts special requests such as dietary restrictions and/or food allergies. The Team maintains an impressive meal preparation infrastructure consisting of industrial freezers, food storage areas, meal preparation stations, and meal assembly so that all meals can be packaged and frozen. Food is prepared and delivered to seniors' residences for up to 5 days per week. Meals are also prepared and delivered to the County's Senior Centers.

During fieldwork, we observed a formal system for maintaining inventory, preparing meals, addressing specific dietary needs, and delivery of the right meals to the right location. Clients are not required to pay for the meals, but may give contributions for the services.

### Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center Operations

The County operates two Senior Centers – Lawrenceville Senior Center, and Snellville Senior Center; and three combined Senior/One Stop Centers – Buford One Stop/Senior Center, Centerville One Stop/Senior Center, and Norcross One Stop/Senior Center. Each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center is led by a Program Supervisor or Program Specialist. The one exception is the Snellville Senior Center, which operates as a satellite center and has limited hours.

Each Senior Center or One Stop/Senior Center has numerous positions based on size and the service levels for each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center. The positions at each Senior Center and One Stop/Senior Center varies, but include Specialists, Program Leaders, Program Supervisors, Program Assistants, Recreation Leaders, Facility Assistants, Clerks, and Cooks.

### Senior Centers

The County operates Senior Centers in Buford, Centerville, Lawrenceville, Norcross and Snellville. Seniors must apply to become participants for each Center’s programming. Each Senior Center provides services and activities that support independence, quality of life, and socialization. Transportation is provided to and from the Senior Centers (based on eligibility), breakfast and lunch, and individual counseling. Numerous activities offered throughout the Senior Centers include educational and fitness classes, arts and crafts, recreational events, volunteering opportunities, day trips, and basic haircutting.

During fieldwork, we observed welcoming, comfortable, and clean environments with numerous seniors who appeared to be enjoying themselves socializing with among themselves with regular, personable interactions with staff.

### One Stop/Senior Centers

The County operates combined One Stop/Senior Centers in Buford, Centerville, and Norcross. The One Stop/Senior Centers offer are locations that house multiple service organizations (County and external to the County) in a single building or complex designed to provide varying services at a single location.

The Buford One Stop/Senior Center houses the Buford Senior Center, Buford Health Center (which is currently offering only Women, Infants, and Children [“WIC”]), and View Point Health (a community behavioral health center).

The Centerville One Stop/Senior Center houses the Centerville Senior Center and the County Public Library – Centerville branch.

The Norcross One Stop/Senior Center houses the Norcross Senior Center, Ninth District Opportunity Head Start/Pre-K, Norcross Health Center, Norcross Tag Office, and View Point Health (a community behavioral health center). The Norcross Health Center offers the following services:

- Child Immunizations
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Dental Care
- Children 1st
- School Screenings
- Teen Services
- Family Planning
- DNA/Lab Tests
- Pregnancy and Prenatal Related Services

- Mammograms/Services for Women over 40
- Cancer Screening
- Travel Immunizations
- Adult Immunizations
- STD Testing, Treatment and Follow-up
- TB Testing and Treatment
- Disease Testing and Counseling
- Environmental Health Services

Generally speaking, “One Stop” centers offer multiple services around a specific citizen need such as health or employment. The County’s One Stop centers include multiple citizen services that include County services and services provided by organizations outside the County, and services that are not necessarily connected to each other (i.e. – health services and motor vehicle services). The County’s One Stop Centers offer multiple services at a single location, but may or may not be beneficial to County citizens for single visits. There is also not integration among all services offered at the One Stop Centers as the services are provided by both the County and non-County organizations with distinct systems and processes.

#### OneStop 4 Help

The OneStop 4 Help is a new County program designed to guide residents to find the appropriate agency to assist with various services. The program serves all County residents. The purpose of the program is to help residents better navigate administrative processes to find and acquire resources, services, and assistance from nonprofits and other charitable organizations. COVID was a major factor in launching the OneStop 4 Help initiative as leadership recognized the increased need to support citizens from health and financial perspectives.

OneStop 4 Help is led by a Project Coordinator who oversees four Community Navigator positions located in various One Stop/Senior Centers, and one Program Analyst who supports the OneStop 4 Help program.

The Community Navigator positions work directly with residents requesting assistance to help provide resources and “navigate the system”. The Community Navigators provide requesting residents with the contact and program information for the community organization(s) who can likely serve their needs and the related processes for obtaining services. Offered assistance includes areas related to employment, food, housing and shelter, income support, legal consultation, mental and behavioral health, substance use, transportation, and utilities.

The Community Navigator positions help locate agencies that can assist with food security, homelessness, emergency housing, utility and rental assistance, and other social needs. The Project Coordinator also oversees one Program Analyst who supports the OneStop 4 Help program.

The Project Coordinator collects and assesses program data in Microsoft Excel.

Residents requesting assistance can complete an application online, call a Community Navigator, or visit a Community Navigator at one of the One Stop/Senior Centers.

## Communications

Weekly meetings are held between the Division Deputy Director and Division management to discuss key events, planned activities, and notable County changes that may impact Division operations. Based on fieldwork, there was an inconsistent understanding of how the new OneStop 4 Help program would operationalize its objectives and how the program would relate or interact with already established Division operations.

Also, much of the Division's organization is aligned by physical location and employees expressed a lack of awareness of operations at other locations besides the location for which they work. Holding weekly management meetings is a strong practice, and can be used as an opportunity to enhance cross-location/cross functional communications and awareness.

Further down the organizational chart to front-line staff, communications feel more informal; either information is shared via word-of-mouth between employees and sections, or there are impersonal mass emails that often lack context or detailed information. Front-line staff feel that many decisions are made without engaging them or soliciting their input on how decisions may impact their workload, or without discussion about the impetus for decision-making or changes to existing processes.

Front-line staff also feel that information shared isn't making it all the way back up to Departmental leadership, which discourages them from sharing ideas, input, or concerns.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division's newly implemented OneStop 4 Help program has a strong mission and can positively impact numerous lives by bringing available services to the attention of in-need residents and helping to secure those services. As the program is fairly new, it is difficult to measure the program's success. The Division should formalize the program's specific functions and educate all Divisional staff about the program's intent and methods. As the program continues, the Division should develop formal performance measures and outcomes to effectively assess program performance and alter delivery methods as needed. The Division should also enhance internal and external awareness of the OneStop 4 Help program so that service offerings can be communicated by County staff and understood by potential users. The Division should collaborate with other County departments and proactively seek out potential program users as many potential users may not have readily available access to a computer, telephone, or transportation.

The County's existing Senior Centers were impressive from environmental, service offering, and staff engagement perspectives. The County has clearly strategically invested in the infrastructure and programming for Senior Centers.

## Systems and Applications

### WellSky DAS

The primary system used by the Division is the WellSky DAS case management system. WellSky DAS is the State Division of Aging's case management system for use by local administrators of Older Americans Act programs.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division collects and reports numerous data points to the ARC, most of which are output measures (number of people served, number of meals prepared, etc.). The Division is certainly providing valuable services to County residents and serving a large population, but with the current data that is being tracked, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the services. The Division should better define, track, and assess outcome measures to help determine service effectiveness and actual outcomes. As an example for the Division's new OneStop 4 Help program, the program should not only assess the number of users assisted, but also seek to understand how many users successfully received new services, what impact did the new services have on the user, and correlations to other data points such as decline in homelessness or other undesirable situations.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** There is currently a waiting list for Division senior services that can extend to multiple years. With the average human lifespan increasing, the mental and financial impacts of COVID on individuals, and the current wait list for services, it is reasonable to conclude that additional Care Manager and/or direct service provider positions within the Division would assist the Division in keeping up with demand.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should assess the need for additional Care Manager and direct senior service positions to create an environment where there is no wait list for senior services, or at least reduce the length of time before eligible seniors can begin to receive all eligible services.

**Observation 2:** The majority of In Home services are provided by contractors. During multiple interviews it was noted that the contractors were having difficulties keeping up with the demand.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should ensure that formal vendor performance evaluations are conducted to provide formal feedback to the vendors and help ensure that the expected service levels are being performed. The Division should also consider a formal open procurement to potentially alter or enhance the current contracted service providers.

**Observation 3:** Generally speaking, "One Stop" centers offer multiple services around a specific citizen need such as health or employment. The County's One Stop centers include multiple citizen services that include County services and services provided by organizations outside the County, and services that are not necessarily connected to each other (i.e. – health services and motor vehicle services). The County's One Stop Centers offer multiple services at a single location, but may or may not be beneficial to County citizens for single visits. There is also not integration among all services offered at the One Stop Centers as the services are provided by both the County and non-County organizations with distinct systems and processes.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should seek to better integrate existing services provided at One Stop Centers and seek to enhance the co-location of similar services.

**Observation 4:** The Division's newly implemented OneStop 4 Help program has a strong mission and can positively impact numerous lives by bringing available services to the attention of in-need residents and helping to secure those services.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should formalize the OneStop 4 Help program’s specific functions and educate all Divisional staff about the program’s intent and methods. As the program continues, the Division should develop formal performance measures and outcomes to effectively assess program performance and alter delivery methods as needed. The Division should also enhance internal and external awareness of the OneStop 4 Help program so that service offerings can be communicated by County staff and understood by potential users. The Division should collaborate with other County departments and proactively seek out potential program users as many potential users may not have readily available access to a computer, telephone, or transportation.

**Observation 5:** The OneStop 4 Help Project Coordinator collects and assesses program data in Microsoft Excel.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should evaluate options for more formal data tracking and analysis tools for the OneStop 4 Help program.

**Observation 6:** The Division’s focus is primarily on seniors and disabled adults.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should consider opportunities to expand its service offerings to a broader population as fiscally and operationally possible.

## 3.A.5 Department of Community Services – Parks and Recreation Division

Parks and Recreation oversees the County’s recreation programs, including athletics, aquatics, camps, recreation classes, and other programming. The Division also oversees parks maintenance, facility rentals, and project administration for new construction and renovation projects.

### Key Functions

Parks and Recreation maintains several key functions, including:

- Lucity System Administration
- Aquatics
- Parks Maintenance
- Volunteer Management
- Recreation
- Trails and Natural Resource Management
- Recreation Set Asides
- Environmental Heritage Center Management
- Capital Project Administration

### Lucity System Administration

The IT Services Team (“Team”) is responsible for administering the Lucity enterprise asset management system is housed within the Parks and Recreation Division. Lucity has been configured to meet a variety of the Department’s needs, providing expanded value to the Department and minimizing the number of duplicate or disparate systems that employees must navigate.

Work management is the current primary function of the system, with use for work orders related to maintenance and repairs needed throughout the Department. Parks and Recreation is the primary system user, although other divisions, such as Community Engagement and Collaboration, use Lucity for marketing work orders.

Currently, Lucity is also being used for:

- Uniform ordering
- Warehouse material requests
- Marketing project work orders
- Documenting playground inspections
- Recording in-house training classes and materials
- General park inspections results

The Team is also working towards leveraging Lucity for more formalized asset management, including preventive maintenance and inventory security functions. Currently, assets are tracked at the “park” level, rather than at the individual asset level. The Team is working to individually label assets such as courts, fences, water fountains, utility valves, etc. Playgrounds, and their associated flooring, are currently the only individual asset being tracked, inspected, and maintained through Lucity.



IT Services is responsible for user administration and system management, as well as GIS for the Department. The Team's GIS Associate enters all GIS updates, creates maps for Division and County use, performs field-level mapping, and is responsible for connecting Lucity information with the ArcGIS database. The GIS Associate also provides GIS and mapping-specific classes for Division staff.

The IT Associates are responsible for reviewing supporting end-users and maintaining employee records in the system. The workload is currently split with one IT Associate responsible for Lucity training and employee records management. The other IT Associate is responsible for front-end user technical support and quality control reviews of work order entries.

Lucity currently has limited capability for detailed tracking. Part of the limitation is based on the system-level details available to identify and categorize the work being performed. The second limitation is the lack of field technology for grounds maintenance and trades staff. These staff have access to a single computer at their primary location, and no tablets or cell phones for in-field access to work orders, so Lucity entry is reliant on either memory or handwritten notes taken during the day and manually transferred to Lucity.

### Aquatics

The County currently has 17 pools and two splash pads spread across nine County facilities. Five of these facilities are year-round, with others offering seasonal availability. Each seasonal pool is paired with a fulltime "sister" pool. The Aquatics Section is responsible for providing lifeguards and operational staff for all of these pools and splash pads. There are two Program Coordinators, with each assigned oversight for several of the facilities. In addition, each Program Coordinator has a specialized role: one oversees training, and the other oversees recruitment and retention efforts. Each full-time facility has a minimum of a Supervisor, a Recreation Leader, and a Grounds Maintenance Associate II. Seasonal facilities only have part-time staff. The Grounds Maintenance Associate is responsible for checking chemical levels in the pools, vacuuming, and providing other general custodial and maintenance-related needs for and around the pools. For more complex maintenance or repairs, Aquatics coordinates with the Support Services Unit.

The pools offer instructional classes and leisure swim periods.

All Aquatics staff receive Red Cross and other training; this training is provided to staff at no cost by the County. Each summer the County hosts an annual recertification training for all part-time and full-time staff, to ensure that they are recertified annually and up-to-date on all certifications and training standards.

Aquatics facilities receive state inspections, health department inspections, as well as annual permit inspections. All facilities also receive weekly and monthly inspections for items such as equipment status, safety reviews, and chemical inventories.

Aquatics also offers a wooden nickel program, to help boost morale and recognize good work amongst the staff. Staff may be awarded a wooden nickel based on performance. These wooden nickels can be exchanged for lanyards, shirts, or other Aquatics-branded items.

## Parks Maintenance

For both Grounds Maintenance and Support Services, vehicles and equipment are an ongoing problem that impacts productivity. Staff are losing time transporting vehicles and equipment to the Support Service Department's Fleet Management Division ("Fleet"), plus extended downtime at Fleet results in challenges to perform work without the needed equipment readily available.

Skilled trades staff are renting equipment, such as excavators, to supplement County-owned equipment that is "stuck" at Fleet.

As the Division doesn't currently have much of an inventory of "backup" or "loaner" equipment and vehicles, there are often trade-offs and lots of transporting equipment between locations based on who has the most urgent needs.

Unit coordinators are also responsible for carrying the emergency cell phone and serving in an on-call capacity. Park facility staff may call the emergency number on evenings and weekends. Given the expectation that staff cannot earn overtime, coordinators often automatically call the on-demand contractors to resolve the issues. There are also noted issues with site staff contacting the emergency line for non-emergency issues that don't have to be resolved before business hours.

## Grounds Maintenance

Within the Parks Maintenance Section, Grounds Maintenance Unit crews are assigned to one of four districts, with each crew assigned one or more parks within the district. Each crew is supervised by a Foreman or Senior Foreman, and each district is overseen by a Coordinator. Given current staffing constraints, there are also roving Grounds Maintenance Associates ("GMAs") to support the workload, as needed, throughout the County, rather than being assigned to a specific park.

Each park is assigned the same allocation of equipment, which may not adequately represent the needs of the various sizes and utilization of the parks. The Division used to have an Equipment Committee, which reviewed each location's needs for equipment, as well as skilled trade needs for equipment and evaluate the need and justification from the requesting unit. The Equipment Committee does not currently exist.

The Grounds Maintenance Unit is responsible for the groundskeeping across all of the Department's parks and athletic fields. Grounds Maintenance is also responsible for janitorial services, such as picking up trash and cleaning bathrooms at the parks and athletic fields. In addition, responsibilities include grass-cutting, weed-eating and edging, leaf and limb removal, trash and litter pickup, and general repair duties.

The County leverages contractors that support mowing, edging, and blowing of more general areas, as well as inmate work crews that support mowing, edging and similar activities. Typically, County staff are responsible for parks that require staffing, as well as many of the sports fields.

Each park crew has an informal weekly schedule for mowing, general maintenance, and other activities, but this is largely dependent on the weather and the ability to access the fields for mowing. The Unit is also provided a copy of the athletics schedule at the beginning of each program's season. The Athletics Associations will, either directly or through the Recreation Section, reach out with one-off or immediate needs for field preparation. There is not currently a formal process for communicating these changes in a timely manner.

Foremen are “working” foremen and contribute to the daily maintenance of the parks, in addition to ensuring all Lucity work orders are entered and accurate. Given staffing issues, foremen may be over parks they aren’t familiar with, which can cause some maintenance challenges, and operational challenges. There also feels like a disconnect in expectations from Department senior leadership: Lucity entry can take time away from completing the workload, but there is an expectation that Lucity data is needed to justify the need for more staff. This is exacerbated by the lack of technology that can be used in the field to encourage real-time entry.

The Grounds Maintenance Section is also responsible for pavilion rentals. There is a checklist of activities that need to be completed between rentals, such as removing all trash from the area after a rental, blowing out the space, cleaning the grills, and cleaning and replenishing the nearby restroom facilities as needed. As there is no standard for pavilion rental times, this can be challenging to manage, especially in parks with multiple pavilions. For many events, the time allotted between rentals is inadequate to complete the transition, as many renters stay beyond their allotted time, other visitors to the park may attempt to use the park during that “free” period, and the next rental often arrives early to start setting up the space before their scheduled rental time. To support this additional work, the Section uses Recreation Park Attendants (“RPAs”), part-time workers who only work on weekends to assist with resetting pavilions between rentals. As the weekends are some of the highest utilization times for the parks, the RPAs are not often able to help with other grounds maintenance functions, such as grass cutting or edging.

#### *Support Services: Facilities and Trades-Specific Maintenance*

Within the Parks and Recreation Division, there is a Support Services Unit that provides skilled trades support, as well as manages the warehouse for the Department. The Warehouse predominantly stocks supplies and materials for Parks and Recreation, but also coordinates uniform ordering, and serves as a secondary storage point for material donated to the G.R.E.A.T Little Minds Library program administered by Building Brains Anywhere. The Warehouse also delivers fuel to grounds maintenance throughout the County, as well as picks up mail and marketing material from GJAC. Currently, the warehouse is hindered by the extended delays in receiving vehicles back from Fleet for routine maintenance.

There have been numerous issues with uniform orders; staff interviewed noted that orders were placed in February to early March for summer uniforms that had not yet arrived. In other instances, staff noted inconsistencies in fabric, and sizing issues which resulted in uniforms that could not be worn, even though employees ordered the same size as previously ordered.

For warehouse orders, a requester enters the needed supplies and materials into Lucity. The orders must get approval up through the Coordinator-level for grounds maintenance staff. Warehouse staff must enter all requests into SAP to ensure tracking through the official inventory management system.

Skilled trades include construction, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, aquatics/pool maintenance, and HVAC support. Due to unfilled and reallocated positions, many of the skilled trades are also assigned a secondary skilled trade to support, such as carpentry supporting locksmithing needs, and plumbing maintaining the irrigation systems. Most of the skilled trades also have on-call contractors to support the workload. Currently, much of the Unit’s workload is reactive and corrective. There isn’t strategic asset management and preventive maintenance scheduling. Where preventive maintenance schedules exist, current staffing levels and windshield time between sites make it challenging to keep up. Additionally, staff do not have access to Lucity in the field, and don’t have access to County phones, so it can be challenging to coordinate PMs with corrective maintenance efforts.

Currently, contractors are used for larger projects as well as called in when the required work would potentially make the Trades Technicians eligible for overtime, which isn't budgeted for and prevented where possible. Currently, staff who work longer than scheduled on any given day must take time off later in the week to avoid earning overtime. This expectation to not accrue overtime can make it challenging to respond to emergency repairs and maintenance needs. Contracts are awarded based on lowest bid, and contracts in use within the Division are leveraging contracts initially awarded by other County departments, which may not always reflect the needs of this Department and Division.

As Lucy has not transitioned to a comprehensive asset management system, Trades Technicians often have to refer to physical plans in the Park Operations Center, which costs windshield time to drive over and review the plans in order to create a plan for maintenance and repairs.

### Volunteer Management

The Volunteer Management Section is responsible for coordinating volunteer workdays within the parks, as well as community service volunteering, and creating other public education and community science programming, such as bird walks.

Many of the volunteer opportunities center around natural resource management where possible, such as trail management, mulching, invasive species management, and pollinator plantings. The Section tries to schedule between four and six workdays each month, while still leaving room for interested community groups to request additional workdays in parks near them or for projects of particular interest.

This Section also serves as the liaison for Eagle Scout service projects. Interested Eagle Scout candidates can contact the Section to register for service project consideration. The Program Leader in the Section will assign a park to the interested Eagle Scout candidate and provide general oversight to ensure the project is moving forward and appropriate for the park.

For residents who need community service volunteer hours, they must register in the Section's office and complete forms requesting placement within the parks. The Program Coordinator reviews all applications to determine if the individual and their charges are an appropriate fit for assignment to work in the parks.

### Recreation

#### *Athletics*

The County has a variety of athletic fields throughout its facilities, including natural grass, paved courts, and artificial turf. The County does not officially host or manage any of the athletic leagues or tournaments that play within the County's parks; these are hosted by athletic associations. Athletic associations have agreements that govern their relationship with the County. The current agreements are typically for twelve-month periods, with additional renewals available. The agreements do not contemplate any corrective actions other than termination, which may cause issues with enforceability of requirements related to operations, maintenance, and improvements. There are currently more than 30 active athletic associations across the County's sports fields and courts. Many sports fields are priority-reserved for use by the athletic association, with some fields closed except for athletic association use; the Division Director over Parks and Recreation is working to establish open access fields at each park.

### *Facilities and Programming*

Many of the County parks also have facilities, such as gyms, community centers, and/or activity buildings. These buildings are managed by Program Supervisors assigned to each site. These facilities may be rented, as noted below, and are also used for community programming, summer day camps, and other events.

Some of the parks also have contracted camps that are hosted at Department facilities. Staff may also assist in coordinating and administering camps put on by the youth athletic associations.

Several of the facilities are also currently being utilized as voting locations, and staff assist in preparing the sites for voting use.

Many of the cultural and heritage sites host signature events throughout the year, such as the annual Christmas Tree lighting, or the Harvest Homecoming. These events are coordinated by committee, to ensure shared engagement and ownership. All events also have event preparation checklists, to assist with ensuring that all steps from inception through clean-up are identified and addressed in the planning stages. Staff are also encouraged to identify and develop ideas for new events, which are then reviewed and discussed by a group of supervisors across several sites.

Staff at the facilities are responsible for taking payments; administering open gyms and other open play periods; assisting with registration and coordination of other programming; assisting with facilities rentals, including form completion, scheduling the rental in Rec1, obtaining necessary paperwork from the renter (e.g. waivers, certificates of insurance, etc.); and providing general assistance and customer service to visitors.

### *Rentals*

The County makes available many of the facilities, fields, and other spaces within the parks for rental, beyond the athletic association usage described above. Pavilions, sports courts and fields, facilities, cultural and heritage sites, and trails for events such as 5ks or fun runs are all available for rent.

The Division has checklists for all special event rentals to ensure consistent preparation and post-event review and clean-up processes.

Pavilion rentals may be made using the Rec1 website. These may be rented any time that the park is open with a minimum of two hours of rental time, but no set amount of rental time beyond the two hour minimum, which can result in variable length rentals throughout the day. Pavilions may be rented online up to seven days in advance of the proposed rental. All other rentals must contact the Department for scheduling.

Cultural sites have minimum rental time slots of four hours during the week and eight hours on the weekend.

Facility rentals are coordinated by Recreation staff. The day-of management of rentals varies, with Grounds Maintenance staff responsible for on-site management of pavilion rentals, and Recreation staff responsible for most other rentals.

For use of the community centers, and other facilities at the County's parks, the rental process is coordinated by the staff assigned to that location. For pavilion rentals not associated with a larger event, Grounds Maintenance is responsible for day of site cleaning, rental management, and assessing for any damage or issues.

For events that are hosted at cultural or historic venues throughout the County, those rental requests go through a specific Unit of the Division – the West District’s Recreation Unit. This Unit is responsible for all events at seven locations, including the Historic Courthouse, the Environmental Heritage Center, and the Isaac Adair House, among others. Events may include Gwinnett County hosted- events as well as third-party rentals or providing space to community organizations or other County departments wishing to use the space.

The County offers three types of specialty rentals, including traditional large event rentals, a one-hour rental of a staged community room for a wedding ceremony, and an intimate wedding package that includes the cake, flowers, punch, décor, flatware, and all other items for a ceremony and standing reception. For large event rentals such as weddings, there are multiple planning steps involved, including initial site visit, a booking appointment to review the rules for the event space, a layout meeting to design the floorplan and identify what furniture and décor will be added to the rental cost, and a final walkthrough the weekend before the event.

### Trails and Natural Resource Management

The County has approximately 145 miles of trails it is responsible for maintaining. The Division is currently using consultants for most natural resource management strategic planning. There are no dedicated Division staff for trail management and natural resource management, with some responsibility assigned to the Grounds Maintenance Unit, the Project Administration Section and some responsibility assigned to the Program Coordinator over conservation projects, which includes the recreation set asides (small managed areas that are not formally part of parks). There may be some support of general trail clearing and maintenance through use of volunteers and inmates, where possible.

### Recreation Set Asides

In addition to the parks and facilities, this Division is charged with managing the County’s recreation set asides, or small managed areas that are not formally part of parks. Currently, the County has more than 225 set asides, comprising more than 1,000 acres of land. Set asides can come from developers, private citizens, or other means who wish to either donate or sell the land to the County. Currently, the Real Estate Section within Support Services sends out advanced notice to several County Departments to review and indicate potential interest. The Real Estate Section then coordinates biweekly meetings comprised of Community Services staff, Real Estate staff, DWR staff, and the Law Department to review all potential acquisitions and determine if they are in the interest of the County.

The Program Coordinator over conservation projects and recreation set asides heavily relies on inmate work crews to provide manpower for projects.

### Environmental Heritage Center Management

The Environmental Heritage Center (“EHC”) is a unique site. It combines museum displays, interactive natural engagement, plus natural resource management and trail components. As such, its maintenance and operations are managed by the EHC Operations Section.

One recent reorganization within Parks and Recreation merged the grounds maintenance and facilities maintenance staff within the EHC into a single Section over EHC Operations. This Section is now responsible for the building as well as all 200 acres. This can be challenging to balance, as building maintenance and cleaning needs to be completed before staff or guests arrive, while morning can also be the best time for some exterior maintenance efforts, and the staff do not always have experience in both grounds and facilities maintenance.

The Section helps with general maintenance and support at the County's other historic sites that aren't consistently staffed or don't have assigned grounds maintenance crews, such as the Yellow River Post Office.

The Section also assists with setting up the space for all rentals, especially the larger special events such as weddings. The staff work with the Community Services Manager and the Program Coordinator within Recreation that are responsible for event reservations and management. The EHC Operations Team receives email notices of the events with details of timing, the furniture layouts and any special requests.

The Section is overseen by a Program Coordinator; there is no foreman position, so the Program Coordinator must also serve as foreman, and with current staffing challenges and workload, is also a working member of the crew.

### Capital Project Administration

The Project Administration Section is responsible for coordination and oversight of all capital projects throughout Parks and Recreation. Many of the other divisions within Community Services use the County's Department of Support Services for facility construction and renovation.

Project Administration is responsible for master planning and updating planning within the parks, as well as new construction, design and build oversight, and smaller projects such as paving, playground replacement, and park expansion. Project Administration is not consistently involved in budget development or initial project planning.

There are Planner IIIs and Construction Managers overseeing the projects; Project Administration is also using Atlas, a third-party vendor, for SPLOST program management. The Section Manager serves as the liaison for the County with Atlas. For project oversight, the Section leverages employee expertise for assignment of projects, as workload allows.

The Section Manager also serves as the liaison with the Planning and Development Department on zoning and rezoning requests, as well as permitting reviews for potential impacts on a specific park, or on the Trails Master Plan. These reviews are completed in Accela.

For larger projects that have been bid out and awarded to contractors, the Section uses eBuilder for project management, including invoice review and process oversight. Smaller projects are tracked internally.

For older projects that were completed prior to the Section's adoption of eBuilder, most of the documents, plans, and other information are located on a Division shared drive. Documents pre-dating the mid-1990s are maintained in flat files at the Park Operation Center. The Section is assessing how best to digitize and make these files available to contractors, maintenance staff, and others who may need access.

## Communications

Given the size, disparate locations, and part-time staff numbers, communications can be a challenge within this Division.

Some sections, such as Recreation are having weekly management meetings. Leadership within Parks have daily standing meetings to discuss workload, site issues, and needs to shift workload based on priority or emergency issues.

Further down the organizational chart to front-line staff, communications feel more informal; either information is shared via word-of-mouth between employees and sections, or there are impersonal mass emails that often lack context or detailed information. Front-line staff feel that many decisions are made without engaging them or soliciting their input on how decisions may impact their workload, or without discussion about the impetus for decision-making or changes to existing processes.

Front-line staff also feel that information shared isn't making it all the way back up to Departmental leadership, which discourages them from sharing ideas, input, or concerns.

Even within Parks and Recreation, staff are housed at a variety of locations, including GJAC, the Park Operations Center, and across all of the County's parks. The physical separation, coupled with the reduced number of in-person meetings due to COVID, has led to minimal organic interactions, and delayed responses and interactions. Many sections felt that there aren't opportunities for inter-section engagement and communication. This is exacerbated for staff who are predominantly involved in support-type functions, as there is a disconnect in understanding how changes may impact their workload or priorities.

Staff also cited the number of organizational restructurings and creation of new or differing positions as making it challenging to understand which positions are responsible for which functions, which has reinforced some perceptions that responsibilities are being associated with people instead of positions. This perception can blur the line between positions and leave some individuals with too many responsibilities and others not fully assuming all responsibilities assigned to them.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division has developed a business plan to define strategic initiatives moving forward; the Division is working with individual sections to develop more detailed business plans unique to each section's operations.

There are many ideas and proposals that relate to leading practices, but may be challenging to implement without the needed staff and resources to plan, implement, and sustain the ideas.

Current staffing levels have resulted in conflicts about prioritization, especially around continuation of current service levels versus expansion of new facilities and services.

The Division prides itself on creating opportunities for promotion and growth from within; many of the team, unit, and section managers worked their way up through the Division, bringing institutional knowledge and an appreciation of the day-to-day responsibilities of the roles they now supervise. The Division is working to develop more formalized mentoring structures and management training for more intentional growth and development from within the Division.



One of the biggest opportunities for more strategic initiative and intent is within asset management and preventive maintenance. There are not current consistent, routine park inspections for all levels of assets. This plan should reflect urban planning practices, as Gwinnett County continues to grow and expand. The County may need to consider expanding the use of building automation systems for better monitoring and condition assessment and may provide better versions of data that the Department had hoped Lucy would collect. Building automation systems would also allow for more intentional root cause analysis and repair, rather than repair of what can be seen or where the issue has been identified.

A strategic asset management and preventive maintenance plan will need to be coupled with intentional funding to support capital replacement and maintenance resources, including staff, materials and equipment, and potential contracts related to maintenance efforts. There is a perception that the focus is on building new rather than maintaining what has previously been constructed.

The Division should also consider how to comprehensively consider and implement green strategies throughout the parks. This could include converting all of the sports fields and outdoor lighting to LED lighting, introduction of more timers or automated lighting schedules, solar panels on buildings, water faucet inventory and assessment for leaks, and other similar strategies.

As the County continues to grow and the diversity of the County's population continues to expand, the Division will need to ensure that it is intentionally crafting processes, programs and initiatives that speak to the diversity of the population. This may include signage within the parks in multiple languages, videos and outreach programming that provide information in different languages about the parks and how to access and utilize the resources, and ensuring that Rec1 or staff are available in multiple languages to ensure broad accessibility. It may also include additional understanding about communities and populations that may want to access the parks and facilities, such as individuals with disabilities or those that need adaptive programming, and assess current processes to understand pain points and obstacles to access.

Another challenge in the County and the Division's growth is ensuring the correct number of management positions needed to oversee the Division's parks and facilities, without taking away staff positions who perform much of the work, and ensuring there is a balance between management and staff positions.

## Systems and Applications

The Division uses a variety of technology systems and applications to serve its business needs.

### Lucy

Lucy is an asset management and work management system, used by the Division for a variety of tasks. While Lucy can collect a large volume of data, it is reliant on timely and accurate entry by staff. Given that Lucy does not integrate with other County systems, there can be challenges in getting information entered into all relevant systems. This lack of communication can also create redundancies for warehouse staff, who receive requests through Lucy and then must reenter the requested items individually into SAP.

In addition, staff noted a lack of training on how data should be tracked and entered into Lucy, which may lead to inconsistent use and entry of information, which dilutes the value of data produced.

There are also frustrations with Lucity's current requirement for manual entry of all work. Many of the staff activities are regular, routine tasks, but require completion of unique entries with each activity, and some limited customization or use of templates to reduce the manual entry. Staff have also noted that Lucity is not currently being used for consistent preventive maintenance scheduling or management. Some of this can be attributed to workload, but staff noted that the system used to have scheduled maintenance work orders to assist staff in tracking regular maintenance schedules.

### Rec1

Rec1 is used to schedule all event rentals as well as payment processing for entry fees, rental fees, and camp registration fees. Residents can also use Rec1 to sign up for programming and activities, such as tennis, pickleball, swim lessons, or leisure pool time.

Gwinnett County was an early adopter of Rec1, and its system has seen some growing pains as the County has grown and expanded services. During our fieldwork, Rec1 was not processing credit card payments online, so customers who wanted to reserve space in classes or for programming had to call or come to the park to have their space reserved and payment processed.

Currently, Rec1 does not communicate with other systems or applications that the Department maintains, such as Lucity or SAP, which requires some additional efforts in reviewing revenue collection and ensuring accurate posting to SAP.

Rec1 can send surveys to program participants after a class or program is complete, but it is limited to individuals who registered for participation through Rec1, and cannot collect information on drop-in participants.

Rec1 also has limited functionality to provide real-time information to residents about programs being at capacity, especially those that have offer drop-in participation, such as leisure swim or open gym periods.

### e-Builder

e-Builder is the primary business system used by the Project Administration Section to manage the construction or renovation of Department parks and facilities. The Division uses e-Builder to store information related to construction and capital renovation projects. The Project Administration Section is interested in uploading all of the current blueprints into the system, but isn't certain about the required time or best approach to accomplish the task.

Complicating this effort is the limitations on sharing information between eBuilder and Lucity. At project completion, much of the information about warranties, as-builts, and other information must be manually exported from eBuilder into Lucity for use by maintenance staff.

### WhenToWork

Several of the sections use WhenToWork for staff scheduling. WhenToWork allows for real-time access to shifts, and easy viewing of upcoming shifts.

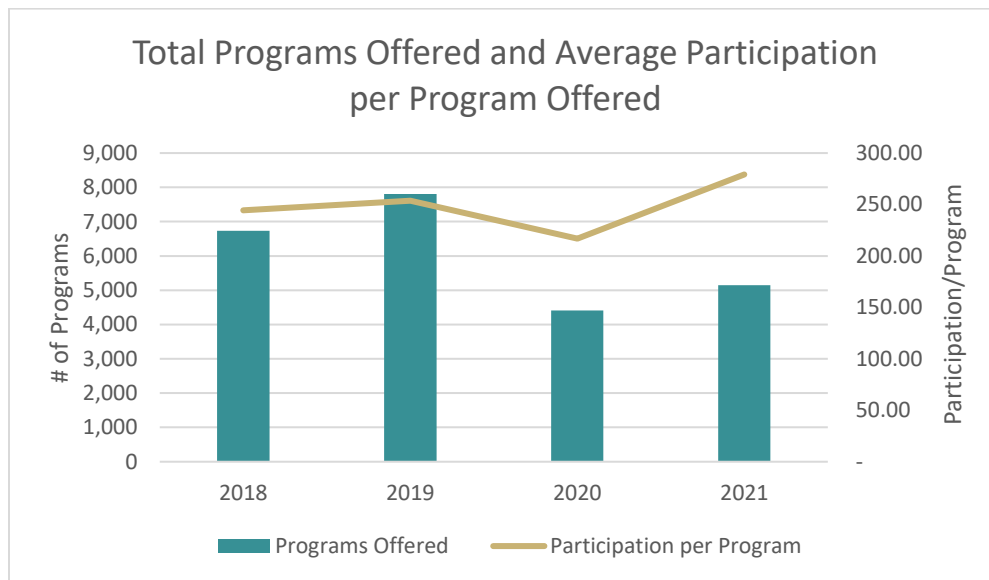
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division collects and maintains a variety of data points, many that are used for performance assessment and benchmarking against peers. Gwinnett County utilizes National Recreation and Park Association (“NRPA”) agency performance reviews, which benchmark Parks and Recreation against peer organizations for six primary categories:

- Capital budget
- Personnel
- Workload
- Agency responsibilities
- Facilities
- Activities

Benchmarking allows the County to understand its service delivery model, size, and personnel model relative to comparable organizations, based on population density. As Parks and Recreation is part of a larger Department – Community Services, some of the information can be challenging to utilize, such as personnel. The County’s Recreation Fund also makes capital budget metrics and some other metrics, such as parkland and facilities, challenging for comparability purposes.

In addition to these benchmarking data points, the Division tracks several other data points that show outputs, such as total programs offered and participants per program. The follow graphic illustrates changes over the past four years in program offerings and average participation per program.



For the Support Services Unit, Trades Supervisors are reviewing the age of Lucity work orders, trying to minimize the number of work orders that are older than 30 or 60 days. Given current staffing levels and supply chain issues, this has been challenging to manage. As the Division shifts from a repair to a preventive maintenance strategy, it may be useful to consider how to best categorize work orders to assess the shift from maintenance and repair to preventive maintenance efforts. This may be useful to better track long-term impacts of preventive maintenance efforts, and whether or not it impacts the number, frequency, and/or costs of reactive maintenance and repair efforts.

Lucity data also tracks when work is outsourced and assigned to contractors. Based on Lucity data provided to M&J, Support Services contracted out approximately 14% of the work completed in 2021. This data does not contemplate the costs or hours worked on these services. This information may be relevant to collect and analyze to ensure that contracting out services is the most cost-effective and time-effective way to meet the needs of the Division.

For Grounds Maintenance, Lucity collects a number of data points, but inconsistencies in entry and time limitations due to staffing and workload challenges may result in these data points not serving their intended purpose, and instead become an unintentional cause for conflict in priority and impact ability to actually complete the needed work.

What seems to be missing from the current data collection is consistent feedback from the residents, both those who currently utilize the parks and programming, as well as those that aren't currently engaging. This is performed as part of the master planning process, but there isn't consistent engagement on specific programming or events. Residents may provide anecdotal data to staff about the appearance of parks, or how clean the facilities are, but this is not collected across the system and cannot be used to truly assess resident satisfaction with parks, facilities, or programming.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division does not have formal, comprehensive asset management strategies or preventive maintenance practices.

**Recommendation: 1** The Division needs to prioritize asset management, including expanding the use of Lucity for asset-level tracking, condition assessment, and preventive maintenance scheduling.

The Division will need to work with Department leadership and County administration to ensure there is adequate funding to support asset management. This may require a shift in funding priority from construction of new assets to maintenance, management, and upgrade of existing assets to protect the County's existing investments.

As part of asset management, the Division should consider energy efficiency initiatives, such as switching to LED lights, energy utilization assessments for all facilities, utilizing timers on athletic field lights, and water faucet and toilet inventories to proactively identify leaks and consider switching to low-flow faucets and toilets. This may also include introducing more building automation systems.

**Observation 2:** Grounds Maintenance crews are allocated the same set of equipment at each site, which may not reflect the needs of each location. This inequitable distribution of equipment, combined with delays in fleet's ability to service equipment and vehicles, has created challenges for Grounds Maintenance's ability to complete all needed work.

**Recommendation 2:** Parks and Recreation needs to assess the equipment needs of each park and ensure that equipment has been allocated based on those needs. Staff noted the prior existence of an Equipment Committee, which included staff-level participation from both Shared Services and Grounds Maintenance. Re-establishing the Equipment Committee may provide valuable insight into the needs of each site, and leverage institutional knowledge about which equipment is best used for different types of grounds maintenance. The Equipment Committee should also play a role in assessing whether or not existing equipment needs to be replaced or potentially could be used as a backup/loaner vehicle or equipment for use when equipment is at Fleet, as well as providing insight about the needs for additional equipment purchases.

The County should also consider including initial maintenance periods in purchase prices for specialized equipment, to ensure that equipment lifespan is maximized through the use of experienced mechanics. The County may also want to consider on-call contracts for specialized equipment maintenance and repair, to provide a supplemental source for these services when Fleet is unable to accommodate needed timeframes.

**Observation 3:** Coordinators who carry the emergency phone and serve in an on-call capacity are limited in their ability to effectively assess the best way to resolve identified issues. Additionally, staff are using the emergency phone for non-emergency requests.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should establish policies for facility staff that clearly outline what should and should not be escalated to an emergency-level call. Coordinators should also be empowered to assess whether or not the call requires an urgent response, or whether it can be addressed during normal business hours.

These policies should also provide clear guidance authorizing the Coordinator to determine whether the use of overtime or an on-demand contractor is the most efficient method for resolving the issue.

**Observation 4:** Communications between Recreation and Parks are inconsistent in timing and method, with varying success from park to park. This can cause miscommunication and Grounds Maintenance staff failing to complete scheduled work to accommodate last-minute requests.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider developing more formal and consistent processes for Recreation to communicate with Grounds Maintenance about upcoming rentals and athletic events, to ensure that Grounds Maintenance can build in time to accommodate needed work. This should include reviewing Rec1 to determine if an internal events calendar could be shared with Grounds Maintenance to help them understand the full scope of upcoming projects.

Alternatively, the Division should consider transferring responsibility to Recreation staff to create work orders for all grounds work needed related to athletic events or other rentals.

**Observation 5:** Grounds Maintenance is using Recreation Park Attendants to manage pavilion rentals on the weekends. Because of the inconsistent nature and timing of these events, Grounds Maintenance cannot use these staff to perform other parks-related grounds maintenance.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should standardize pavilion rental timeslots of either four or eight hours. This will allow Recreation Park Attendants adequate time to clean the pavilions between the rentals, and would also free up some of the Rental Park Attendant's time to provide other grounds maintenance efforts, and potentially assist coordinators in responding to emergency call issues.

Alternatively, the Division should consider assessing budgeted personnel funds that have not been spent due to unfilled positions. The Division should consider using these funds to offer overtime, as funding permits, to allow Grounds Maintenance staff to work weekends assisting with needed grounds maintenance, or to assist in pavilion rentals.

**Observation 6:** There have been numerous issues with uniforms throughout the Division. Uniforms are not arriving timely, are not of good quality and are wearing out quickly. In addition, Parks staff shirts look similar to Recreation staff shirts, which has caused some park visitor confusion in understanding their roles, especially during the summer when there are multiple parks and programming activities offered at the parks.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should ensure that staff are participating in evaluating the quality of uniforms provided by current and potential vendors. The Division should also consider stocking basic uniform inventory in the warehouse, to help protect against supply chain challenges which may result in newly hired staff not having uniforms. The Division may need to consider updating uniform design, to better distinguish between staff in different sections and with different responsibilities.

Additionally, the County should consider including making samples available as part of bid response assessment and contract renewal consideration, so that staff can ensure accurate sizing and verify quality is appropriate for the work they are performing.

**Observation 7:** Division and Department policy discourages and, at times, prevents employees from working overtime hours, as overtime is not budgeted for. This has resulted in the use of on-demand contractors for work that could be performed by staff. In some instances, staff have been required to stop work mid-repair, to avoid overtime, and call on contractors to complete the repair.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department needs to conduct more formal cost-benefit analysis on the use of on-demand contractors versus allowing staff to earn overtime. This should include formal contractor performance evaluations to understand differences in quality of work performed.

The Department should also consider regularly assessing budgeted but unspent personnel funds, due to open or vacant positions, to determine if these funds can be utilized to support overtime budgets and allow staff to use this time to perform needed repairs or corrective maintenance.

**Observation 8:** The EHC Operations Section does not have a foreman, which requires the Program Coordinator to serve as crew foreman. Currently staffing levels and workload require the Program Coordinator to serve as a working member of the crew. On occasion, the Program Coordinator over the recreation set asides is also assisting at the EHC when needed.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division needs to add a Foreman position to the EHC Operations Section to allow the Program Coordinator to operate more strategically in the operations and asset management of the EHC.

**Observation 9:** The Division heavily promotes from within, creating opportunities for growth and promotion for staff, and leveraging institutional knowledge and passion. There are not currently consistent mentoring, management, and leadership training programs that are appropriate for each type of leadership and management role, although the Division is in the process of developing several more formalized roles and programs.

**Recommendation 9:** The Division should continue to develop formalized mentoring and training programs to develop candidates for promotion and growth. The Division should speak with the Department of Water Resources about the programs they have developed, which include management training for all level III technicians, including management training and understanding of County processes and policies related to timesheet review, budget and financial management, and similar responsibilities that tend to increase as staff are promoted.

**Observation 10:** As the County continues to grow and the diversity of the County's population continues to expand, the Division will need to ensure that it is intentionally crafting processes, programs and initiatives that speak to the diversity of the population. Currently, most of the park signage is in English only, and there is minimal basic information about how to best access or use the parks and facilities.

**Recommendation 10:** The Division should regularly assess its outreach materials, signage, and other public-facing information to ensure that it is appropriate and accessible to more of Gwinnett County's residents.

**Observation 11:** The Division collects a large volume of data, but isn't always utilizing the data for the most effective analysis and decision-making. The Division also is lacking consistent asset-level infrastructure condition assessments and condition tracking.

Additionally, the Division does not consistently collect feedback from the communities where many programs and activities occur. While the Division collects and provides anecdotal stories about service impacts, they do not provide consistent demonstration to support the need for the programs, or the potential for expansion or growth.

**Recommendation 11:** The Division should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments.

The Division should also assess the data points currently being collected, to ensure that the data being collected is value-add and assists in program development or performance assessment. The Division should, as part of a more holistic asset management strategic initiative, develop and implement consistent asset-level condition assessments, with regular reviews of condition levels, and utilization of this information to inform funding decisions around rehabilitating, repairing, or replacing existing assets versus constructing new assets or facilities.

## 3.A.6 Department of Community Services – UGA Extension Gwinnett

UGA Extension Gwinnett (“Division”) is a partnership among the County, the University of Georgia (“UGA”), the State of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that offers educational programs in the areas of horticulture and agriculture, food safety and nutrition, and leadership and citizenship for youth. The County maintains a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with UGA and the County pays UGA for specific related Division personnel and services. Although the Division consists of both UGA and County employees, operations appeared to be seamless and the Division strives to adhere to the Gwinnett Standard for operations.

UGA Extension Gwinnett consists of both County and University of Georgia employees. The Division consists of three main organizational pillars – 4H, Agricultural and Natural Resources (“ANR”), and Family and Consumer Sciences (“FACS”). The Division is led by a County Extension Coordinator who has four direct reports – County Extension Agent for 4H, County Extension Agent for ANR, County Extension Agent for FACS, and an Administrative Support Associate III. The County Extension Coordinator and the three County Extension Agents are all University of Georgia employees.

The Division’s mission is to “extend lifelong learning to Georgia citizens through unbiased, research-based education in agriculture, the environment, communities, youth and families”.

### Key Functions

UGA Extension Gwinnett maintains the following key functions:

- 4H
- Agricultural and Natural Resources
- Family and Consumer Sciences

### 4H

The main function for the 4-H Program is to assist the youth, pre-school to 12<sup>th</sup> graders, in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. The 4H Team executes their mission by providing hands-on learning activities focused on agricultural and environmental issues, agriculture awareness, leadership, communication skills, food and nutrition, health, energy conservation, and citizenship. 4-H is part of the nationwide Extension network. 4-H combines federal, state, and local expertise and resources. 4-H has multiple programs and activities including:

- Community service initiatives
- Summer activities and camping
- Horse Club
- Competitive Judging Teams- Consumer, Poultry, and Forestry
- Rock Eagle 4-H Camp
- Zoom into Science
- Wahsega Overnight & Tubing
- Blast off with Georgia 4-H



Furthermore, 4-H has 4 core programs that they provide and offer which include Camps for youths, STEM focused programs for 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Gwinnett County, an Annual State Council Meeting to vote on the state Board of Educators, and youth Public Speaking programs.

### Agricultural and Natural Resources

The main function of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Team is to educate the public on plant identification, plant diseases, insect identification, pest control, and soil & water testing. Key ANR service offerings include:

- Soil and Water Testing
- Turf and Landscape Diagnostics
- Georgia Pesticide Licensing
- Monthly Garden and Landscape Tips
- Master Gardener Program Certification and Programming

Currently, the team has two Program Assistants. One Program Assistant focuses on the office, Master Gardeners, and teaching programs; and the other Program Assistant focuses on School coordination, school gardens, and training for teachers.

The Master Gardener program provides intensive horticultural training to individuals who then volunteer as Master Gardeners in their communities by giving lectures, creating gardens, conducting research, and many other projects.

### Family and Consumer Sciences

The main function of Family and Consumer Sciences Team is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families. They focus on the economic and social well-being through programs that help improve income, health, and strengthening personal and family relationships. The program includes Radon Testing and services through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (“EFNEP”).

EFNEP is a federal grant program and is the nation’s first nutrition education program for low-income populations and remains at the forefront of nutrition education efforts to reduce nutrition insecurity of low-income families and youth today. EFNEP combines hands-on learning, applied science, and program data to ensure program effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

FACS also provides training and certification for the National ServSafe program for food handlers and managers in restaurants and other businesses that handle food.

FACS focuses on the following enrichment areas:

- Food
- Home
- Family
- Textiles
- Health
- Money

Currently, the program has two Program Assistants that provides support and assistance to 4-H and FACS when needed. The staff are bilingual in English and Spanish and also help the 4-H Team with translation as needed.

## Communications

As the Division is fairly small in size, communications appear relatively managed. However, as the Division consists of County employees and UGA employees, effective communications is critical to Division success as there are employees from more than one organization that may have differing objectives and methods for operations.

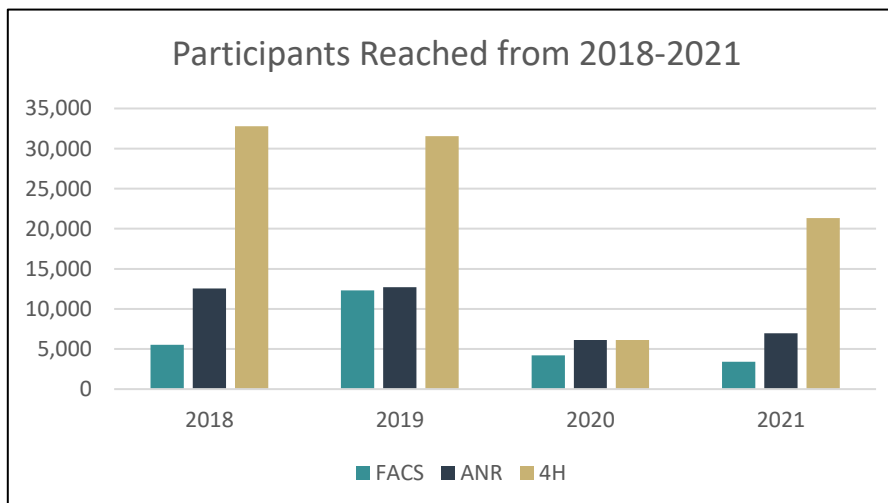
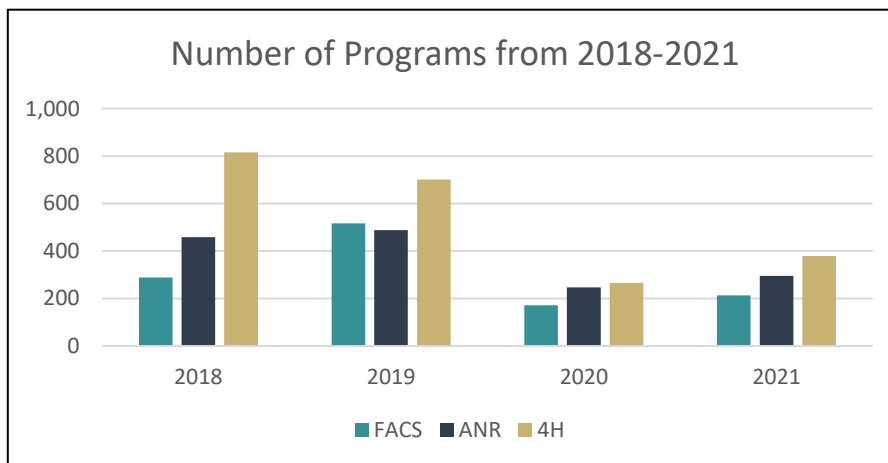
The Division maintains a website hosted by UGA. The website provides a great deal of information about each program, the offered services, and how to utilize the services. The website is very user-friendly and provides the public with needed information.

## Strategic Initiatives

It is noteworthy that the FACS professionals are bilingual in English and Spanish. The Division should consider this practice to include the ability to communicate in other languages largely represented within the County.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks a number of activity/output measures such as the number of programs provided and the number of participants reached. The following charts show program and participant data for 2018 through 2021 by program area.



In addition to the activity data, the Division also assesses outcomes. The Division has a link on its webpage that shows impact by program (as of the date of our fieldwork). The following table contains language on the Division’s website under the “Our Impact” link.

Program Area	Impact Content on Webpage
4H Youth Development	<p>Our 4-H youth development staff proactively adapted curricula from March - August to offer teachers a digital alternative to our face-to-face 4-H programming for their students once school went back in session in the fall. ZOOM links were easily shared via email with teachers as well as individual program-related activity kits designed to augment the learning process. More than 70 programs and 4-H club meetings were delivered to over 660 Gwinnett school youth. We also taught lessons on biology, communications, earth science and chemistry STEM classes guiding 220 youth through hands-on activity kits in 28 different schools and day care centers. Gwinnett’s 4-H LifeSmarts Team received the national varsity wildcard bid to the National LifeSmarts competition for 2020. While recognizing public health guidelines, 4-H maintained its programming in the areas of special interest club meetings and competitive Project Achievement events at district and state competitions. We hope and dream of returning to summer camps, fundraising, and community service projects in 2021. Our 4-H youth development staff proactively adapted curricula from March - August to offer teachers a digital alternative to our face-to-face 4-H programming for their students once school went back in session in the fall. ZOOM links were easily shared via email with teachers as well as individual program-related activity kits designed to augment the learning process. More than 70 programs and 4-H club meetings were delivered to over 660 Gwinnett school youth. We also taught lessons on biology, communications, earth science and chemistry STEM classes guiding 220 youth through hands-on activity kits in 28 different schools and day care centers. Gwinnett’s 4-H LifeSmarts Team received the national varsity wildcard bid to the National LifeSmarts competition for 2020. While recognizing public health guidelines, 4-H maintained its programming in the areas of special interest club meetings and competitive Project Achievement events at district and state competitions. We hope and dream of returning to summer camps, fundraising, and community service projects in 2021.</p>
ANR	<p>Our ANR Agent and Program Assistants offered a variety of educational programs to homeowners, green industry professionals and the general public about vegetable and landscape gardening, turf management, plant and insect identification, plant diseases and pest control reaching more than 600 participants. Enhancing UGA’s capacity to reach and teach people in neighborhoods, community gardens, parks, and farmers markets, our Master Gardener Extension Volunteers provided more than 10,100 hours of research-based educational programming. With the help of our trained Teacher Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, we added five new demonstration gardens for a total of 30 to our school garden initiative that has only been in existence for three years. No matter the delivery method, virtual or face-to-face, all ANR programming continues to strive for a safer and healthier environment.</p>

Program Area	Impact Content on Webpage
FACS	<p>Family and Consumer Sciences staff helped grow strong families and healthy kids by teaching research-based programs on chronic disease prevention, cancer prevention, nutrition and healthy eating, food safety and security, food preparation, and food preservation. Food safety was enhanced as more than 50 hours of training was provided by the FACS agent to 53 food handlers and managers who received National ServSafe certification. Over 200 training hours were delivered and approved by Bright from the Start to 103 childcare providers to help them maintain their Georgia daycare licensure. Topics included: Avoiding Stress for Healthy Brain Development, Language Development, More than Routines, and Feeding Healthy Babies. Additional COVID-related programming focused on Positivism and Enthusiasm, Managing Stress, and Having Fun with Children during the Pandemic. The FACS Agent is at the senior level of Public Service and considered an expert in her field in the areas of Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention, Human Development Training for Child Care Educators, Food Safety and Food Preservation and Housing. She is bilingual and has dedicated her career to bringing valuable educational programming to the English and Spanish speaking communities in Gwinnett and throughout Georgia and the US.</p>

**Observations and Recommendations**

**Observation 1:** The current FACS staff are bilingual in English and Spanish.

**Recommendation 1:** As Gwinnett County consists of large populations of multiple nationalities, the Division should seek to expand its ability to effectively communicate in other represented languages such as Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.

## 3.A.7 Department of Community Services – Voter Registration and Elections Division

The Voter Registrations and Elections Division (“Division”) is responsible for maintaining Gwinnett County’s voter rolls and the conduct of County, State, and Federal-level elections within Gwinnett County. Municipalities in Gwinnet County conduct their own elections for municipal-level offices with voter rolls provided by the Division.

Gwinnett County is unique among all other Georgia counties as Gwinnett is the only County whose population demographics meets the language requirement set in the Voting Rights Act. Per the Act, if more than 10,000 or over 5% of total voting age citizens in a political subdivision are members of a single language minority group, have a higher illiteracy rate than the national average, and have limited English proficiency as determined by the American Community Survey five-year estimates, that political subdivision must provide all official documents in that minority group’s language in addition to English. As a result, Gwinnett County must produce all official voter registration and election material in both English and Spanish.

### Key Functions

The Division has nine primary functions, eight of which are divided between three sections. The ninth is conducted by the Administration Team, which is separate from the three sections.

The Outreach, Education, Staffing, and Training Section is responsible for the following functions:

- Outreach and Education
- Staffing and Training

The Elections Section is responsible for the following functions:

- Warehouse Operations
- Elections Operations

The Voter Registrations and Absentee/Advance Voting (“VRAA”) Section is responsible for the following functions:

- Voter Registration
- Absentee by Mail
- Advanced In-person Voting
- Data Entry

The Administration Team is responsible for the following function:

- Elections Board Support and Candidates/Elected Officials Ethics Filings

## Outreach and Education

The Outreach and Education Team is the first line of communication at the Division for most members of the public. The Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) I serves as the lead receptionist for the Gwinnett Voter Registrations & Elections Beauty P. Baldwin Building (“Baldwin Building”). The Baldwin Building is the primary office location for the Division, as well as the center for Election Day and Election Night activities. The ASA I, along with part-time and temporary staff (at least one of whom at any given time is bilingual in English and Spanish), answers public questions, directs calls, and provides voter identification cards for eligible voters without other forms of photo ID. Currently, all public phone calls come through reception, and the half dozen phones in the reception area ring simultaneously. The Team puts callers into a queue in order to respond to as many callers as possible, however, during the busier season around each election, many callers wind up in the voicemailbox resulting in thousands of voicemails left every day. Currently, the Team does not have a means for tracking calls, so are unaware of how many times some residents are calling before speaking with a member of staff. The Division does not have a phone tree or Interactive Voice Response (“IVR”) phone system to assist with management of incoming calls.

The Team as a whole participates in events around the County – some hosted by the County, Department, or Division, others hosted by organizations within the community. The Team uses festivals, job fairs, school celebrations, holiday celebrations, and other events as an opportunity to promote voter registration and participation. The focus and goals of each outreach event depend on the audience – the Team may spend more time with one audience trying to sign up new poll officials while working to convince another audience to increase voter registrations in that community. Outreach events occur year-round, on both on-cycle and off-cycle years (on-cycle being those years with elections and off-cycle being those years without an election). During off-cycle years, the Outreach and Education Team generally works to offset time working weekend and evening events by providing a rotating schedule during the standard workweek; however, during on-cycle years, the Team starts receiving overtime for events worked outside the standard workweek.

On Election Day, the Team provides outreach support for voters who come to the Baldwin Building looking to vote. Because the Baldwin Building serves as an Advanced In-person (“AIP”) voting location, many voters mistakenly believe they can vote at the Baldwin Building on Election Day, as well. The Outreach and Education Team sets up tables at the front of the public lobby, where they hand out information on Gwinnett County elections and help voters identify their correct voting precinct. As polls close, the Team shifts into oversight of the temporary staff and volunteers who assist poll officials with initial check-in when those poll officials come to return equipment and provisional ballots.

After the certification of each election, the Team processes Open Records Requests and begin the process of sorting for record retention. The Team collects all records from the other teams and sections, including provisional ballots, voter registration cards, absentee/advanced voting applications, etc. The Team arranges records based upon which entity is responsible for retention of the records – some stay with the Gwinnett County government, some go to the Gwinnett County Clerk of Court, and some to the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office. Outreach and Education ensures the records are delivered to the correct custodian and provide copies of the records retained by the Division for Open Records Requests as appropriate.

Finally, the Team is responsible for much of the external communications and marketing for the Division. The Team works closely with the Community Engagement and Collaboration Division and the Communications Department on development of signage, social media content, and website updates.

### Staffing and Training

The Staffing and Training Team recruits and trains poll officials for each election conducted by the Division. As potential poll officials are identified – at outreach events, through current poll officials, or by residents expressing interest in person or online – the Staffing and Training Team works with the HR Department to ensure individuals have completed proper applications and are ready to be temporary staff. During an election, the Division will hire up to 2,000 poll officials to staff the variable number of AIP voting locations and the 156 Election Day precincts. The Team trains each of these poll officials for the particular type of voting they will assist with – advanced voting, Election Day voting, or both. While the State provides a training manual, the State also makes it clear that Counties and municipalities run elections – not the State. Therefore, the State’s resources are limited, and the Team is responsible for developing the training curriculum and schedule. The members of the team leading training sessions host classes six days each week for a minimum of three to four months during on-cycle years, with staff often on-site at training locations from 7 am until 7 pm. Training currently occurs at a rotation of County-owned parks and recreation centers, whose scheduling often requires last minute changes for the Team. In order to adhere to borrowed facilities’ schedules, the Team has been forced to abridge trainings due to set-up/break-down time restrictions or have had to make last minute changes to the scheduled location. With the Team’s inability to fully plan ahead due to uncertainty around the facilities they use, they are often having to make last-minute requests of the Warehouse for training equipment – requests which are not always able to be fulfilled.

Once poll officials are trained the State and County-required number of hours, oversight of these temporary staff is transitioned from the Staffing and Training Team to the VRAA Section. However, the Staffing and Training Team is still responsible for processing payroll for poll workers. Payroll processing is a largely manual process, with two different payment calculations for AIP and Election Day poll staffing. Poll officials fill out paper timesheets with the hours worked and submit one timesheet for each day worked, marking the location, position, and day they worked. Because many AIP poll officials work multiple locations, as well as work Election Day, and may serve as a poll manager one day but an issuing clerk another day, it is imperative they notate the differences in locations, positions, and days worked so the Team is able to correctly calculate payments. AIP poll officials are paid hourly, so receive overtime pay; Election Day poll officials are paid a flat rate with no overtime pay. All poll officials also receive a stipend for training hours completed. While Gwinnett County’s poll official pay is competitive with other Metro Atlanta counties, the number of hours worked on Election Day compared with the flat fee results in Election Day poll officials making less than the \$15 per hour minimum set by the County for government employees.

The Team collects paper timesheets at the end of each day of voting and holds the timesheets for processing. Previously, the Team used to batch process all timesheets after Election Day, however, the Division's policies changed to allow two processing cycles: the first week of AIP voting is processed in the first cycle, with the second and third week of AIP voting processed together with Election Day voting after Election Day. The Division's policies have also changed to include scanning the timesheets into FileNet for record retention. The Team, during the tight turnaround period after the end of Election Day before payroll is due, manually enters each poll official's time worked for that cycle into a spreadsheet that is set up with formulas used to calculate payroll based upon type of voting, position worked, and hours worked. While the spreadsheet cuts down on manual calculations, the manual entry of each individual poll official's timesheet for each day worked has led to overpayments, underpayments, and missed payments through inadvertent human error. And with poll officials not automatically calculating time worked to the quarter hour, as is necessary for the calculation of payment, the Team is having to make judgement calls on the poll officials' time worked. After all calculations are complete, the Team is transferring the calculations from one spreadsheet to another, and then re-formatting that second spreadsheet for submission to HR. In order to cut down on errors in payments, the Team has begun implementing multiple audits of the poll official payroll process, however, this requires additional personnel to be pulled away from other duties – such as beginning to recruit and train staff for the next election (which in the case of a run-off, may be less than a month after the general or primary election).

### Warehouse Operations

The Warehouse Team manages the asset inventory, chain of custody, testing, preventative maintenance, and repair of all election equipment. During an election year, the Team is primarily responsible for preparing all of the equipment for use in each of the elections, as well as conducting State-mandated Logic and Accuracy (“L&A”) Testing. L&A Testing is the process of determining whether or not that all voting equipment is functioning correctly and producing accurate tabulations of votes cast through each machine. The timeline for L&A Testing can often be truncated depending on when the State provides the secure election database, which is required for the creation of memory cards which store the votes cast in each machine, the programming of each machine, and the production of ballots and reports. Once the memory cards are created using the State database, the Warehouse Team conducts L&A Testing to ensure proper programming of voter access cards, display of the ballot on the screen, printing of the paper ballot, scanning of the paper ballot, vote acceptance, and tabulation of the results. The Team tests each unit, physically inspecting and recording each piece of equipment and calibrating as necessary. L&A Testing is, by law, open to the public and notices are posted by the Division prior to the start of testing. Gwinnett County conducts two separate rounds of L&A Testing for each election: one for AIP voting and one for Election Day voting.

Prior to each election, the Warehouse Team prepares six bags of cords, supplies, and paper forms for each polling location, in addition to the actual voting units and any furniture needs a polling location may have. Poll managers visit the Warehouse to pick up some of the equipment and supplies they need for the election, while the Warehouse Team coordinates the delivery of the larger equipment and serialized units. The Division contracts with a delivery company for some of the equipment deliveries, but the Warehouse Team delivers much of the equipment to polling and training locations themselves.



During Election Day, the Warehouse Team and the Elections Operations Team constitute a call center for poll officials having trouble with equipment. The Section's staff will travel to polling locations as necessary to troubleshoot and fix equipment, and often act in lieu of IT professionals due to the Division not having IT staff and the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department not regularly having personnel on-site for elections. The Warehouse Team also spends Election Day setting up an assembly line outside of the Baldwin Building for poll officials to return equipment.

On Election Night, after poll have closed, poll officials return to the Baldwin Building with smaller equipment, provisional ballots, and required forms. Their first stop is a tent in the election center's parking lot, where the Warehouse Team accepts and checks-in equipment from each precinct, organizing equipment by type and ensuring everything is returned as required. After Election Day, the Warehouse Team coordinates the pickup of larger equipment from polling locations, inspecting each serialized unit as it comes back into the Warehouse, as time permits. Delivery and pickup of equipment often takes multiple rounds for each location as the Division does not have the necessary fleet vehicles. The Elections Operations Section utilizes one minivan, and the other sections keep a second minivan at the Baldwin Building. The Team attempts to borrow or rent a box truck when possible, however staff indicated this has become more difficult, especially when other divisions and departments' schedules limit the Team's time to use borrowed vehicles.

Outside of elections, the Warehouse Team maintains the records kept onsite, after they have been sorted by the Outreach and Education Team. Traditionally, the records required for retention by the County were kept in the warehouse managed by the Support Services Department. However, due to limited space in that warehouse, voter registration and early voting applications have been stored in the spaces managed by the Division. The Clerk of Court, additionally, does not have the space required for the records that office is supposed to retain, so those records are also stored in the Division's space. With no space for record retention at the Warehouse, large sections of the Baldwin Building have been reallocated for records retention. Because the Warehouse Team is responsible for the maintenance of these records, their limited permanent staff are often split between the two Division locations in order to get all required work completed, while still ensuring permanent staff are on hand to monitor and manage the temporary staff.

The Warehouse Team also provides or coordinates maintenance on equipment during non-election years, ensuring units are operational again before the next election. Most equipment has a three-month charging cycle, so the Team guarantees each unit is recharged, maintained, and kept up to date on a recurring schedule.

The Team's ability to efficiently and effectively perform its required duties and responsibilities is limited by two factors: staffing and space. While the Team is adequately staffed for non-election years, the Team struggles to maintain the necessary number of temporary workers during election cycles. During our Assessment, we learned anecdotally that the temp agencies with which the Department contracts do not adequately prepare staff for the work they'll be performing in the Warehouse. Temporary staff assigned by the agencies are often unable to perform the heavy lifting required and often come to the Division without an understanding of the correct hours they're expected to work. The Department does not have a formal process for staff to evaluate vendor performance, limiting the Division's ability to respond when temp agencies are perceived to not fully prepare their workers.

In addition to limited staffing, the Warehouse suffers from limited space. Large sections of the Warehouse floor are dedicated to surplus and trash – without an appropriately sized dumpster, the Warehouse Team is unable to dispose of trash in an expedient manner. Much of this trash is outdated forms and other documents, many of which were printed within the same election cycle. Due to regularly changing requirements for elections and election materials, the Division updates documents frequently, requiring disposal of all previous iterations. Staff identified a policy requiring bulk printing at the beginning of each year. However, with the need to regularly edit and reprint materials, the majority of these documents are being trashed without the boxes on the majority of pallets ever being opened. The documents instead take up space and represent inefficient purchases. Much of the rest of the Warehouse floor is taken up by serialized units. The new voting equipment required by the State takes up more space than the previous equipment. In order to move any equipment or supplies – or perform required L&A Testing – the Team has to move other equipment aside, resulting in a lack of space to walk between equipment, further resulting in more shuffling when the initially moved equipment is needed. Of the four bay doors used for pick-up and delivery, one to three are blocked by equipment at all times in order to have enough space for testing or set-up. The limited space – and near total lack of vertical storage capability – in the current Warehouse results in staff not being able to strategically arrange equipment and supplies, nor complete more than one task at a time (packing, shipping, testing, etc.).

The reception area of the Warehouse serves three purposes: a training area for new Elections Operations Section staff, a staging area to pack the bags for all 156 precincts plus AIP locations, and a break area for the staff. Office space is limited. The Warehouse Manager and Warehouse Supervisor each have small individual offices, neither of which are directly adjoining the warehouse floor. All other staff in the Section share one office, including the Assistant Elections Supervisor. A second office, which has recently been vacated and is currently being used as a meeting space, is planned for shared office space among new staff as positions are added. The lack of a separate office for the Assistant Supervisor and limited space overall for each employee (their desks not being large enough for them to have their keyboard on the desk while filling out required forms) cause concerns of confidentiality and adequate space for staff to actually complete their jobs.

As previously noted, records are currently not stored at the Warehouse, but rather in the Baldwin Building due to lack of space in the Warehouse. The current Warehouse is a rental space and we heard from both Divisional and Departmental leadership that plans are being developed to move the Warehouse to a more permanent space. We recommend the County conduct a comprehensive space audit before solidifying any plans to completely understand the spacing requirements, and ensure the eventual permanent space meets the needs of the Division.

### Election Operations

The Elections Operations Team works closely with the Warehouse Team to conduct L&A Testing. The Team coordinates with the Georgia Secretary of State's Office to ensure the elections database has all candidates correct and ensures the visual and audio for each ballot is correct. This often requires several rounds of review for each type of ballot in each electoral district (in a general election there's only one, but in a primary, there are three – one per party and a non-partisan). As equipment comes back in from polling locations, the Team must check each unit to ensure proper functionality and guarantee all ballots have been extracted from the machines. The records pulled from these machines become part of the Section's records retention efforts.

On Election Day, the Team oversees the poll officials, including 26 area managers (who each oversee six precincts), 156 poll managers, at least 156 assistant poll managers, and hundreds or thousands of issuing and non-issuing clerks. The Team is also responsible for chain of custody of all provisional, supplemental, emergency, and other printed ballots, as well as the memory cards used in each precinct. As poll managers return equipment to the Baldwin Building, the memory cards are delivered to the Building's Elections Central room, where the Team oversees the receipt of the memory cards and upload of the cards' data to the Georgia Secretary of State's system, ElectioNet. At least three times throughout Election Night, the Team must publish the County's partial results, though the Division tries to publish more often as possible.

During non-election years, the Elections Operations Team manages the street research, redistricting, and polling location selection processes. As new subdivisions are developed, the Team performs street research in conjunction with the County's Planning and Development Department and GIS function to determine district, precinct, and municipal boundaries. The Team enters all information for each new street (location, parcel number, postal city, mailing city, precinct, etc.) into the voter registration system so new residents can be matched with their address's correct districting immediately upon registration. And as the County redistricts, either through the Georgia General Assembly or the Board of Commissioners, the Team reviews each property that has been redistricted and ensures voters receive new precinct cards and are informed of their new districts.

The Team arranges agreements, with Election Board review and approval, with polling locations for a one-year term, renewable three times before the agreement must be reviewed again by the Elections Board. When selecting locations to serve as precincts, the Team first tries to establish precincts that have limited overlaps among multiple districts. After redistricting, the Team may rearrange precincts, choosing not to renew some agreements, in order to best avoid too many different ballots within each precinct. When the Team identifies a potential new polling location, they have to conduct surveys of the location to ensure the facility can meet State and County requirements – indoor lighting, parking lot lighting, ADA compliance, etc. Once the Team has determined compliance with all required codes, the Team draws up and executes the contract, ensuring payments through the year as stipulated in the contract. Occasionally polling locations are unable to fulfill their obligations for every election throughout the year, so the Team sometimes has to find polling locations at the last minute or, with the permission of the Elections Board, combine voting locations.

### Voter Registration

The Voter Registration Team helps to ensure that the residents of Gwinnett County who meet State-mandated criteria are able to register and vote. The Team utilizes a series of databases and dashboards to maintain the voter roll for the County and the municipalities within Gwinnett County. Voter registrations come in from three primary sources: online registrations through the Georgia Secretary of State's website, in-person or mailed applications received directly by the Division, and registrations submitted through the Georgia Department of Driver Services when applying for motor vehicle licenses. Once an application has been processed, the Team enters the voter's information into the County's system, EasyVote, and identifies the voter's districting and precinct based on their address.

Throughout the year, the Team performs regular list maintenance through various databases and touchpoints. The Team reviews vital statistics records, removing voters who have died or been convicted of a felony. The Team also reviews U.S. Postal Service change of address forms and participates in a record-sharing organization of more than 20 states called the Electronic Registration Information Center (“ERIC”). Through ERIC, Georgia and its counties are able to receive reports of voters who have moved out of the State and registered to vote elsewhere. Voters confirmed to have moved out of the County or the State are removed from the voter list. The Team also identifies voters who have not participated in the last two general election cycles and change their status to inactive. Inactive voters and voters identified as deceased or having moved receive confirmation notices from the Team before they are subsequently removed from the voter roll.

### Absentee by Mail

The Absentee by Mail (“ABM”) Team receives and reviews the applications for those voters wishing to vote via a mail-in ballot. During non-election years, the Team assists with voter registrations, but leading up to an election, the Team focuses on processing and determining the validity of ABM applications and subsequently mailing the ballots to approved voters. If any information is missing from the ABM application, the Team sends a letter or otherwise contacts the registered voter to inform them of the missing information and to request a cure affidavit. Oftentimes the process of curing applications with missing information can require multiple touchpoints with a voter if the voter continues to miss information or forgets to send identification with their cure. All other counties in Georgia are able to generate cure letters using ElectioNet, however, the Division produces these letters in house due to the Spanish-language requirement for the County’s documentation.

As ABM ballots are delivered by mail or are dropped off at the Baldwin Building or in one of the drop boxes at AIP voting locations, the ABM Team begins to process and batch the ballots. The Team confirms the ballot has a signature (prior to SB 202, the Team had to validate the signature against the voter’s recorded signature in ElectioNet), a date of birth, and an identification number, such as a social security or license number. The Team confirms the identification number matches the voter in ElectioNet and sorts the ballot by precinct. Throughout the acceptance period leading up to Election Day, the Team runs a report daily of whose ballots were accepted, sharing that information with poll officials to ensure voters don’t vote twice and guaranteeing an ABM ballot is present for every voter on the list. While the Team starts processing received ballots immediately, the ballots remain in the sealed envelopes until Election Day.

On Election Day, the ABM Team opens and extracts all of the ABM ballots, ensuring the ballots stay batched. The Team works with the rest of the VRAA Section to ensure extracted ABM ballots are scanned, accepted, and included in the tabulation of votes cast. If a ballot gets cut during the extraction process or a voter’s intent on a ballot is not clear, the Team convenes a three-person panel (one representative of the Democratic Party, one representative of the Republican Party, and one non-partisan volunteer) to adjudicate and duplicate the ballot for scanning and tabulation. Scanned and tabulated ABM ballots are sealed and locked away for records retention. Overall, 10 people on average touch each ABM ballot between accepting, extracting, scanning, adjudicating, and filing for records retention, as the procedure for processing ABM ballots is mostly manual.

## Advanced In-person Voting

Similar to the AMB Team, the AIP Team spends non-election years assisting with voter registration and voter list maintenance, as well as implementing changes to election laws regarding AIP voting. In the lead-up to elections, the Team makes recommendations on necessary training for those poll officials staffing the AIP voting locations, based upon leading practices, changes to process, and gaps in knowledge from the last election. Once AIP voting starts, the Team assumes oversight of the poll officials for the voting locations and helps determine the best layout and flow for each precinct, based on leading practices and building codes. As AIP voting proceeds, the Team helps poll officials troubleshoot and enhance the voter experience.

All of the advanced voting locations (seven, on average) bring all required paperwork, including applications and voted ballots, to the Baldwin Building each night. The AIP Team stores these documents in a locked cage overnight and in the morning pulls together the daily report for the Georgia Secretary of State's Office showing how many voted at each location. The Team conducts a daily audit of the applications, ensuring an application exists for every ballot cast, and vice versa. The audit requires a line-by-line reconciliation to correct any mistakes. After the audit is completed, the Team scans the applications into FileNet for storage. Currently, applications are not scanned and uploaded to voters' individual files for easy access during larger election audits or Open Records Requests.

At the culmination of AIP voting, the Team helps coordinate the collection of the ballot boxes and the breakdown of those voting locations not used as Election Day precincts. On Election Day, the Team manages the Division's third call center – this one being for polling officials with questions about individual voters' registration status. Once polls have closed, the AIP Team, along with the rest of the VRAA Section, oversees receipt of provisional ballots. Poll managers deliver the provisional ballots to the Baldwin Building, where the poll managers go through three different check-in desks, each of which is responsible for reviewing a different set of documents and materials returned from the polling locations. Provisional ballots are accepted by precinct, the Section then records the number of ballots accepted per precinct and indicates why a provisional ballot was cast, and then lock the provisional ballots in a vault. Voters have several days to cure provisional ballots as necessary, and the Division performs the final tabulation of provisional ballots usually about five days after Election Day so the Elections Board can certify the results of the election.

## Data Entry

The Records Team is the newest functional area in the VRAA Section, and the responsibilities are still being developed. Currently, the Team is assisting with Open Records Requests, alongside the Outreach and Education Team. The Records Team is also developing regular reports through analysis and auditing of voter data, ranging from participation in absentee/advanced voting to breakdowns of voters by race and gender. During elections, the Team works with the rest of the VRAA Section to provide required daily AIP reporting and reports detailing provisional ballots received. Moving forward, the Team has expressed interest in building reports that can be used to mitigate potential issues.

## Elections Board Support and Candidates/Elected Officials Ethics Filings

The Administration Team provides support for the Division as a whole, but also for the Elections Board and, to a lesser extent, elected officials. In advance of all Elections Board meetings, the Team publishes the required public notices and prepares the meeting agendas. During the meetings, the Team provides the Elections Board members with binders and supplies, and takes the minutes from the meeting, which are translated by a member of the team into Spanish as required by the Voting Rights Act. The Team also processes the stipend payments for Elections Board members.

Candidates for elected office and elected officials in Gwinnett County are required to file campaign disclosures on finances, campaign contributions, lobbying activities, political action committees, and other potential conflicts of interest. These disclosures are filed with the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission. The Administration Team collects documents throughout the year from candidates and elected officials to assist with filing the disclosures and a member of the Team serves as the Local Filing Officer. The Team transmits all documents collected to the State.

## Communications

The Division encourages a fairly vertical communications structure, with information transmitted from leadership to Elections Coordinators and then to Elections Associates and other frontline positions. Weekly leadership meetings become daily during the leadup to an election. Coordinators are also encouraged to meet and collaborate regularly.

However, during interviews and fieldwork, staff identified concerns with uniform delivery of messages across and among the sections and team, especially those not regularly located at the Baldwin Building. A lack of full understanding what other teams are responsible for leads to frustration toward other employees, negatively affecting morale. The Division does not provide comprehensive training for new employees, relying instead on current employees to train their new colleagues and supervisors. The lack of comprehensive training prevents new employees from gaining an understanding of the Division as a holistic unit and appreciating the nature of other teams' work, schedules, and processes. Without better cohesion in the Division, teams don't uniformly communicate changes in forms and processes to other teams that may be affected by those changes, resulting in inconsistent knowledge.

Additionally during interviews, staff expressed concern with leadership not planning and communicating to staff on a consistent and timely basis. Staff feel that leadership are not planning with a high degree of intentionality how to best utilize staff, schedules, and other resources. As a result, staff suggested communication from leadership is not provided with enough time to avoid last-minute requests that either cannot be fulfilled or that lead to inefficient uses of staff time and resources. One area of concern for Divisional communications is a comprehensive understanding of the functions and authority of the Department versus the functions and authority of the Elections Board. With the Elections Supervisor reporting to the Election Board but all other staff reporting to the Department, a lack of clear lines of authority can result in conflicting expectations, direction, and guidance.

## Strategic Initiatives

Several team and section heads identified strategic initiatives for their functional areas ranging from hosting more registration and staffing events at the Baldwin Building to building a standby pool of poll officials. Leadership additionally identified four overarching strategic initiatives that are described below.

Leadership acknowledged a large number of manual processes utilized by the Division both during the conduct of elections and throughout the planning and non-election cycles. Much of the Division recognized a need to automate where possible (as many processes and systems are due to state requirements) with leadership suggesting a desire to become an innovative leader in the state for elections.

Related closely to revising processes, the Division is working toward developing standard operating procedures (“SOPs”) for all processes as part of the Department’s larger SOP strategic initiative. The struggle for the Division, however, is the number of processes reliant on changes in Georgia election law, which force changes in processes and require updates to SOPs.

The Division works to implement the Commissioners’ language initiative. In addition to the legally mandated requirement to produce all documentation in both English and Spanish, the Division also produces documentation in Korean, Vietnamese, and Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese. The Division has struggled at times to receive full buy-in from these ethnic communities, creating difficulties ensuring translations provided by vendors actually convey the expected message. The addition of extra materials, ranging from hundreds of thousands of sample ballots to large stand-up banners, in the four languages in addition to those already in English and Spanish has compounded the Division’s space issues. However, Divisional staff recognize the importance of encouraging all communities in Gwinnett County to participate in elections as both voters and volunteers, and work to find solutions (even just temporary) to issues in order to implement this County-wide initiative.

Finally, the Election Center (a nonprofit organization focused on improving voter registration and elections operations and processes) conducted a review and analysis of Divisional operations after the June 2020 election. The review resulted in a series of observations and recommendations ranging from ABM ballot applications and information systems to payroll and warehouse space. Many of the observations noted in the review were independently corroborated by our Assessment and are reinforced in part or in whole in this report. The Division has made progress in addressing some of the recommendations offered in the Election Center report and continues to implement as reasonable and possible.

## Systems and Applications

### ElectioNet

ElectioNet is the Georgia Secretary of State’s system for managing elections and voter registrations, which all counties in the State are required to utilize. The State intended to replace ElectioNet with the Georgia Registered Voter Information System (“GaRVIS” or “Jarvis”) in early 2022, however, quickly reverted to using ElectioNet when the system wasn’t ready for the May 24<sup>th</sup> election. The County uses the system for checking in voters during elections and processing absentee ballots. The County also uploads election results to ElectioNet throughout Election Night, publishing the results to the Georgia Secretary of State’s website at least three times throughout the night.

### EasyVote

The Division uses EasyVote as its comprehensive election management platform. EasyVote allows the Division to enter information relation to polling locations, manage campaign finances; manage inventory; upload poll officials' history, training, and performance; and scan and check-in ABM ballots.

### FileNet

The Division uploads scans of most documentation to FileNet, including voter registration applications, ABM applications, and AIP applications.

### NeoGov

The Division utilizes NeoGov for managing temporary employees, including poll officials.

### ArcGIS

The Division utilizes ArcGIS to identify where current and new properties are located in order to determine the district and precinct for each property.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division collects a series of activity measures as part of preparation for elections. Data points tracked by the Division include:

- Number of registered voters
- Voters by race and gender
- Voter registration transactions (new registrations, duplicate record merges, names changes, list removals, etc.)
- Number of bilingual poll officials at each precinct
- Unofficial ballot totals and AIP voting totals
- Number of interactions per outreach event

Most of these output measurements are required by the State, however, are not necessarily indicators of performance, especially without context or application of these measures to strategic goals and objectives. Output data, though, can be utilized to show performance if applied to a strategic goal – for example, mapping number of new voter registrations within a particular community to outreach efforts to determine the performance of those efforts. An opportunity for tracking new data might be determining how changes in equipment, procedures, staffing, layout, or another controlled factor affects voter wait times. Other than metrics required by the State, the Division should be sure any data collected is used for decision-making and not just collected for the sake of collecting data.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division receives thousands of calls per day during the lead up to elections with no phone tree or Interactive Voice Response (“IVR”) phone system to assist with management of incoming calls. As a result, callers leave thousands of voicemails daily and the Division does not have an efficient way to track which callers have received callbacks or have left multiple messages.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should talk to other County departments about solutions for handling calls as a call center, such as the IVR and switchboard systems utilized by the Support Services Department’s Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division, the Communications Department’s Fiscal and Administration Division, and the Department of Water Resources’ Fiscal and Administration Division.



**Observation 2:** The Division currently trains poll officials at a rotation of County-owned parks and recreation centers, whose scheduling often requires last minute changes for the Division. In order to adhere to borrowed facilities' schedules, the Division has been forced to abridge trainings due to set-up/break-down time restrictions or have had to make last minute changes to the scheduled location.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider identifying a permanent location for the Division to host training. The Division should consider reserving certain units for training and leave those units at the training facility to avoid unreasonable delays due to set-up and break-down.

**Observation 3:** The payroll process for poll officials consists of a several manual actions, risking overpayments, underpayments, or missed payments due to inadvertent human error.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should determine a less manual process for poll official payroll. The Division should conduct a needs assessment to define the poll official payroll process requirements and build the business case for procuring a system or similar tool to increase automation and internal controls for the process. The Division should consider reviewing WhenToWork, used by other divisions in the Department, as a potential solution or model for a solution.

**Observation 4:** The Division does not have internal information technology staff nor are Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department staff consistently on hand during elections to help troubleshoot and address technology issues ranging from malfunctioning mobile hotspot devices to system user access issues, both in the Divisions facilities and at the various polling locations.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should work with the ITS Department to ensure staff are present in Divisional facilities during elections to help troubleshoot technology issues. Departmental and County leadership should reinforce the expectation that the ITS Department will have personnel present at the Baldwin Building and/or Elections Warehouse during each election. The ITS Department should develop a hypercare plan to ensure the Department has adequate staffing and escalation procedures during elections.

**Observation 5:** The Division struggles to maintain adequate levels of temporary employees, especially in the warehouse, during high volume periods leading up to elections. Workers supplied by temp agencies are often unprepared for the work they're expected to perform and the hours they're expected to work. The Department does not currently have a formal process for staff to evaluate vendor performance when temp agencies are perceived to not adequately prepare their workers.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division, the Department, and the County should review contracts with temp agencies to ensure expectations are being properly communicated to the vendors and from the vendors to their workers. The Division should work with the Financial Services Department to develop a process for formal evaluations and identified issues about vendor performance. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.

**Observation 6:** Delivery and pickup of equipment often takes multiple rounds for each location as the Division does not have the necessary fleet vehicles. The Elections Operations Section utilizes one minivan, and the other sections keep a second minivan at the Baldwin Building. The Team attempts to borrow or rent a box truck when possible, however other divisions and departments' schedules limit the Team's time to use borrowed vehicles.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should conduct a needs assessment for the fleet vehicles allocated to the Division and consider requesting a change in allocation if the assessment determines the Division needs additional or different vehicles.

**Observation 7:** The space restrictions of the Elections Warehouse limit the Division's ability to conduct multiple equipment-based activities simultaneously, such as set-up, testing, and packing/shipping. Additionally, the limited space at the Elections Warehouse has resulted in records and equipment storage shifting to the Baldwin Building, where already limited space has been condensed even further. The current Elections Warehouse is housed in a rented facility and the Department and County have been developing plans for moving the Elections Warehouse location.

**Recommendation 7:** Before the Department solidifies plans to move the Elections Warehouse, the Department should conduct a spacing audit to determine the spacing needs for the Division and ensure the space selected adequately addresses the full range of storage and activity needs.

**Observation 8:** The Division scans documentation to FileNet for storage but does not uniformly upload applications and other files to voters' individual records for quick access during Open Records Requests and other inquiries. Any documentation scanned into both systems is done so in duplicate.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division should consider either working with the ITS Department to link FileNet to EasyVote and/or ElectioNet to ensure applications and other documents can be easily accessed from voters' records, or scanning applications and other documents directly to voters' records in the County-owned or State-mandated voter management system.

**Observation 9:** The majority of processes undertaken by the Division on Election Day are manual, oftentimes with 10 or more people touching each ballot before it is finally scanned and recorded.

**Recommendation 9:** The Division should consider resources, tools, equipment, and systems that can partially or completely automate processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness on Election Day. The Division should observe and record leading practices implemented by other major metropolitan counties, especially in the Atlanta metro region, and Departmental and County leadership should work with the Division to find reasonable means and methods to implement those leading practices in Gwinnett County.

**Observation 10:** The Division does not provide comprehensive training for new employees, relying instead on current employees to train their new colleagues and supervisors. The lack of comprehensive training prevents new employees from gaining an understanding of the Division as a holistic unit and appreciating the nature of other teams' work, schedules, and processes.

**Recommendation 10:** The Division should develop a standard for new hire orientation and onboarding. Leadership and administrative staff in the Division should either be responsible for offering these orientations or providing training to Division staff to ensure consistent onboarding and information is provided to all new hires.

**Observation 11:** Staff expressed concern with leadership not planning and communicating to staff on a consistent and timely basis. Staff feel that leadership are not planning with a high degree of intentionality how to best utilize staff, schedules, and other resources. As a result, staff suggested communication from leadership is not provided with enough time to avoid last-minute requests that either cannot be fulfilled or that lead to inefficient uses of staff time and resources.

**Recommendation 11:** Divisional leadership should ensure their weekly or daily leadership meetings are being used for effective planning of staff workloads, schedules, and other resources. When leadership conducts planning of resource utilization, leadership should communicate expectations to staff in a timely enough manner to avoid last-minute requests and inefficient uses of resources as much is possible.

**Observation 12:** Division staff, including leadership, had an inconsistent understanding of the functions and authority of the Department versus the functions and authority of the Gwinnett County Board of Registrations and Elections (“Elections Board”). With the Elections Supervisor reporting to the Election Board but all other staff reporting to the Department, a lack of clear lines of authority can result in conflicting expectations, direction, and guidance.

**Recommendation 12A:** The Division should clearly define the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the Department and the Elections Board and ensure all staff are aware of each body’s area of authority.

**Recommendation 12B:** The Division should consider an independent third-party assessment of the Election Board to determine the Election Board’s legally mandated governance, as well as adherence to applicable statutes.

**Observation 13:** The Division currently collects a large amount of State-required voter registration and real-time voting data, however performance metrics are limited. The Division does not currently use performance data to make strategic, proactive decisions.

**Recommendation 13:** The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions

## 3.A.8 Department of Community Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Department of Community Services to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Commendation

The Department expanded the use of Lucity beyond work order and asset management to include managing and tracking uniforms, warehouse material delivery, key inventory, marketing projects, and inspections. The Community Services Department has won awards for its innovative use of Lucity. The enhanced use of Lucity is attributed to dedicated staff with Lucity expertise in the division, which we would like to identify as a best practice. Having process and technology staff embedded in the Department provides a greater understanding of business requirements and opportunities for improvement.

### Technology Observations

#### Animal Welfare and Enforcement

##### *ShelterBuddy*

Many of the ways the Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division uses ShelterBuddy are workarounds and do not allow the Division to fully utilize the software as staff would like to ideally use it. Customization of the system is limited, both in terms of the categorizations used when entering information about animals and in terms of producing specialized reports. Currently, the Division tracks numerous data points and lists – such as foster and rescue group contacts – in Excel spreadsheets due to perceived limitations in ShelterBuddy. The Division has contacted RSPCA Queensland in order to work with the developers to provide better solutions for Gwinnett County, however struggled to gain traction because the County's customer representative was located in Australia. The Division recently began working with a customer representative in Boston, which will hopefully allow better communication with the company to ensure the software meets the custom needs of Gwinnett County.

### *Enforcement Section Observations*

ShelterBuddy is a system built for animal shelters – predominantly nonprofit animal shelters. While the system has been adapted as possible for the enforcement and public safety side of Gwinnett County’s animal welfare operations, the system – and the Division’s overall information technology infrastructure – does not fully meet the needs of the Division’s Enforcement Section. In the field, Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”) have to duplicate reports between the County’s computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) and ShelterBuddy as the systems are not integrated. ShelterBuddy reporting requires a high degree of switching between screens, tabs, and modules, which is time consuming and difficult to do in the field. ShelterBuddy additionally doesn’t currently provide comprehensive tracking of cases from initial complaint to closure. If the direction for the Division is to encourage compliance, the Section does not have an adequate means to indicate progress toward this initiative.

### **Business Management and Technology Services**

#### *SAP*

The current version and configuration of SAP is outdated and not user-friendly. There is a need for a better interface, easier login, and easier search and navigation capabilities than what is currently in place. Staff must log in to different modules that do not communicate well with one other. It is difficult to find reports, and staff feel there is no visibility or transparency into the overall process.

Staff also reported that contract tracking is performed outside of SAP, as SAP doesn’t have the ability to track project level expenses and utilization, instead of overall Departmental utilization.

#### *Other Observations*

Internal invoicing process is manual and time-consuming. Most requests for purchases come to the Division via email, and may require several rounds of communication to resolve questions or discrepancies. Email communication is also the primary process for the Division to reach out to end-users if the County’s Finance Department uploads an invoice to FileNet for payment approval.

### **Community Engagement and Community Collaboration**

#### *Lucity*

Community Collaboration is using Lucity to manage marketing-related work orders. As the system is not designed as a project management system, it has limited functionality for tracking long-term projects, and does not have the capacity for document edits and review within the system, creating a secondary process for project management.

#### *Other Observations*

Many of the Community Engagement and Community Collaboration programs are hosted outside of traditional facilities, such as within the parks, in a variety of parking lots, playgrounds, and other areas. As such, the lack of wi-fi within the parks, as well as the lack of mobile phones with wi-fi capabilities, can be limiting for helping participants understand how to access future events, sign up for volunteer opportunities with CERVIS, etc.

## Parks and Recreation

### *Lucity*

It was stated that Lucity lacks granular asset details, which is both a system and user issue. For example, soccer field complexes are considered one record for entire parks rather than each field within the complex. While there are parent and child records, finding and accessing records is not a straightforward process in the system. Each piece of equipment in parks is considered one record, such as benches, swings, water fountains, and similar items with a fixed record.

Performance is tracked by work order completion and employee time recording. However, this has not been tracked recently, as performance measurement is difficult to baseline due to the varied nature of each project. Moreover, separate Lucity instances are needed for each project, making performance tracking and system management difficult, despite the Department managing its version of Lucity. Additionally, some of the categories for work performed are somewhat high level, and may not fully differentiate between discrete tasks performed by staff. As an example, “landscaping” as a category may include mowing, edging, treating grass or turf, mulching, and other tasks that represent the majority of work for certain staff. Having to differentiate between these tasks in notes, and having to manually enter all information for repetitive tasks, is not viewed as a valuable use of time.

Lucity and SAP do not align, limiting the Department’s ability to understand the cost of doing business at each location and creating duplicative work for warehouse staff who must track inventory in SAP, even though all warehouse requests come through Lucity.

Lucity does not align with Rec1, which limits the potential to automate communications and develop work orders related to rentals or athletic events. Rec1 has the capacity to create calendars to manage rentals, tournaments, or other upcoming events, which could be leveraged to help create work orders for grounds maintenance tasks related to these events.

### Future Use

The Department is implementing Lucity Mobile, which will help forepersons perform park inspections by enabling them to view reports in the field rather than printing out work orders in the office and taking on-site photos. The success of this project is dependent on the Department providing tablets or web-ready cell phones to Grounds Maintenance Foreman.

### *Rec1*

The County’s early adoption of Rec1 resulted in some custom features and functions that Parks and Recreation has benefitted from over the years. As system features and capabilities have grown, the County’s instance of Rec1 has not always grown. Rec1 has limited functionality in certain areas, such as real-time reporting on program and facility capacity, or capturing any information on drop-in program participants. Rec1 also does not align with other Department systems, which requires manual export and reentry of information related to calendars, SAP for revenue collection, or Lucity.

### *Other Observations*

Staff in the Parks Section are often working in the field and do not have regular access to email or internet. This makes real-time response to work orders or other issues challenging. Additionally, it adds time to the beginning and/or end of each day, as staff must spend time at the computer entering information into Lucity.

## Technology Summary Recommendations

### Animal Welfare and Enforcement

**Recommendation 1:** Animal Welfare and Enforcement should conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified within ShelterBuddy. The Department should use this information to define system requirements and either develop the associated projects and business cases, or prepare to issue a procurement for a new system based on the needs assessment results.

### Business Management and Technology Services

**Recommendation 2:** Business Management and Technology Services should continue to work with Finance on the new ERP to determine how it will meet their needs. If the new ERP does not meet all of their needs, the Division should consider assessing contract management strategies in other Departments to determine if a software or less manual solution may fit their needs.

**Recommendation 3:** Business Management and Technology Services should leverage leading practices utilized in the Department of Transportation and Department of Support Services, and utilize SharePoint workflow for invoice processing. This should reduce the manual communications and tracking of documentation, and allow for more insight into delays or roadblocks to processing. Processes should be developed and end-users should be trained on how to utilize the SharePoint. These processes should include escalation as needed for untimely review or response to requests for review or approval.

### Community Engagement and Community Collaboration

**Recommendation 4:** The County has acquired Hive, a project management system for use in the Communications Department. As Hive has been customized specifically for use in managing marketing and communications projects, Community Engagement and Community Collaboration should reassess its use of Lucity as a work order management system and discuss the potential for leveraging Hive in the future.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should work with ITS to determine the best way to make internet available to staff who frequently work in the field. This may include cell phones or tablets with internet capabilities, or exploring expanded Wi-Fi within the parks.

### Parks and Recreation

**Recommendation 6:** Parks and Recreation should work to create Lucity work order templates for common or standardized tasks, that are pre-filled based on average time spent, and general notes for what tasks were performed. Processes should be updated to require more detailed work order entry to tasks outside of the normal, or to document additional materials, supplies, or chemicals/pesticides needed to complete the task.

Parks and Recreation should also prioritize the transformation of Lucity for comprehensive asset management, including contract staff to assist with the transition.

Parks and Recreation should also communicate with Finance on determining if Lucity could potentially communicate with the new ERP, to allow for less duplicative entry.

**Recommendation 7:** Parks and Recreation should conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified within Rec1. The Department should use this information to define system requirements and either develop the associated projects and business cases, or prepare to issue a procurement for a new system based on the needs assessment results.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department should work with ITS to determine the best way to make internet available to staff who frequently work in the field. This may include cell phones or tablets with internet capabilities, or exploring expanded Wi-Fi within the parks. This should be completed before Lucy Mobile is launched.



## 3.A.9 Department of Community Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The Department uses a limited number of titles, which can result in employees in very different roles holding the same titles. The lack of titles that accurately reflect the responsibilities of the position can create challenges in promotion as well as challenges in hiring, as the posted description may not adequately reflect the responsibilities of the role.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department needs to work with County HR to assess whether additional titles can be utilized to better delineate between roles and responsibilities. The Department should ensure that growth and promotional responsibilities are appropriate for each role, rather than compared against Department or county-wide use of the title.

**Observation 2:** The Department's organizational chart is disjointed, with similar functions present in several divisions. This has created some confusion about which division is responsible for certain functions and how the functions are delineated between divisions. Additionally, some functions are not assigned within divisions, which can create discrepancies in how units are housed under management. Under one Deputy Department Director, there is a division, a team, a section, a single person, and an unclassified unit.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should conduct a functional assessment to reorganize the department by functional responsibilities, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level.

**Observation 3:** The Department is predominantly focused on community service and public-facing programming and activities. As such, there are many opportunities to support other community activities, or expand their footprint to include additional programming, initiatives or activities. Leadership frequently introduces new initiatives, or expanded activities throughout the Department. This has resulted in mission creep and conflicting priorities throughout the Department, with staff often asked to step away from their primary functions to support other initiatives and efforts. This mission creep has also led to an increased reliance on volunteer labor, and has led to stretched resources and overextended staff.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department needs to work with County leadership to develop a refined, specific mission and scope for each of the divisions, as well as a way to refer requesters to other departments or community organizations. The Department also needs to formally and consistently evaluate staff workload, and identify a plan to either add additional staff and resources to support the current programming, or reduce programming to better reflect what can be reasonably accomplished with current staffing levels.

**Observation 4:** The Department Director is focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department, including reviewing individual documents and requiring explicit review and approval for a variety of duties that are typically the responsibility of lower-level directors or managers. This emphasis has led to delays in approvals, inconsistent treatment of issues, and less autonomy and authority granted to other directors and managers, eroding their authority and benefit.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the lower-level departments and managers and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.

**Observation 5:** In an effort to create consistency for all the divisions, the Department has created departmental policies, processes, and procedures. These policies, processes, and procedures do not reflect an understanding of the operating needs of each division, and have created inefficient processes and potential waste.

**Recommendation 5:** Department leadership need to work with each division to ensure that policies either allow adequate authority to modify them to provide efficient and effective operating practices for each division, or move towards developing division-level policies and procedures, rather than department-wide policies and procedures.

**Observation 6:** Public complaints, issues, or concerns that are made through or escalated to Section, Division, Department, or County leadership may be handled differently than complaints submitted through other methods. Leadership may intervene and request specific or expedited actions that are not the normal or standard operating practices, creating inconsistent treatment of similar complaints, issues, or concerns, and the perception of preference provided high visibility customers. The individual involvement in cases also creates a perception that staff are not given the authority to perform their jobs without specific approval from leadership.

**Recommendation 6:** As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff's understanding of specific issues and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all and understand the potential precedents that are set by responses to common issues. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with appropriate division staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific issue can do so.

**Observation 7:** The Department has recently prioritized a focus on customer service and service delivery strategy. Most of this strategy is internally driven and based on leadership's perceptions of customers and their needs. There has not been consistent efforts to engage different groups of customers and stakeholders to better understand their interests and needs. This has resulted in the inconsistent definition of customer and has often failed to gain customer insight or perspective on what they desire.

**Recommendation 7:** The Department should identify and consistently collect customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions, needs assessments, and process evaluation.

**Observation 8:** The Department has a wide-spread issue with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. These issues have led to perceptions of favoritism of certain divisions and staff. Leadership often appears to be most involved in those functional areas in which they have experience and knowledge, or those that are highly visible with the public and County leadership.

This disparity is also perceived in the opportunity to engage with leadership and provide thoughts, recommendations and feedback that is received credibly and considered for action or response. Many staff feel that leadership does not want to hear from them, unless their thoughts support or validate leadership's ideas. There is also perception that information must be shared through divisional or section leadership, who may not always follow up on ideas or requests for additional information due to fear of discipline or public humiliation.

**Recommendation 8:** Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn't only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.

Leadership may also want to consider developing committees or other groups representing staff at all levels and employee titles to provide insight and cross-divisional discussion for Departmental planning and performance efforts, as well as discussing when workflow or policy modifications may have impacts on other Department workflows or functions.

**Observation 9:** The Department does not allow any teleworking. Many other County departments offer at least some level of teleworking. This discrepancy frustrates staff and many feel that it reflects a lack of trust from leadership, and is indicative of senior leadership's desire to be hands-on and involved in the day-to-day of departmental operations.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should reassess its stance on teleworking and consider introducing teleworking to positions whose job functions could be performed from home at last part of the time.

**Observation 10:** The metrics and performance data reported through Management Framework is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of the Department, and may not provide adequate context for the reported metrics to provide value. There are missed opportunities to effectively demonstrate the customer service and quality product provided by the Department.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.

# 3.B Information Technology Services Department

## Information Technology at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Facilitate the use of technology throughout the Gwinnett County government
- 2 | Provide high-availability server and storage infrastructure and services with redundancy, failover, and load balancing for all mission critical applications
- 3 | Align information technology (“IT”) resources with the needs of business units to improve customer service
- 4 | Evaluate and implement emerging technologies to solve problems, enhance processes and services, and assist with definition the direction for the Gwinnett County government
- 5 | Provide and maintain secure and reliable IT to meet the County’s changing needs

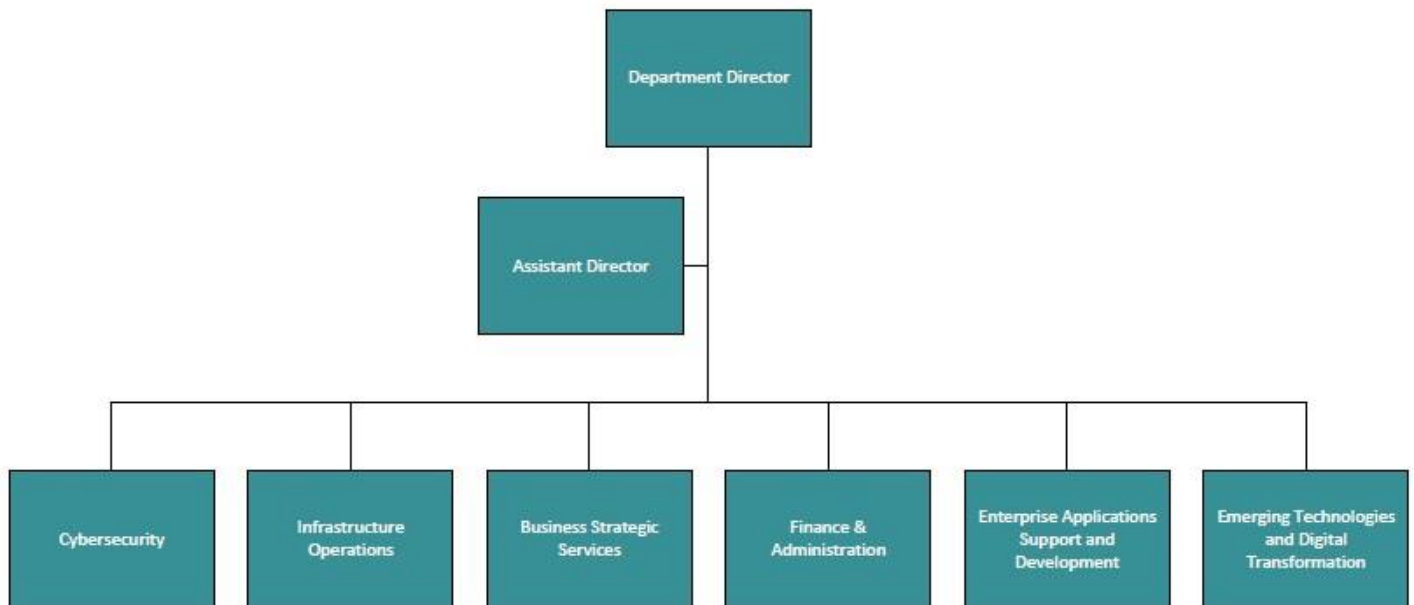
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$47,226,935</b>	<b>\$8,209,124</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	*through June 2022	IT Services
FTE	Filled	114
	Allocated	145

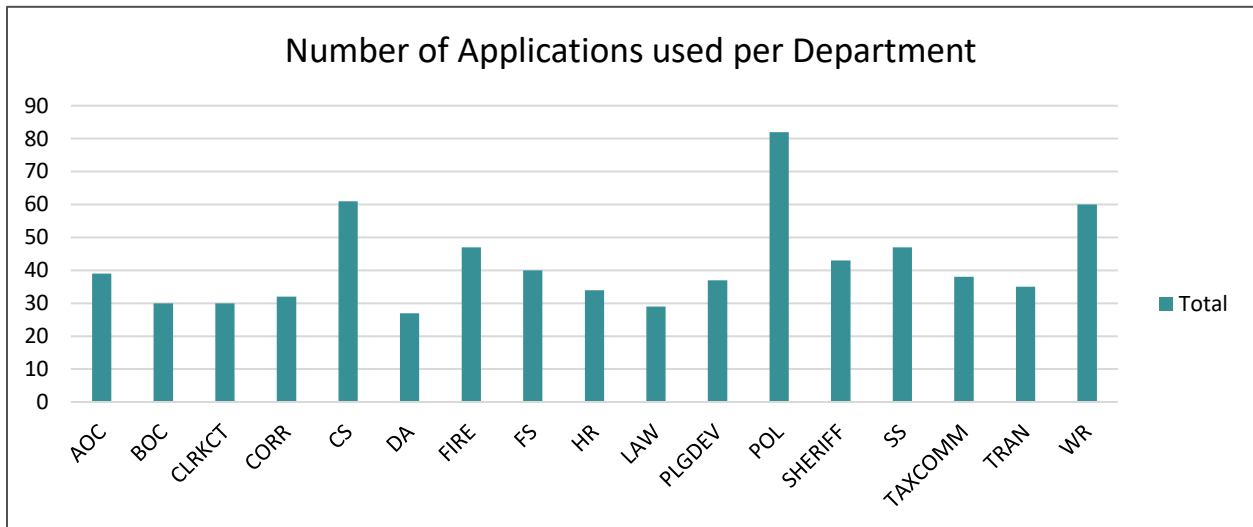
## Organization Structure



## Introduction

Information Technology Services (“ITS”) provides service to all County departments, including the Board of Commissioners, Community Services, Corrections, Courts, Elections, Financial Services, Fire and Emergency Services, Human Resources, Planning and Development, Police Services, Sheriff, Support Services, Tax Commissioner, Transportation, and Water Resources. ITS currently consists of 164 full-time, 19 part-time, and 72 contracted resources working across seven divisions.

The table below depicts the approximate number of applications and technologies the County Department supports.



ITS’s services include data center and network operations, end user computer support, information security and compliance, business application support, technology planning, and innovation, and project management and governance. Like other public sector information technology departments, Gwinnett County’s ITS has many outdated systems, applications, and infrastructure components. ITS recognizes these challenges and has developed a strategic plan to transform the Department’s organizational structure and update the County’s business applications and technology infrastructure for the future.

## Organization

The ITS is led by the County’s Chief Information Officer (“CIO”) and is organized into seven divisions:

- Office of the CIO (Director’s Office)
- Business Strategic Services
- Enterprise Applications Support and Development
- Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation
- Finance and Administration
- Infrastructure Operations
- Cybersecurity

### Office of the CIO (Director's Office)

The Information Technology Services Director's Office is responsible for providing strategic vision and planning for the technical direction of Gwinnett County by aligning IT industry standards and approaches with the County's goals. It is also responsible for IT training across the County. The CIO leads the Division. The Assistant Director, Public Safety Project Manager, and Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator report to the CIO. The Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator handles and coordinates training for the Department. One full-time Technical Trainer, two part-time Technical Trainers, and a part-time Administrative Assistant report to the Executive Assistant/Project Coordinator. Currently, the Assistant Director and two part-time Technical Trainers positions are vacant.

It should be noted that Public Safety Project Manager reports directly to the CIO instead of the Project Management Office in the Business Strategic Services Division. In addition, it should be noted that due to leadership vacancies within the Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division, the Geospatial Solutions Unit Manager, Public Safety Solutions Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Managers report directly to the Department Director (CIO).

### Business Strategic Services

The Business Strategic Services Division is responsible for providing business consulting, process improvements, project management, and the application of technologies to the County's internal Departments. The Business Strategic Services Division is comprised of the Business Relationship Management Unit and the Project Management Office. The Business Relationship Management Unit is the liaison between management and IT Departments. The Project Management Office ("PMO") is responsible for providing project management to the County's IT Projects. The Division consists of 10 full-time employee positions, four staff-augmented contractor positions, and five temporary contractor positions. There are several vacancies in the Division, including one project manager position, one business analyst, one PMO Financial Analyst, and one business relationship specialist position.

Due to the demand and workload of the existing project management staff, the Division is in the process of adding several contract project managers to augment the existing project management staff. To source the contract project managers, the County has issued a Request for Proposal ("RFP") for a Project Management Managed Service Provider ("MSP") that will provide the Division with a dedicated source for project management and business analyst resources. Once the new MSP is procured and the new project managers onboarded, it is expected that the new Project Managers will alleviate the workload of the current staff. Still, there is concern that managing the additional staff will increase the workload for Division managers who already have full workloads.

In addition, the Division is currently hiring contractors to fill the Business Process Analysts positions to support requirements definition for projects that require Agile development practices. Agile projects have specific needs and require specific business analyst skills to elicit requirements and write user stories. With such heavy workloads and a lack of Agile knowledge/training, it is difficult for current staff to analyze Agile projects thoroughly. It is anticipated that the Project Management MSP will be able to assist in sourcing Agile Business Analysts.

## Enterprise Applications Support and Development

The Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division is responsible for developing, maintaining, and supporting the Gwinnett County core business systems. The Division is comprised of The Business Solutions, Enterprise Resources Planning (“ERP”), and Data Services Units which focus on integrating, developing, and supporting core technical business systems. The Division Director is supported by the three Unit Managers. There Division is comprised of 53 positions consisting of 37 full-time employees, two part-time employees, 11 staff augmentation contractors, and two temporary contractors. Currently, there are 28 positions with 10 vacancies in the Enterprise Application Unit, 14 positions in the Business Solutions Unit with two vacant positions, and 11 positions in the Data Services Unit with two vacancies. Similar to other divisions within the Department, hiring has been challenging due to the lengthy hiring process, low pay, and lack of teleworking options.

## Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation

The Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division is a new division focused on digital automation and business optimization using new and emerging technological solutions. To create the new Division, the Geospatial Information Solutions (“GIS”), Public Safety Solutions, and Web Solution Units were moved from the Enterprise Applications Division into the new Division. To complete the Division, a New Technology Solutions Unit will be created.

Currently, the Division consists of 24 full-time employees, two part-time employees, three contractor employees, and three temporary contractor employees. There are seven vacant positions throughout the Division. Four of the vacancies are for the Department Director and Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Solutions Unit. It should be noted that due to leadership vacancies within the Division, the Geospatial Solutions Unit Manager, Public Safety Solutions Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Managers report directly to the Department Director (CIO).

## Fiscal and Administrative

The Fiscal and Administrative Division provides fiscal and administrative support services for the Information Technology Services Department. Services included contract management and oversight, asset management, human resources administration, and financial and procurement support. The Fiscal and Administration Division Director leads the Division, and the Financial Management Office Section is led by a Business Manager, who is supported by two full-time Financial Analyst IIs, three part-time Financial Analysts II, a Program Analyst III, and a Business Services Associate (“BSA”) II.

The Office Manager oversees the HR/Administration Section, which is comprised of an Administrative Associate IV, two Administrative Associate IIs, two part-time Receptionists, and a part-time IT Associate. The Asset Management Section was recently created and is led by the Asset Management Manager. In addition to being the Asset Management Manager, the Section has one full-time and one part-time position. The Division consists of 8 full-time employees, seven part-time employees, and four temporary contractors. There are four vacant positions throughout the Division, including the part-time Acquisitions Assistant and a Financial Analyst II, and two full-time Administrative Associates III.

## Infrastructure Operations

The Infrastructure Operations Division is responsible for providing continuous operation of the network infrastructure, the county data centers, Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”), physical & virtual servers, Microsoft Exchange, and various end-user computing technologies. The Infrastructure Operations Division is comprised of the Network Operations Division and the Unit the Systems & Storage Unit and the End User Support Unit. The Department is led by the Infrastructure and Operations Deputy Director. The Network Operation Division consists of 24 full-time employees, two part-time employees, and 15 staff augmentation contractors. The Systems & Storage Unit and the End User Support Unit consist of 30 full-time employees, three part-time employees, nine contractors, and six temporary contractors. There are five vacant positions throughout the Division and two additional positions that are being filled and awaiting a start date.

## Cybersecurity

The Cybersecurity Division is responsible for securing Gwinnett County’s IT assets. The division is responsible for defining, administering, and ensuring compliance with the County’s Information Security Policy and industry best practices. The Cybersecurity Division works with the other County departments to identify security risks, detect potential cyberattacks, and respond as necessary. The Division consists of nine full-time employees, six contractors, and one temporary contractor. There are four vacant positions: the IT Systems Supervisor, 2 Security Architects, and a Security Compliance Control Assessor.

## Strategic Priorities

### Strategic Plan

ITS has developed a Strategic Plan to guide the adaption of technologies to improve the County’s business processes and technical infrastructure. The Strategic Plan consists of four strategic pillars and 10 strategic goals. The four strategic pillars include Security, Service Delivery, Communication, and Innovation. The strategic goals are as follows:

- 1. Strategic Approach:** Take a strategic approach to IT planning and operations by adopting industry standards and practices that align with the County’s strategies and goals
- 2. High Availability:** Provide high availability of data and voice networks through a robust and reliable network and server infrastructure that follows industry standards and architecture, as well as server and storage infrastructure and services with redundancy, failover, and load balancing for all mission-critical applications
- 3. Cloud Technology:** Move applications to vendor-hosted and cloud-based servers and storage when possible and focus IT personnel work on data and application integration
- 4. Customer Service:** Improve customer service and be known as a trusted partner that is proactive and responsive in aligning IT resources with the needs of the business units
- 5. Dynamic Infrastructure:** Maintain a secure, reliable, and dynamic information technology infrastructure
- 6. Emerging Technology:** Evaluate and implement emerging technologies to solve problems, enhance processes and services, and assist with defining the direction for the Gwinnett governmental community
- 7. Automation & Optimization:** Facilitate the use of technology throughout the County



8. **Secure and Reliable Information:** Provide and maintain secure and reliable information technologies to meet the County’s changing needs
9. **Professional Development:** Provide professional development and training in the use of technology to increase the productivity, efficiency, and communication expertise of staff
10. **Partner for Success:** Collaborate with County departments for shared success

The key strategic initiatives lay the foundation for the projects that comprise ITS’s Strategic Roadmap for the next three years (2022 – 2025). The projects are categorized into three groups as follows:

1. **Business Support:** Each County initiative is supported by a major IT project, and each project has unique IT challenges that require IT support. The following Business Support projects are included in ITS’s Strategic Roadmap:
  - a. Aumentum Replacement
  - b. Lucity Mobile
  - c. 800 MHz Radio Program
  - d. Public Safety Solution
  - e. Jail Management System
  - f. Microsoft Project Online
  - g. Multiple Accela Module Implementation and Enhancements
2. **ITS Excellence:** These projects will increase IT process maturity and systematically improve IT. The following ITS Excellence projects are included in ITS’s Strategic Roadmap:
  - a. Network Modernization Program
  - b. Countywide Cabling Upgrade Program
  - c. Single Sign-on County User ID
  - d. ArcGIS Cloud Migration
  - e. Services Payments Processing Standardization
3. **Innovation:** These projects will improve future innovation capabilities and decrease risk by increasing technology maturity. The following Innovation projects are included in ITS’s Strategic Roadmap:
  - a. Digital Automation Program
  - b. Website Modernization Project
  - c. Real-Time Event Notification
  - d. Asset Management Solution

### Organization Transformation

In the Fall of 2021, ITS contracted with Jabian Consulting to conduct an organization design project to document the County’s current state IT operating model and define the future-state operation module. The Jabian report proposes a future state model for operation, including new Departmental responsibilities, functions/applications, and positions. The future state proposed creating an Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division to position ITS for the future.

At the time of this Operational and Performance Assessment, ITS established the structure for the Emerging Technologies and Transformation Division and transferred the Geospatial, Public Safety, and Web Development units to the new division. However, ITS has yet to hire the Division Director and New Technologies Manager.

In addition to the organization changes, the Jabian report identifies several key themes or opportunities for improvement and strategies for improving each theme. The opportunities for improvement identified in the Jabian report include resource constraints, high turnover, vision for the future, staffing challenges, innovation, collaboration, alignment of performance and strategy, security, and cloud technology.

At the time of this Operational and Performance Assessment, ITS implemented several of Jabian's recommendations, such as conducting an Information Technology Road Show, procuring a Project Management Managed Service Provider, reducing ITS's data center footprint, and migrating applications to the cloud. However, several more significant strategic recommendations that require additional funding, such as developing a competitive salary structure and a funding model to support technology upgrades, need support from County Leadership.

### **Leadership and Management**

Most of ITS's leadership and management team have been with the County for at least five to six years. There are several vacant leadership positions within the Department, including the Assistant Director for the Department, the Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Director, the New Technologies Solution Unit Manager, and Web Services Unit Manager. Due to the leadership vacancy, the staff in the Divisions and Units report directly to the CIO, placing additional management responsibilities on the Department Director. In addition, the Department Director is involved in many detailed decisions and approvals, often resulting in process bottlenecks. While the Department Director's involvement in tactical decisions may be attributed to leadership vacancies within the Department, the lack of delegating authority for tactical decisions uses time that could be more effectively used on ITS's strategic initiatives.

As with other public sector information technology departments, Gwinnett County's ITS has several outdated systems, applications, and infrastructure components. ITS recognizes these challenges and has developed a strategic plan to transform the Department's organizational structure and update the County's business applications and technology infrastructure for the future. ITS's Leadership Team communicated its vision to the Department and is conducting a Road Show with the other County Departments to communicate the vision and report on progress against the strategic plan. However, full implementation of the strategic plan will require the support of County leadership and additional funding.

In addition to implementing the new organizational structure and strategic plan, Department Leadership is trying to change the Department's culture to become more agile and results-oriented. As with any organization, culture change is difficult and is often met with resistance. Employees noted that, generally, they understand their roles, Employees do not feel, however, that leadership is consistently making decisions that are in the best interest of the County, nor are the decisions being made communicated to staff in a timely and effective manner.

Through our observations and analysis, it was observed that the staff is dissatisfied with the Department's telework policy. The current policy allows for non-management staff to telework one day per week. While the current telework policy is damaging employee morale, it is also prohibiting this Department from attracting new talent, as indicated by the reports of candidates that decline offers due to the lack of teleworking opportunities.

There is friction within the Business Strategic Services Division between the Division Director and PMO Manager over management styles and project management philosophy. These diverging opinions have led to a fractured organization and disfunction within the Division. As a result of the disfunction, the contract project managers and PMO Financial Analyst report to the Division Director rather than the PMO Manager, and the Division Director assigns the project managers to projects rather than the PMO Manager. When a new project starts, the Division Director assigns the next available project manager to the project regardless of the project manager's domain expertise within the project subject area. This method of assigning project managers has resulted in mismatched expectations, a lack of functional project management, and projects that do not meet customers' expectations.

## Technology

ITS utilizes many software applications and tools as the County's technology service provider. However, RemedyForce is the primary system used across the Department for service requests.

### RemedyForce

RemedyForce is a comprehensive IT service management system used by ITS for technology service requests (IT Tickets), asset management, and contract management.

#### *Technology Service Requests*

RemedyForce is the workflow engine for ITS to support the other County Departments. When a user contacts the IT Help Desk, a service request is created in RemedyForce and routed to the appropriate support group. Staff within the support group works on the service request and communicates directly with the end-user to resolve the issues until the service ticket is closed or escalated. Given the data captured in RemedyForce, the system manages customer service response time and reports on performance metrics.

#### *Asset Management*

End-users who need to acquire new assets, both software and hardware, can submit a self-service request form in RemedyForce to request the purchase of a new asset. Once all equipment approvals have been obtained, Asset Management will issue the purchase order (PO) and create a "receiving" task with RemedyForce.

#### *Contracts*

RemedyForce has basic contract capabilities. All active technology contracts are entered and managed in RemedyForce.

## Customer Service

As an internal service function, ITS considers other County departments as primary customers. ITS has identified several different ways to focus on customer service.

## Application and System Requests

County departments communicate their systems needs and requirements through the Business Strategic Services Division's Business Relationship Managers. When a request becomes a project, dedicated project managers from the Project Management Office in the Business Strategic Services Division are assigned to the project.

## Services Request

End users communicate their requests to ITS through the IT Help Desk. When a user contacts the IT Help Desk, a service request is created in RemedyForce and routed to the appropriate support group. Staff within the support group work on the service request and communicate directly with the end-user to resolve the issues until the service request is closed. To improve communication and educate the users on the IT Strategic Plan, ITS is conducting a Road Show presentation with each Department.

## Regular Communication Channels

There are several regularly scheduled meetings among the teams of the Division and with other Departments. Besides the team-centric formal and informal discussions, scheduled meetings facilitate communication and exchanging ideas. Divisions capture and share performance metrics in meetings, but there has previously been no Department-wide survey to capture feedback.

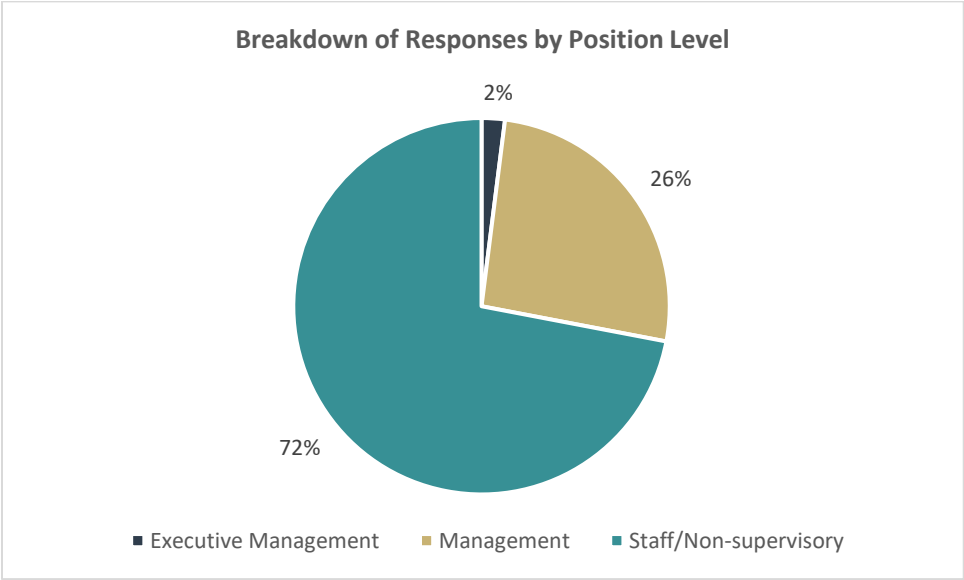
Type	Frequency	Description
Staff Meetings	Monthly	Staff meetings are held on the first Friday of each month, alternating between Management only (Supervisors and up) and all staff. During the monthly staff meetings, important announcements and reminders are shared, and units and teams are allowed to share what is happening in their respective areas.
New Hire Orientation	Monthly	Each month ITS HR and Directors welcome new employees to the department. During the presentation, employees learn more about the county structure, its mission and vision, and the Gwinnett Standard. In addition, they learn about the department's structure and the department's strategies.
CIO Direct Reports Meetings	Weekly	Each week the CIO meets with her direct reports to share/receive important updates related to activities and projects, staffing updates, etc.
BRM Customer Meetings	Monthly	Each month the Business Relationship Managers ("BRMs") meet with their assigned customers (business units) to review/discuss their technology-related needs, issues, concerns, etc.
BRM Quarterly Customer Meetings	Quarterly	Each quarter the Business Relationship Managers and departmental leadership meet with their assigned customers (business units) to review/discuss their technology-related needs, issues, concerns, etc.

Type	Frequency	Description
ITS Road Show	Annually	Recently, ITS leadership conducted "Road Show" sessions with each business unit to provide an overview of the ITS organizational structure, share the ITS mission, vision, and strategy, celebrate recent successes, and discuss how they can better partner with County departments.

**Survey**

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Fifty responses were received, representing an approximate rate of 26%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of response by position level:



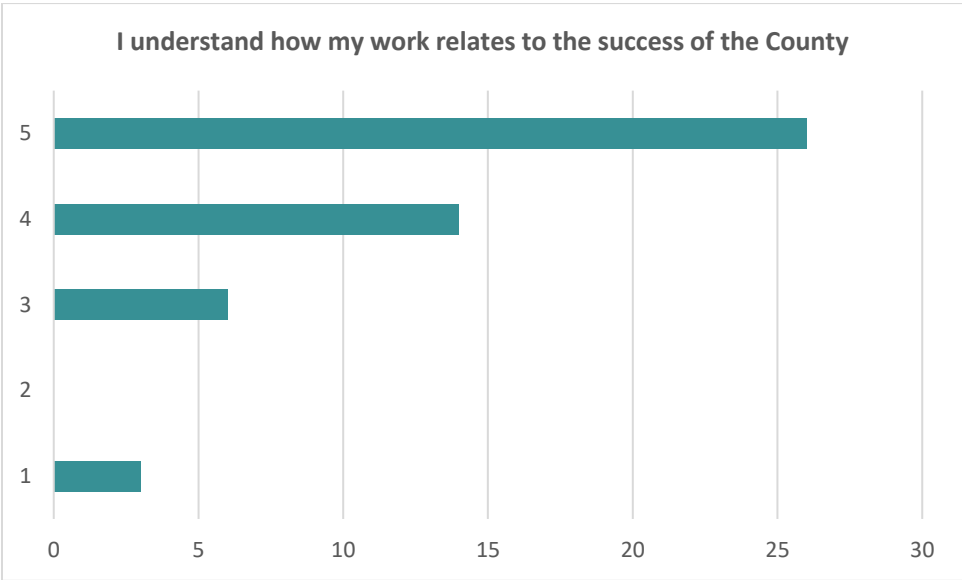
As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff. The following table shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

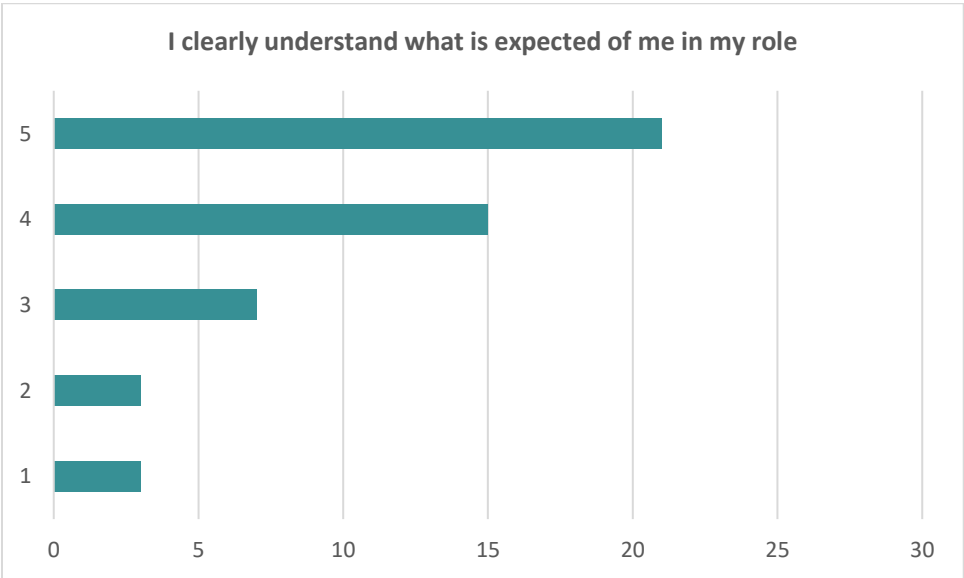
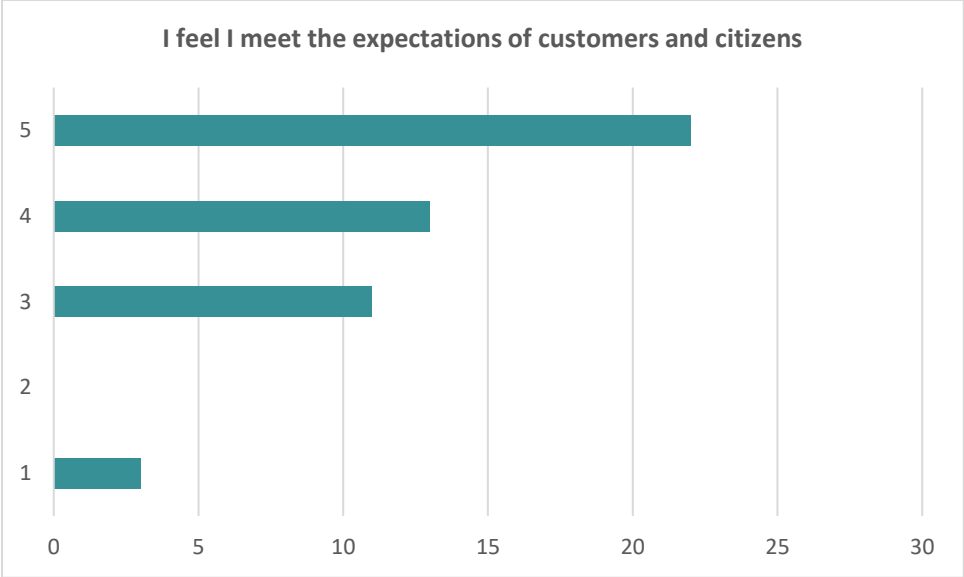
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

Survey Statement	Average Score
Community goals are clearly communicated	3.39
I understand my mission and vision of my department	3.63
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.22
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	3.98
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.35
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.24
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.04
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.33
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.55
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.45
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.16
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.00
My supervisor encourages my professional development	3.63
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.40
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.00
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	2.73
I am proud to work for the County	3.88
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	3.20

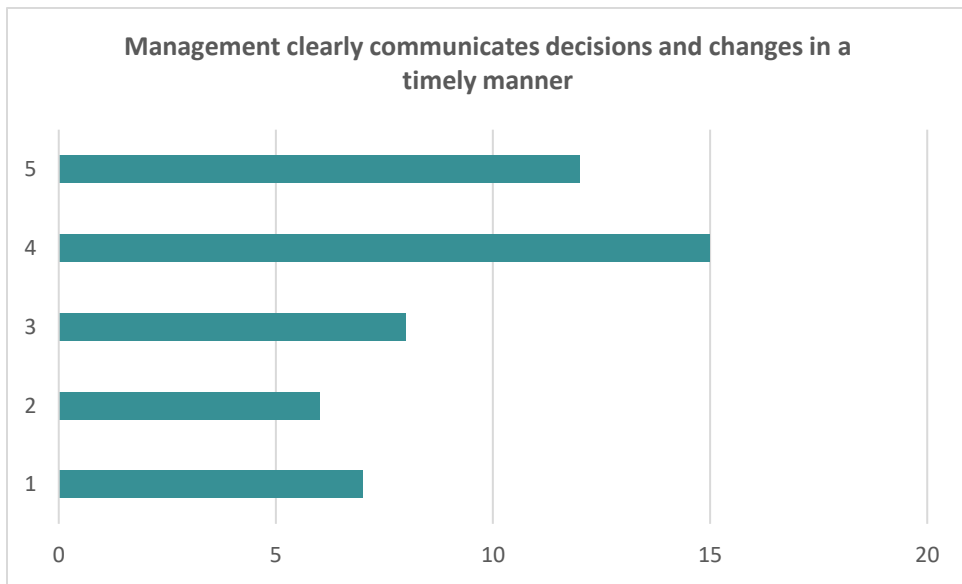
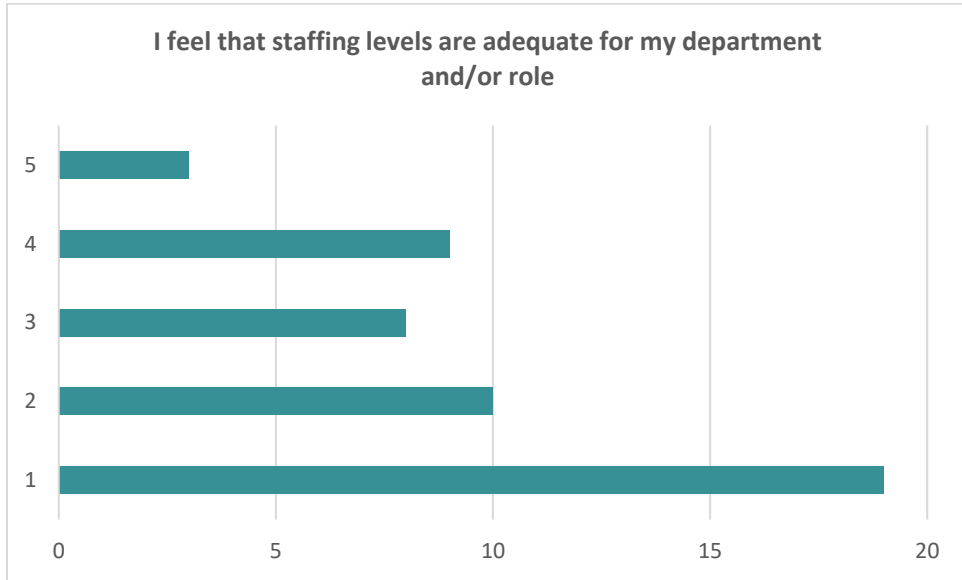
The average score for all the survey statement is 3.40. The highest score is 4.22 and the lowest score is 2.33.

The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:

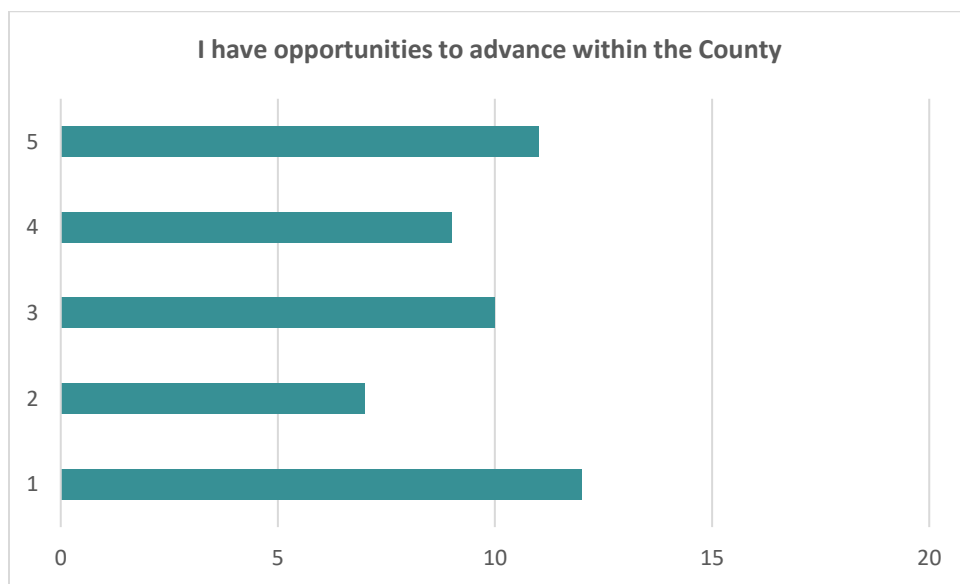
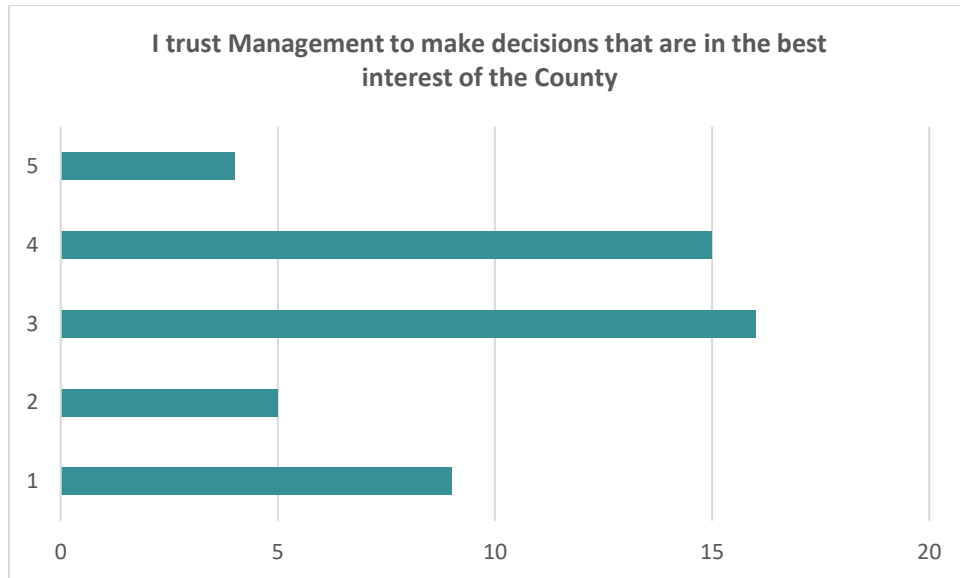




The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs (two responses were tied for third-lowest score):







In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the staff’s teamwork and technical skills as the biggest strengths of the Department. Respondents also appreciated the continuing education opportunities provided to the staff.
- Respondents identified low morale as the greatest detractor to productivity. According to respondents, morale issues stem from lack of communication, leadership, and trust from management. Respondents felt management is quick to blame staff rather than admit fault at a higher level or acknowledge changes are needed in processes.

- Respondents noted the Department’s culture is one of demoralization due to lack of trust from management. Respondents suggested the demoralization limits innovation and improvements.
- Respondents recommended improving staffing levels, eliminating micromanaging, and creating a better work-life balance through a hybrid work model as means to improve morale and service delivery.
- Respondents suggested the Department relies on antiquated tools and processes, including software applications (like SAP) and wet signatures. Management does not embrace change and process improvements, according to respondents.

## 3.B.1 Department of Information Technology – Office of the CIO

The Office of the CIO is responsible for providing strategic vision and planning for the technical direction of Gwinnett County by aligning IT industry standards and approaches with the County's goals. It is also responsible for IT training across the County.

### Key Functions

Essential divisional functions include the following:

- Strategic Vision and Technical Direction
- Training

#### Strategic Vision and Technical Direction

The Office of the CIO's responsibilities includes providing the overall strategic vision and technical direction of the Information Technology Services Department.

#### Training

The Executive Assistant's responsibilities include providing professional development and training to ITS staff on multiple IT solutions to increase staff productivity, efficiency, and communication expertise.

### Communications

ITS's leadership team meets with division directors weekly for operational updates. They also receive daily reports on network operations, help desk tickets, security incidents, patches, and updates. In addition, leadership meets every other month with division managers to discuss updates and meets with all employees during the alternating months.

Per the recommendation in the Jabian Report, ITS has developed a Road Show plan to define its services, engage stakeholders, and communicate its delivery process. The purpose of the Road Show is to build awareness of ITS's vision, mission, goals, accomplishments, roadmaps, and strategy.

### Strategic Initiatives

The Office of the CIO is responsible for leading the implementation of ITS's strategic initiatives identified in the previous section. To build awareness of ITS's vision, mission, goals, accomplishments, roadmaps, and strategy, the Office of the CIO is conducting a 'Road Show' with each County Department. As part of the Road Show presentation, each Division Director discusses their division's focus, accomplishments for the previous year, and projects for the forthcoming years. The Road Show aims to build executive relationships with each Department and discuss the benefits of partnerships with ITS.

### Data and Performance Analysis

The Director's Office receives daily reports on network operations, enterprise applications, and security. The reports display the status of the applications and network operations using the following categories: Good (Green), Issues (Yellow), and Outage (Red). The daily status report also depicts the number of service requests (or help desk tickets) by category status. Of the three sample reports, the Information Security Report provided the most detailed and useful information.

Additionally, ITS provides two metrics to the County's Management Framework: SLA % on Time and Core Network and Telecommunication Platform / Availability. These metrics are limited and do not provide useful information.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Assistant Director and Emerging Technology positions are vacant. These vacant positions place more responsibility on the Director due to the lack of senior-level staff to delegate tasks and responsibilities.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should continue the search to fill the Assistant Director and vacant position within the Emerging Technology Division or promote from within and backfill one of the Division Director positions.

**Observation 2:** The daily reports on network operations, enterprise application, and security are inconsistent in format and provide limited information with no trend analysis.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should expand the information provided on the daily network operations and enterprise application reports to be consistent with the daily information security report. Determine which metrics provide the information to monitor performance and identify areas of improvement. Develop a program to collect the metrics required for the new performance indicators with a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.

**Observation 3:** The Road Show presentations are an excellent first step to building awareness of ITS's services and fostering relationships with the other County departments. The Road Show concept or format should be expanded to allow more interactions with the end-user departments to get feedback and discuss their application and technology needs.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should expand the Road Show concept to create more forums for discussion with County departments that are less presentation and more collaborative conversation. This concept could be implemented at multiple levels within ITS, such as an executive forum or a forum focused on a specific business application or technology.

## 3.B.2 Department of Information Technology – Business Strategic Services Division

The Business Strategic Services Division is responsible for providing business consulting, process improvements, project management, and the application of technologies to the County's internal Departments. The Business Strategic Services Division is comprised of the Business Relations Management Unit and the Project Management Office. The Business Relationship Management Unit is the liaison between the end-user Department's management and IT. The Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for providing project management to the County's IT Projects.

### Key Functions

Essential Divisional functions include the following:

- Business Relationship Management
- Project Management Office

The Division manages approximately 100 projects across 14 divisions within its portfolio. They also serve as the liaison for several systems co-managed with external providers, such as Accela and Lucity. Additionally, the Division submitted 36 IT business cases and developed 20 strategic IT roadmaps for County Departments.

### Business Relationship Management

The Business Relationship Management Unit is the liaison between the end-user Department's management and ITS.

The Business Relationship Management Unit's responsibilities include:

- Serving as IT point of contact for business senior leadership and management on IT service-related matters and issues
- Identifying technology solutions to improve business processes and challenges of Departments
- Working with Departments to identify and develop business cases for capital projects
- Ensuring service levels are tracked and reported to the customers
- Informing IT senior management of customers' concerns and performance issues
- Working closely with IT management to resolve performance issues and seek improvements

### Project Management Office

The Project Management Office (PMO) is responsible for providing project management to the County's IT Projects.

The Project Management Office's responsibilities include:

- Providing project management resources to ensure consistent project delivery
- Managing the IT Project Portfolio
- Managing selected IT projects for the County and ensuring project delivery

- Establishing and ensuring compliance with standard project management methodologies
- Promoting project management best practices

## Communications

This section outlines the methods of communication the Division and units use internally to communicate as a team and externally to communicate with customers and/or other departments and divisions.

### Internal

There is minimal communication between the BRM and PMO leadership, as there is no Business Strategic Service meeting between the PMO Unit and BRM. The units do not engage with one another in Division meetings, which results in siloed information between projects and within the Division.

The BRM Unit holds monthly meetings with end-users to discuss project status and updates. They also have monthly meetings with senior management to identify potential issues and if they can step in to assist.

### External

The BRM Unit works as a conduit for the County department's business needs and advocates for their IT business needs and standards. They work closely with customers to determine their current and future state desires and collaborate to identify existing IT solutions to support those needs, considering the number of users and scope of the application.

The project managers within the PMO division work directly with customers on each project, but there is little communication between customers and PMO leadership.

## Strategic Initiatives

### Microsoft Project Online

The Division has a strategic initiative to implement Microsoft ("MS") Project Online and Power BI to gain visibility over project success and analyze costs. As part of this initiative, there is a desire to include information from the financial and human resources system to better understand labor costs, track expenses, and deliver business value.

A vendor was brought in to build the system to implement MS Project Online for the division, but the implementation failed to meet expectations. A second vendor was hired to improve the systems and integrate MS Project Online with the County's SAP Financial and HR system to create project metric dashboards in Power BI. However, there was disagreement within the Division about the data input screen, and the project was ended before the go-live date. Currently, the Division is reassessing its needs and options. In the meantime, the Division is using the original Project and Power BI system, which lacks dashboards and integration with other applications.

### Project Management Staffing

Another initiative is staffing 100% of projects with certified Project Managers. The Division created a Request for Proposal to solicit firms for the provision of Managed Services for IT Project Management to provide on-demand project management services to augment PM and IT Business Analyst positions within the PMO office of the Division. The RFP was issued on June 16, 2022.

The lack of Project Managers and Business Analyst staff has negatively affected the Unit's work. Project Managers have high workloads and may act in the Business Analyst role on Agile projects. As a result, it is challenging to elicit requirements to build strong business cases and projects effectively. The lack of strong business cases has resulted in important projects not being approved or funded because the business case did not provide sufficient justification.

### System Upgrades and Automation

The Division supports the strategic initiative outlined in the ITS strategic roadmap. The Division is involved in each project of this initiative, acting as the liaison with the other ITS divisions to gather requirements, identify and remediate issues, and provide PMP-certified project managers and Agile-certified business analysts for project support.

### Methodology

The Division created a Project Methodology and Operations Guide to provide the PMO with the framework for successful project management and delivery. The guide provides critical components, processes, standards, and templates to fully engage and implement project management lifecycle phases and activities of intake, initiation, planning, execution, closing and monitoring, and control of ITS projects. The guide includes standard PMO templates for each project phase and guidance on how to use each template, an artifacts checklist for projects of all sizes, and a project management toolkit.

## Systems and Applications

### Microsoft Project Online

Microsoft Project Online tracks data between finance and human resources to analyze costs between the two Departments.

### Microsoft Excel

Excel is used for project tracking.

### Adobe

Adobe is used to sign documents securely.

### SharePoint

SharePoint is used for document management and collaboration.

### FileNet

FileNet is used for high-end workflow systems and enterprise content management.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Business Relationship Management Unit scores performance based on multiple areas:

- Marketing of IT services
- Analysis of the quality and descriptiveness of business cases
- Customer satisfaction
- Innovativeness and strategic alignment of projects and applications

The Project Management Office Unit scores project performance based on multiple areas:

- Number of open and closed projects
- Project phase against planned state
- Capital vs. Operational

The Project Management metrics listed above provide minimum project statistics and do not provide project metrics for project performance-based completion within the allotted timeframe, resource allocation, or budget.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Business Strategic Services Division is understaffed for the Project Management Office and Business Relationship Management Unit. There are currently ten open positions within the Division, resulting in heavy workloads for the existing staff. The Division is hopeful that hiring a Project Management Managed Services Provider will relieve the staffing challenges. However, the awarded MSP will likely face the same challenges with filling positions due to the onsite work requirement.

**Recommendation 1:** As part of the overall Department recommendation regarding expanding the Department's telework policy, the Division needs to consider how the policy is impacting its services providers and adjust the policy accordingly. For more information, refer to Department Level Observation 2.

**Observation 2:** The Division Director is overloaded. In addition to her regular job duties, the Director serves as the Business Relationship Manager for some departments, manages three Contractor PMs, assigns project managers to projects, and conducts interviews for vacant staff positions while trying to maintain the day-to-day functions of the role. Also, there is fragmentation and a lack of communication within the Division resulting from the friction between the Division Director and the PMO Manager.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department Director, Department Human Resources Administration staff and the County's Human Resources Department should coach the Division Director on managing the Division's workload and repairing the fractures within the Business Strategic Services Division. The Department Director and the County's Human Resources Department should monitor progress and intervene if necessary.

**Observation 3:** The Business Relationship Management Unit is understaffed and cannot meet service expectations for developing customer business cases. Due to the number of IT projects submitted for approval and the Unit's current workload, the Business Relationship Managers cannot complete the analysis and due diligence required for thorough business cases. The lack of strong business cases has resulted in important projects not being approved or funded because the business case did not provide sufficient justification.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should examine the workload and demand for the Business Relationship Managers and determine if the Division needs additional staff. Due to the nature of the work and the importance of effective business cases, the Division should seek additional business analysts from the Project Management Service Provider or hire outside consulting firms to complete the business cases for critical initiatives.



**Observation 4:** The Division developed the PMO Methodology and Operations Guide to provide standardized processes, procedures, and templates for project implementation. However, there is disagreement within the Division on Project Management standards. Project managers often write and use standards that do not align with the Division’s governance and procedures, resulting in conflicting standards, policies, and procedures.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should revisit the existing project management standards, tools, and templates. The PMO Unit should work as a team to update the standards to account for multiple project management methodologies (Waterfall, Agile, and Waterfall/Agile Hybrid) and require the use of the method for all projects.

**Observation 5:** The Division lacks a tactical process for analyzing project performance on a detailed level, particularly with financial and risk data, which is critical for optimal project performance. The Division tracks high-level project performance metrics but does not track data that could be beneficial for process improvement and cost savings. Also, there is no comprehensive PM system for tracking time and activities on each project or project team performance.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should validate the requirements for a comprehensive project management system and conduct a fit-gap analysis of the requirements against Microsoft Project Online. If Microsoft Project Online meets the requirements, complete the current implementation based on the requirements validations. If Microsoft Project Online does not meet the requirements, conduct a vendor selection for a replacement.

### 3.B.3 Department of Information Technology – Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division

The Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division is responsible for developing, maintaining, and supporting the Gwinnett County core business systems. The Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division is comprised of the Business Applications, Business Analytics, Unit Enterprise Resources Planning (“ERP”), Enterprise Applications, and Data Services units. They focus on integrating, developing, and supporting core technical business systems.

#### Key Functions

Essential Divisional functions include the development and support of the following enterprise software applications:

- Business Applications
- Enterprise Applications
- Data Services

#### Business Solutions

The Business Solutions Unit provides all County Departments with technical expertise and user support for non-SAP applications. The Unit manages the County’s extensive portfolio of business applications.

The following table describes several of Gwinnett County’s business applications and the County Departments using the applications.

Software Application	Application Description	Departments
Aderant Total Office	Business management software used by the Law Department to manage cases, task management, time, billing, workflow, etc.	Law
Aumentum	Tax Collection System	Financial Services Tax Commissioner
Court Display System	Supports the hardware and software for the electronic docket display for the courts	Court Administration
e-Builder	Construction Project Management	Community Services, Support Services
ElectioNet	Used by Elections for ENR (Elections Night Reporting) to State and Federal Government	Community Services
EnergyCAP	The application is used by Support Services to manage utility bill accounting and analyze energy use	Support Services
Fairfax Quick Modules Software	Used for remitting and depositing checks collected for property tax and motor vehicle tax collections. Also used to process workflows for homestead exemption applications and other documents	Tax Commissioner

Software Application	Application Description	Departments
Fleet Focus, Fuel Focus, KPI Dashboard	Fleet uses them for fuel, asset, inventory, and vehicle fleet management. It integrates with the fuel sites across the County and with NAPA for parts	Support Services
ICON Justice 360	Jury management support and jury text-email notification system	Court Administration
JCATS Juvenile Court Activity Tracking System (JCATS) CMS	The system is used to manage scheduling/payments for legal cases for services Indigent Defense, Court Interpreters, and Court Reporting for legal cases for services	Court Administration Juvenile Court
Lucity	Asset management and work request/order system used to maintain building inventory and track work performed and resources used on those buildings  Community Services uses Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) to maintain Parks asset inventory and track work performed and resources used on park and equipment assets. EAM interfaces with Gwinnett County's GIS by utilizing map services, so EAM users are provided a geographical portrayal of assets and work locations	Support Services Community Services
Management Framework Application	Used to measure County departmental performance	All Departments Finance Services
Opex	Mail sorter and opener used by the Tax Commissioners' Office	Tax Commissioner
PastPerfect	Software specifically for museums and capturing artifact inventory used by Interpretive Resources	Community Services
Rec1	The application is utilized by Community Services to register customers and conduct point-of-sale transactions	Community Services
Secure 32	The Tax Commissioner's office uses them to issue checks	Tax Commissioner
Versatile	Manage, sort, share, and retain paper and electronic records, maintain retention schedule, execute legal holds and e-discovery, and classify and retain emails	Clerk of Court Support Services

**Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)**

The ERP Solutions Unit provides development, maintenance, and support activities for County's SAP ERP system. SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, customer relationships, and procurement business processes. Gwinnett County's SAP implementation consists of 10 modules that provide the following business functions.

SAP Module	Business Function	
Business Warehouse (BW) - SAP's data warehouse for storing and reporting on SAP data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Budget Preparation</li> <li>• Budget Administration</li> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Financial Reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Systems Controls</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Debt Management</li> <li>• Cash Management</li> </ul>
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) SAP module used to automate and integrate customer-facing activities: sales marketing, customer service, and e-commerce (CP1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Customer Accounts</li> <li>• Manage Residential Hauler</li> <li>• Contracts</li> <li>• Code Enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Account Management</li> <li>• Airport Operations</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Field Operations</li> </ul>
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Central Component of SAP (RP1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract Management</li> <li>• Financial System Controls</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Preparation</li> <li>• Administration</li> </ul>
Employee Self Service (ESS) is an application utilized by County employees to review and update benefits & payroll information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal HR</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Fleet Management</li> <li>• Investigations</li> </ul>
Financial (FI) SAP module used for creating updating and reviewing financial information for all County Departments (RP1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension Service</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Polling Locations</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Administrative</li> <li>• Licensing &amp; Revenue</li> <li>• Perform Financial Transactions</li> <li>• Manage Customer Accounts</li> <li>• Maintain Financial Data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Grant Management</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Debt Management</li> <li>• Investment Administration</li> <li>• Cash Management</li> <li>• Account Management</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> </ul>
Human Capital Management (HCM) SAP module utilized for creating, updating, and reviewing Human Resource Benefit and Payroll information of employees (ESS MSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Internal HR</li> <li>• Training and Organizational Development</li> <li>• Retirement</li> <li>• General HRIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Benefits</li> <li>• Classification and Compensation</li> <li>• Employee Relations</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Perform Administrative Tasks</li> </ul>
Materials Management (MM) module that integrates with Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) that covers the tangible components of a supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory</li> <li>• Warehouse Management</li> </ul>	
Budget control and budget preparation system integrated with (ERP Central Component (ECC) and SRM (BP1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Preparation</li> <li>• Budget/Fund Control</li> </ul>	

SAP Module	Business Function	
Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) is the SAP module used for procuring goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Safety/Security</li> <li>• Contract Management</li> <li>• Maintain/Manage County Fleet</li> <li>• Provide Purchasing Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial System Controls</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Fiscal Analysis</li> </ul>
Warehouse Management (WM) is the SAP module is a critical part of the supply chain, and primarily aims to control the movement and storage of materials within a warehouse, and process shipping, receiving stocking, and inventory management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Warehouse Operations</li> <li>• Resource Management</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal Management</li> <li>• Internal HR</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>

Every Department in the County uses the SAP system. The following table depicts the use of the SAP modes by County Departments using each module.

Department	BW	CRM	ECC	ESS	FI	HCM	MM	BC	SRM	WM
Administrative Office of Courts	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Board of Commissioners	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Clerk of Court	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Community Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Correctional Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
District Attorney	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Financial Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fire Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Human Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Information Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Law	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Planning and Development	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Police Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Sheriff	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Support Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Tax Commissioner	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Transportation	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Water Resources	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

The SAP system is supported internally within the Enterprise Applications Division. As with other ITS divisions, the ERP Unit has suffered high turnover. Currently, only 18 of the 35 positions within the ERP Support Unit are filled. To address some of the challenges with staffing and save money on the SAP maintenance cost, the County outsourced the technical application support to a third-party vendor Remini Street. Remini Street provides ‘Tier 3’ support for the application. Prior to moving to Remini Street, SAP provided application support.

The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has not kept up with upgrading the system to the latest version of SAP. The County is currently running a different version of SAP’s legacy ERP Central Component (“ECC”) product and has not upgraded to SAP’s latest version, SAP Business Suite 4 HANA. New versions of SAP ECC are not being released as customers are expected to upgrade to SAP Business Suite 4 HANA. Rather than upgrade to the latest version of SAP, the County has chosen to issue an RFP for a new ERP system to replace the current version of SAP.

## Data Services

The Data Services Unit manages the databases for the County. Most of the databases are SQL or Oracle and serve almost all the departments within the County. The Unit assists with customer requirements and license quotes and manages help desk requests. The Unit analyzes and utilizes tools to securely scan data to identify sensitive and encrypted data for various departments and projects. The Unit is moving away from Oracle to migrate to the cloud.

## Communications

This section outlines the methods of communication the Division and units use internally to communicate as a team and externally to communicate with customers and/or other departments and divisions.

## Enterprise Applications

The Enterprise Applications Division has a weekly management team meeting, and the Division Director meets with the CIO weekly. Within the ERP Unit, the manager meets with the Unit's teams in a group meeting every month and has a one-on-one meeting with each team every quarter. The ERP Unit has limited meetings with the end users in the other Department.

## Business Solutions

The Business Relationship Managers in the Business Strategic Services Division collaborate with customers to develop business cases that they bring to the review committee to analyze and vote on whether to implement the solutions. Once the business case goes through the approval process, the Business Solutions Unit in the Enterprise Application Development Division Unit works with the customers to explain the environment and transition process for the new application/project. In addition, the Business Solutions Unit Manager is a part of the business case review process and procurement for applications supported by the Business Solutions Unit.

## Enterprise Resource Planning

The ERP Unit team meets with the Division Director weekly to discuss previous, current, and future activities and projects. The Unit is encouraged to share new ideas, solve problems, and make recommendations. Moreover, the Unit lead works with SAP customers to understand how the system works for them and identify any opportunities for improvement.

## Data Services

The Data Services Unit works with customers on an ad hoc basis to support customer needs and requests. The Server Unit also works with the Network Unit to set up systems and open ports.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Enterprise Applications Support and Development Division is working on several enhancements and upgrades, including migrating to the cloud, implementing a new Enterprise Record Management (ERM) solution, integrating Microsoft Online and Power BI, and the Lucity Mobile system.

### *SAP HR/NEOGOV Integration*

The main strategic initiative for the ERP Unit is the selection and implementation of the County's new ERP system and the integration of SAP HR and NEOGOV.

### *Cloud Migration*

The Enterprise Application Support and Development Division and Infrastructure Division are migrating 31 physical servers and critical systems' databases to the Cloud environment to reduce the high hardware, software, and IT maintenance costs.

### *SharePoint Online*

The Division is upgrading the existing SharePoint system to SharePoint Online for increased collaboration, usability, and control.

### *Lucity Mobile*

Lucity Mobile is used for asset and work order management in a cloud environment. The Division is currently migrating its current Lucity system.

### *FileNet Enhancements*

FileNet is used for high-end workflow systems and enterprise content management. The Division is migrating FileNet to the cloud environment to reduce the management and maintenance of hardware, software, and other back-end systems and increase usability.

### *Microsoft Power BI*

The Business Solutions Services Unit supported the initial Microsoft Online and Power BI implementation project and continues to support the integration initiative to address the remaining functionality needs. This involves migrating custom forms in Oracle to the Power BI platform using C# coding.

### *uPerform*

uPerform is the learning management system (LMS) used by the Division to provide employee training.

### *Aumentum*

Aumentum is the system used to manage land information and property tax revenue.

### *Aderant*

Aderant is the legal application used by the Division for timekeeping and billing.

## **Data and Performance Analysis**

The ERP Unit uses a dashboard report of tickets assigned to a queue where workers manage tickets and requests. Metrics include system statuses, the number of late tickets for incidences and service requests, and change control data.

The Data Services Unit has software that provides dashboards for database server memory, CPU utilization, and transaction monitoring.

## **Observations and Recommendations**

**Observation 1:** There is a need to implement an overall business process improvement mindset for enterprise applications. The current process is disjointed with multiple stakeholders such as end-users, business relationship managers, enterprise application support staff, and others providing input for system improvements. The identified solution is often a system enhancement that may solve a problem for one group but not another. The need for a business process improvement mindset will multiply when the County begins the new ERP system implementation.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should create user communities for standard business functions (finance, HR, procurement) or applications (Lucity, eBuilder, Asset Works) that includes end-users, Business Relationship Managers, Business Analysts, Enterprise Application Staff, and the Office of Strategic Excellence to provide a single forum to gather business requirements, agree on standard business process and identify and prioritize the resulting system enhancements.



## 3.B.4 Department of Information Technology – Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division

The Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division is responsible for digital automation and business optimization using new technologies. The Division is comprised of Geospatial Information Systems (GIS), Public Safety Solutions, and Web Solutions. The GIS Unit supports and maintains major Geographic Information Systems, and the Public Safety Solutions Unit supports and maintains all public safety-critical applications and communications. The Web Solutions Unit manages the County’s internet website and intranet.

### Key Functions

Essential Divisional functions include the following:

- Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Public Safety Solutions
- Web Solutions
- New Technology Solutions

### Geospatial Information Systems (GIS)

The Geospatial Information Systems (“GIS”) Unit consists of two sub-units that manage GIS and Accela, respectively. The GIS Unit supports and maintains the County’s Geographic Information Systems, which are used to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and display spatial or geographical data to support the County. The GIS Unit also supports and maintains the Accela Civic Platform for plan review, permitting, and code enforcement, enabling the County to automate manual processes, resulting in reduced paperwork and improved customer service.

The GIS Unit’s responsibilities include:

- County’s Geographic Information Systems
- Creating maps and geo-enabled applications
- Managing the Accela Civic system

### Public Safety Solutions

The Public Safety Solutions (PSS) Unit supports and maintains all Gwinnett County public safety-critical applications and communications, including the Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD), Records Management, Emergency Management, radio communication system, and all mobile devices that help first responders and critical decision-makers communicate and collaborate safely and securely. The division supports Fire, Police, Sheriff, and Corrections departments. They also manage mobile solutions in vehicles, cell phones, and 911 communications.

The Public Safety Solutions Unit’s responsibilities include managing the following applications:

- CAD system

- Records management
- Emergency Management
- Radio Communications Systems
- Mobile Devices for first responders

### Web Solutions

The Web Solutions Unit is responsible for developing, maintaining, and supporting the County's internet website and intranet, including all activities to maintain the site's operational integrity. The Unit monitors and implements standard themes and plugin updates, creates and implements custom posts for optimal site performance, and creates custom-built web-based business solutions.

The Web Solutions Unit's responsibilities include managing the following

- Gwinnett County Internet Website
- Gwinnett County Intranet

### New Technology Solutions

The Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation Division is adding an additional Unit for New Technology Solutions. This Unit will support the digital automation solution implementation to fulfill over 500 automation opportunities across the County by adopting emerging technologies that support the newest, industry-leading capabilities. Moreover, the Unit will identify and champion innovations and projects that focus resources to provide automation and process optimization.

### New Technology Solutions

This Unit has not yet been staffed.

## Communications

This section outlines the methods of communication the Division and units use internally to communicate as a team and externally to communicate with customers and/or other departments and divisions.

### Geospatial Information Systems (GIS)

The GIS Unit interacts with other County divisions with GIS staff by providing training and ensuring their data is available and accurate in enterprise systems, such as COVID exposure and gang violence data. The Division leadership report directly to the CIO.

### Public Safety Solutions

The PSS Unit works closely with customers due to their specific product/system knowledge to determine the customers' needs and current IT capabilities. They manage cell phones and radios in collaboration with the Network Services Unit, work with Planning and Development Department to update address points in the County, and provide application architecture support to the database administrators supporting the public safety applications

## Web Solutions

The Unit meets with the CIO weekly to discuss activities, risks, issues, and security updates. They also work with the Communications Department to design website elements and validate branding standards, with Communications creating content changes and Web Solutions implementing technical changes.

## Strategic Initiatives

Upcoming projects include enterprise-wide implementation of a digital automation solution to fulfill over five hundred automation opportunities, County website modernization, continued fulfillment of the Accela roadmap, and the Public Safety Solution implementation.

Goal 6 of the Strategic Roadmap, which outlines projects from 2022-2025, is to evaluate and implement emerging technologies across the County. The GIS division began the fulfillment of the Accela roadmap, which consists of 36 individual projects, including data reporting, inspections and code enforcement, fees and online services, permitting, licensing and revenue, and 17 enhancements.

## Geographic Information Systems

### *Geographic Information System (GIS)*

The GIS Unit manages the GIS system ArcGIS, which provides data across the County such as address points, street center lines, driveway markers, and other landmarks using 120 GIS layers of data. The Division assists external departments by editing and posting data to enterprise applications and the master database.

The GIS Unit is migrating the enterprise GIS and Ersi to an open data model in the cloud. In addition, the Unit is searching for a replacement for the OnPoint GIS data browser, which is no longer supported because the vendor went out of business.

### *Accela Roadmap*

The GIS Unit manages Accela, which the County uses for building and planning purposes. They have created the Accela Roadmap as part of ITS's larger Strategic Roadmap to implement 36 upgrades/enhancements to the system across the County over the next three years.

## Public Safety Solutions

There is currently a three-year project to replace the Computer Aided Dispatch ("CAD"), Records Management, and mobile systems with Central Square, which will be the largest application used by Public Safety. The Records Management system has already gone live, and the CAD and mobile solutions are in progress, in accordance with ITS's Strategic Roadmap.

## Web Solutions

### *Website Modernization*

The Web Solutions Unit is currently modernizing the Gwinnett County website in accordance with the Strategic Roadmap and will be completed in 2025.

## Data and Performance Analysis

### Public Safety Solutions

#### Databases

The Public Safety Solutions Unit monitors servers for overall performance and load thresholds.

#### RemedyForce

The Public Safety Solutions Unit monitors and manages the number of tickets based on who they are assigned to, ticket origin, repetitive tickets/issues, and remediation time.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The build-out of the new Division is incomplete. The three units within the Division were moved from the Enterprise Application Division. However, the Division Director position and Manager and staff within the New Technology Solutions Unit are vacant. Currently, the managers within the Division report directly to the CIO.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should continue to work towards completing the build-out of the new Division. Without staffing the key position, the County is not making any advances in Emerging Technologies. If staff cannot be recruited externally, consider promoting from within as the new positions will offer growth opportunities for existing staff.

**Observation 2:** There are GIS and Accela resources in other departments that do not report to IT, which results in competing priorities, lack of standards, and duplicate effort.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider consolidating application resources and experts in the other departments to the ITS Department or create user communities for applications (GIS, Accela, etc.) that includes Department expertise, Business Relationship Managers, Business Analysts, and application support staff to provide a single forum to gather business requirements, agree on standard business process and identify and prioritize the resulting system enhancements.

**Observation 3:** RemedyForce is used to manage IT help desk tickets, asset, and contract management. However, RemedyForce lacks the asset tracking capabilities needed by the Division for device management. Assets have a 'smart code' in the asset number for asset assignment, but the smart code is limited and not useful in determining asset assignment.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should reexamine the asset tracking implementation in RemedyForce and the use of smart coding. The Division should conduct a fit-gap analysis between the asset tracking requirements and RemedyForce implementation, and consider adding additional data fields that provide the required information for device asset tracking.

**Observation 4:** The GIS and Public Safety systems are dependent on Planning and Development to provide addresses for parcels in new developments. Emergency services rely on accurate address information, and delays in obtaining new addresses can result in delays in public safety services during an emergency.

**Recommendation 4:** The ITS Department and Planning and Development Departments must work together to define a process and expected timeframes for updating the GIS and Public Safety System with new addresses.

## 3.B.5 Department of Information Technology – Fiscal and Administrative Division

The Fiscal and Administrative Division provides ITS financial management, human resource management, asset management, and administrative support services. The Fiscal and Administrative Division is comprised of the Human Resources and Administrative Services Unit, the Asset Management Unit, and the Financial Management Office Unit.

### Key Functions

Essential Divisional functions include the following:

- Human Resources and Administrative Services
- Asset Management
- Financial Management

### Human Resources and Administrative Services

The Human Resources and Administrative Services Unit (“HR and Administrative Services Unit”) is responsible for all ITS’s human resources needs.

Responsibilities include completing all requests for action, including hiring, transfer, separation, and other types of personnel actions. This Unit is also responsible for working with end-user divisions to post vacant positions and assist the end-user divisions in scheduling interviews and selecting candidates to extend offers. Responsibilities include forwarding resumes to the hiring division, scheduling interviews, and coordinating the new hire setup and internal onboarding.

Responsibilities also include working with staffing contractors to identify potential contract staff to fill Division positions. The Unit maintains an Access database to track current contractors eligible for use in sourcing potential contract employees and those with current contract employees currently placed within the Department. For contractors, once potential individuals are identified, they are called in for an interview with the hiring division, and then if selected, a background check request must be sent to the Police Department for completion of the background check. Each hire must be approved by the hiring division, up through the Deputy Director over that division.

Monthly, the HR & Administrative Services Unit is responsible for hosting an ITS-specific orientation for all new employees and contractors.

This Unit is also responsible for managing performance appraisals for the Division, ensuring that all appraisals are completed and submitted promptly. Staff may also review performance appraisals for general grammar and clarity. The CIO must review and approve all performance appraisals. The Unit uses an excel database to track appraisal timelines to ensure timely completion.

A member of this Unit is also responsible for employee time entry against an IT leave calendar to confirm all approved leave matches the entered leave time for the pay period.

The Unit works closely with the Gwinnett County Human Resources Department to ensure compliance with all County policies and procedures. They also provide administrative support to ITS, including processing payroll and assisting employees on projects as needed.

For separating employees, this Unit is responsible for collecting the materials of the separating employee and completing the separation checklist. As there is no comprehensive inventory of materials, uniforms, or other equipment that may be assigned to each employee, it can be challenging for HR to coordinate with the employee's division management to understand what should be collected and collect everything before the employee separates from the Department.

### Asset Management

The Asset Management Unit assists in ordering assets for the Division. This includes obtaining quotes, issuing shopping carts, and ensuring that all requested purchases comply with County standards. This Unit works closely with the Financial Management Office and End User Support Unit to ensure the Division collects and maintains accurate software licensing and hardware asset data.

This Unit uses Remedyforce to assist in tracking assets.

End-users who need to acquire new assets, both software, and hardware, can submit a self-service request form in Remedyforce to request the purchase of a new asset. The Unit reviews the request against the list of approved vendors and specifications to ensure that the request complies with Gwinnett County requirements.

The Unit contacts the vendor or vendors that can provide the requested asset to obtain quotes and then provides those quotes to the requestor. If the request does not conform to Gwinnett County standards, the Unit can work with the End User Support Unit to determine if the request can be accommodated.

Asset Management creates the shopping cart for the request, then routes the shopping cart for the required approvals. Once all approvals have been obtained, Asset Management will issue the PO and create a "receiving" task with RemedyForce to notify the IT Service Delivery Unit that they will need to acknowledge receipt of the asset and resolve the ticket.

Asset Management is responsible for entering all asset information into the asset repository once confirmed. The Unit is migrating to Client Management, the asset management module within Remedyforce, for better asset tracking.

The Asset Management Unit is also working to improve proactive harvesting efforts to proactively identify assets that are not being used and can be redeployed to another user rather than purchase an additional asset.

### Financial Management

The Financial Management Office ("FMO") is responsible for coordinating with end-user divisions for all financial and budget tracking and processing for the Division.

The FMO collaborates with all Department end-user divisions for budget development, maintenance, and management throughout the year. The FMO may also assist other Gwinnett County departments with IT-related budgeting, such as providing documentation and budget estimates to assist with budgeting for hardware and software purchased with the end-user department's budget rather than purchased within ITS.

The FMO also assists with the indirect cost allocation, providing information to the Finance Department to process the calculations and charge the applicable County departments.

Given the number of contractors used as supplemental staff for the Division, there is one position responsible for reviewing and processing all purchase orders and invoices associated with staffing-related contracts.

The FMO is also responsible for administrative contract management for approximately 175 contracts within the Department. Contracts may include some enterprise-wide contracts related to IT software or hardware as well as Department-specific contracts and some contracts that are for specific functional areas, such as public safety. Responsibilities include processing all contract-related shopping carts and purchase orders and coordinating contract renewals and board approvals. The FMO uses Remedyforce's database capabilities for basic tracking of the current active contracts. Currently, there is no tracking of spend against the contract or review of the appropriateness of contract use.

Everyone in the FMO may assist in processing shopping carts, confirming invoices, entering approved invoices into FileNet for payment, and issuing payments for the end-user divisions. There are multiple approvers required for all purchases, averaging nine approvers for each purchase, regardless of size of prior budget approval. The Department Director approves all purchases, and FMO must spend time reviewing in-process shopping carts to ensure they are progressing through all the required approvers.

The Program Analyst position is responsible for tracking and managing contracts with end-user divisions, reviewing all shopping carts, and issuing all purchase orders related to contracts. This position also liaises with the Board of Commissioners for contract approvals, as appropriate.

## Communications

The Division holds weekly meetings, with each Unit spending approximately one-third of the meeting providing an update on workload, upcoming activities, and any challenges they may have. In addition, the Division uses email and Microsoft Teams to stay in communication.

The Division also holds meetings to keep inter-division working groups apprised of ongoing workload and issues or challenges that may impact other divisions.

The Division has an email listserv for all Department Managers and Supervisors to keep them updated about any activities or workload changes. In addition, monthly manager meetings provide updates about activity within end-user divisions. The Division Managers also have weekly meetings with the Division Director to discuss workload, upcoming projects, or potential obstacles to progress.

Some communications are a bit informal for the information being shared. For personnel transitions, separations, or terminations, there are no automated forms or formal processes for notice of the HR and Administrative Services Unit; many divisions send information with Teams' chat function.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division has undergone functional role changes in the past year and is continuing to assess priorities and where current business processes could be streamlined and more efficient.

Upcoming projects include developing and delivering talent acquisition and retention initiatives, revisiting job descriptions and titles to attract more qualified applicants, providing cross-training and growth opportunities across departments, and partnering with HR to address market trends.

The Division feels that many of its tracking processes are somewhat manual, using excel databases and/or email to communicate with and remind end-users of needed action, such as supporting documentation related to purchases or timesheet approvals. The Division continues to assess how best to manage and automate workflow for activities that are not automated through SAP.

The Division has developed a 12-month, three-year, and five-year asset management plan and hopes to extend and expand these efforts soon and incorporate more proactive contract and asset management.

## Systems and Applications

### RemedyForce

RemedyForce is the application used for asset and contract management.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division does not collect much data for performance assessment. The Division is in the process of assessing metrics around “time to process” invoices or shopping carts to determine if this metric will be useful in understanding workload and performance and maintaining compliance with Gwinnett County invoice payment requirements

Currently, FMO tracks the number of contract renewals completed on time, although this data point isn’t solely attributable to the action of that Unit. FMO also tracks the number of invoices that take more than 60 days to process. Staffing levels prevent much analysis of the invoices from taking more than 60 days to determine if there are themes or trends in the types of invoices, end-user divisions involved, or vendors.

As a newer Unit, Asset Management hasn’t created many data points. The Unit sees the value in using measures such as cost-savings generated by Unit action, such as harvesting, and creating a process for asset validation, to randomly spot-check the completeness and accuracy of the asset listing.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division currently has seven part-time positions, representing more than a third of the Division’s workforce. As an internal service division, this may cause challenges with prompt customer service, especially when using part-time positions as subject matter experts for certain functions and responsibilities.

**Recommendation 1:** The Fiscal and Administrative Division should complete a more in-depth functional assessment and determine if the workload supports converting some of the part-time positions to full-time positions.

**Observation 2:** Currently, there is no inventory of all equipment or materials such as access badges or uniforms that employees provide. The lack of a comprehensive listing of assigned equipment or supplies makes the processing of separating employees problematic, as the HR & Administrative Services Unit must coordinate with the employee’s division to understand what is typically provided to employees in the separating individual’s role and then determine if the separating employee received that equipment and/or materials, create an inventory of all materials/equipment assigned to an employee, have employee sign acknowledging receipt and responsibility to return.



**Recommendation 2:** The HR and Administrative Services Unit should work with Departmental leadership to create an inventory of all equipment and/or materials assigned to Department employees. This should include a form that employees should sign during the onboarding process to acknowledge receipt of the equipment and materials and their responsibility to return the materials to the Department upon separation.

Each division's leadership should be responsible for providing updates to the HR and Administrative Services Unit when there are updates within their Division.

**Observation 3:** The Division's current process for notifying the HR and Administrative Services Unit of changes in employee status, such as employee resignation, transfer, or termination, are not formalized, which results in a variety of notification methods. This may result in information not being shared on time or insufficient information being provided.

**Recommendation 3:** The HR and Administrative Services Unit should develop forms to ensure that complete and timely information is provided consistently for all changes in employment status. Division leadership should assist in ensuring consistent adoption of the forms.

**Observation 4:** Most of the Division's workflow tracking is manually tracked by Division employees, with emails or other communications to check in with other divisions about the status of pending actions. This is time-consuming and may result in missed deadlines or communications about needed information or approvals to proceed with financial processing.

Additionally, this tracking is complicated by the number of approvers required for each purchase, including the Department Director.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider using SharePoint for workflow management for essential division functions to allow for more automated tracking of workflow and timing and allow for insight into process delays and potential automated escalation when needed. Other divisions, such as Support Services Fiscal and Solid Waste Management, successfully use SharePoint to obtain invoice approvals and workflow management for payment-processing related functions.

The Division should also work with Department leadership to reduce the number of approvers required for each purchase. Senior leadership's time should not be spent reviewing and approving small-value purchases, or those that have already been approved through the budget development process. The Division should work with senior leadership to update approval policies and only escalate to division and department leadership for large-value purchases, or those that are not part of the originally approved budget for the division or unit.

## 3.B.6 Department of Information Technology – Infrastructure Operations Division

The Infrastructure Operations Division is responsible for providing continuous operation of the network infrastructure, the county data centers, Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”), physical & virtual servers, Microsoft Exchange, and various end-user computing technologies. The Infrastructure & Operations Division is comprised of the Network and Systems Infrastructure Division, the Service Delivery Unit, and the End User Support Unit.

The Infrastructure and Operations Division manages three Data Centers that serve the IT needs of the County. They are located at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center (“GJAC”), Police Annex, and police precinct with E911 at Bay Creek. The division supports 6600+ end-users that predominantly run Microsoft Windows Operating System. There are also approximately 100 Apple users in the supported environment. The server footprint is made up of approximately 900+ physical and virtual servers. The Operating environment is approximately 80 percent virtualized. The physical infrastructure is made up of Nutanix hyper-converged infrastructure. The County is currently migrating from NetApp to Nutanix hyper-converged infrastructure. The Server Operating systems supported are Windows and Unix/Redhat Linux. The County is in the process of migrating from an IBM Storage Area Network (SAN) to a Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure. The databases that are predominantly used are Oracle and Microsoft SQLServer.

The current leadership took advantage of CARES Act funding and replaced all End-of-Life Routers/Switches/Firewalls with new equipment. The Infrastructure and Operations division is now moving to standard manufacturer’s lifecycle replacement: 36 months for standard laptops, 48 months for ruggedized laptops, network equipment every five years, and storage equipment a bit longer.

In the Enterprise Operating Environment (“EOE”), servers are segmented by Department (technically VLANs) to maintain separation. A hybrid active directory is in place. The end-user computing environment is patched monthly using the Windows patching cycle. Automation is in place for delivering patches.

Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (“SCCM”), Intune, and a third-party platform are used to push OS and application patches. Microsoft Intune is a cloud-based service that focuses on the County’s mobile device management (“MDM”) and mobile application management (“MAM”). It controls how County devices are used, including mobile phones, tablets, and laptops. It can also configure specific policies to manage applications. All changes are approved by the Change Advisory Board. There are two client-based VPN solutions for secure remote access. One of those solutions is primarily for car-based remote access (e.g., firetrucks, Department of Water Resources vehicles, etc.).

Microsoft Sentinel is used for monitoring and was recently brought in-house along with an in-house SOC.

The County has adopted the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (“ITIL”) 4.0 Framework for service delivery. The IT service management (“ITSM”) and other modules are being implemented. The Cybersecurity Division has adopted the Center for Internet Security (“CIS”) framework for securing the Enterprise Operating environment.

The service desk is comprised of 5 Service Desk Agents (“SDAs”) and handles approximately 3800 calls a month. It is available from 6 am to 6 pm and has one on-call agent to staff the 24/7 service. In 2021, the End User Support Division was reorganized to staff teams geographically and based on high priority. This and other changes brought down the mean time to repair (MTTR) from 12 days to 3 days. The goal is to bring this further down to 8 hours. The Help Desk staff uses RemedyForce to calls and other requests. The End User Support Division is also responsible for asset management. There is a configuration management database (“CMDB”) in place that has information for all the IT assets. The application server dependencies are also captured in CMDB.

An Independent third-party assessment concluded that at least 18 full-time employees should staff this division to handle the help desk ticket volume.

Identity management and cloud deployments are current strategic priorities. The cloud migration/implementations are based on the characteristics of the application. The County is evaluating software as a service (“SaaS”) and platform as a service (“PaaS”), assessing cost, capability needs, etc. The goal for new applications is to consider cloud platforms (e.g., ERP, ERM, CRM, etc.).

## Key Functions

Essential Division functions include the following:

- End User Support
- Network Operations
- Systems and Storage

### End-User Support

The End User Support Unit provides services for Gwinnett County departments and agencies’ end-user computing environment. The End User Support Unit is responsible for delivering on-site support to all Gwinnett County departments and partners. This Unit manages the end-user computing environment to ensure that end-user computing meets the business units’ needs. This Unit is responsible for computer hardware deployment, desktop imaging, endpoint protection, problem resolution, and relocation services. The End-User Support Unit is comprised of the Desktop Architecture, Desktop Services, and Mobile Communications teams. The Desktop/Field Support Unit provides application support, including software deployment and configuration, application patches, and version upgrades.

- The Desktop Architecture team provides continued growth for the organization by concentrating on desktop Unit management and technology direction. The group looks at the latest and greatest hardware and software technologies. They also customize configurations as required and provide level 3 support for unique and complex problems.
- The Desktop Services team is responsible for the daily support of all end-user systems and peripherals. Their main support issue is the reliability and stability of the end-user computing environment. This team provides the labor-intensive process ownership of level 2 support and maintenance to all end-user hardware and productivity tools.
- The Mobile Communications team supports the Motorola 800MHz Radio System and manages mobile wireless devices throughout the County.

The End User Support Unit is responsible for tracking technology devices from the cradle to the grave and providing customer services to improve the end-user computing experience. The Unit is comprised of the Service Desk and Asset Control teams.

- **Service Desk:** The Service Desk provides problem ticket recording, problem resolution and escalation, resolution tracking, and reporting for all Gwinnett County departments and agencies. Services are provided twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The Service Desk team provides a central point of contact for customer help, problem status, and customer feedback. Primarily responsible for level 1 problem resolution, this team is the focal point for reporting problems and minor system problem resolution, including monitoring data communications, online applications, and large complex network systems on various hardware platforms.
- **Acquisition Desk:** The Acquisition Desk is responsible for the procurement, receiving, inventory, assignment, and retirement of technology assets for the County. The Asset Control team builds and maintains the technology Inventory from Receiving through Surplus disposal.

### Network Operations

The Network Operations Division provides continuous operation of the network infrastructure, including local & wide-area networks, telephones, and physical & virtual servers and storage. The Division includes three units:

- Network, Telecommunications, and Audio Visual
- Systems and Storage Management
- Network Operations Center (“NOC”)/Technical Assistance Center (“TAC”),

Overall, the Division supports the following technology components:

- 969 Servers (200 Physical & 769 Virtual)
- 7,035 Email Boxes
- 6,000 Managed Users
- 4.56 Petabytes of usable storage
- 81 Sites Connected via a WAN (Wide Area Network)
- 4,781 Desktop Phones
- 1.9 Terabytes of Data moved each day

### *Network, Telecommunications, and Audio Visual*

The Network, Telecommunications, and Audio Visual Unit designs, implements, and supports the foundational network layer that provides connectivity to County offices and departments. This Unit is comprised of the Network Design and Engineering Team and the Telecommunications Team. The Network Design and Engineering team is responsible for delivering voice, data, and video transport services utilizing the County’s network. This team also provides connectivity services for the County data centers. The Telecommunications team is responsible for designing, implementing, managing, and administering the enterprise VoIP telephone system.

### *Systems and Storage*

The Systems & Storage Unit is responsible for designing, deploying, configuring, administering, and maintaining the County's server platforms, email, storage, and directory services. The Unit provides 24-hour support to the application development teams supporting the County's enterprise-wide business systems and services. The Systems and Storage Unit is comprised of the following groups:

- **Windows Server & Exchange:** The System Administrator and Operations team is responsible for the design, administration, monitoring, patching, security, and antivirus management of the County's physical and virtual servers, Microsoft Windows and Exchange Servers.
- **UNIX & Storage:** The System Design and Engineering team is responsible for the design, management, administration, backup, and recovery of the County's UNIX servers.

### *Network Operations Center (NOC)/Technical Assistance Center (TAC)*

The Network Operations Unit is responsible for monitoring and managing the following infrastructure components for the County's:

- Three Data Centers
- 150 IT Communication Rooms
- Environmental management (power, backup generators, etc.)
- Heating ventilating and air conditioning, and surge control systems.
- Network cabling to each GC office's building and server room/data center.
- Network Security:
- Circuits and routing for the Wide Area Network (WAN) and Wireless networking equipment.
- Routers, Switches, Servers, and other components for each Local Area Network (LAN) consisting of 12,000 devices.
- Computer Memory/CPU, bandwidth, performance, storage, and back-up
- Infrastructure and Software from multiple vendors, including Microsoft, Cisco, IBM, NetApp, CommVault, etc., make up the Enterprise Operating Environment
- The Microsoft Azure Cloud Computing

### **Communications**

This section outlines the methods of communication the Division and units use internally to communicate as a team and externally to communicate with customers and/or other departments and divisions.

Technical Bulletins are sent to communicate changes to the network, infrastructure, and end-user computer. The Bulletins are sent out countywide or to impacted users to keep business units and employees aware of technology-related maintenance windows, outages, reminders, etc. If possible, a 2-1-2 notification protocol is followed, meaning a two-week notice, a one-week notice, and a two-day notice is provided for a planned event.

As earlier stated, the end user computing environment is patched monthly using the Windows patching cycle. Automation is in place for delivering patches. Microsoft SCCM, Intune, and a third-party platform are used to push OS and application patches. The process follows the Software Development Life Cycle (“SDLC”) and moves from the development environment to the production environment after user testing is completed. The users test for a week and complete User Acceptance Test (“UAT”) forms. If needed, communication with the end-users is performed using ITS Technical Bulletins.

## Strategic Initiatives

Upcoming projects include IT asset inventory and lifecycle management process, delivering end-user training programs for digital literacy, proactively aligning IT resources with business needs, and focusing on reducing attack surfaces.

## Data and Performance Analysis

As earlier stated, the Service desk operates from 6 am – 6 pm, Monday through Friday. There is also a service portal that is available 7X24.

Some of the metrics that are planned to be tracked include:

- Tickets solved over the phone
  - Total Calls
  - Number solved over the phone
  - Percentage solved over the phone
- Average monthly acknowledgment times (P1 – P5)
- Acknowledgments achieved on time (P1 – P5)
- Resolution times (P1 – P5)
- Percentage of resolutions achieved on time (P1 – P5)
- Totals
  - Monthly average acknowledgment time of all tickets
  - Percentage of on-time acknowledgments of all tickets
  - Monthly average resolution time for all tickets
  - Percentage of on-time resolutions for all tickets
- Notification/Reminders
  - Number of acknowledgment reminder pages sent
  - Number of acknowledgment notifications to management
- Escalations
  - Total number of escalations requested by end-users
  - Total number of automatic escalations
  - Total number of escalations by level (1 - 3)

- Customer Response
  - Percentage of tickets closed by the customer upon resolution
  - Customer satisfaction index
  - Number of reopened tickets
  - Percentage of reopened tickets

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The End User Support Unit has reduced the MTTR from 12 to 3 days. As the goal is now to reduce the MTTR to 8 hours, staffing should be addressed based on metrics collected.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should review currently gathered metrics and the independent study that calculated that 18 FTEs were required to handle the current volume of tickets. Based on the results of the review, adjust staffing as needed.

**Observation 2:** Office space was mentioned as an issue. When all the vacancies are filled, this may become a significant issue if not addressed proactively.

**Recommendation 2:** Facility planning and office space must be proactively evaluated based on the division's headcount and growth plans.

**Observation 3:** Availability of spare parts and exchange units onsite will improve MTTR. The Infrastructure and Operations Division aims to move towards onsite spare management.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should accelerate the move to onsite spare management. This will reduce Mean Time To Repair ("MTTR") and improve customer satisfaction.

**Observation 4:** VDI (Virtual Desktop) as a solution should be re-evaluated to determine if it can be viable for some groups. It was mentioned that some years ago, it was considered and abandoned.

**Recommendation 4:** Microsoft offers a Windows Virtual Desktop solution that can be evaluated to determine if it is appropriate for some users. It can be a cost-effective solution that is secure and can be deployed quickly. It can also address any delays in obtaining laptops caused by supply chain issues.

**Observation 5:** Resetting employee and user passwords is the number one issue that takes up most of the Service Desk Agent's time.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should evaluate, acquire, and implement an automated password resetting tool. This can significantly improve the productivity of the Service Desk and employees. There are several cloud-based and on-premise tools that can be evaluated after establishing the County's requirements. This will free up Service Desk Agents' time to take on other tasks currently performed by the Level 2 desk once SDAs have received appropriate training.

**Observation 6:** There does not appear to be a searchable knowledge base database that can be queried quickly to help Service Desk Agents. This can aid in quick resolution and improve customer satisfaction. It can also help in the training of new Service Desk Agents.

**Recommendation 6:** The Division should develop, implement, and maintain a knowledge base to help Service Desk Agents. Provide incentives to enhance the knowledge base by making it a part of performance appraisals of Service Desk Agents.

**Observation 7:** There does not appear to be any Virtual Digital Assistants that can alleviate the workload of Service Desk Agents.

**Recommendation 7:** The Division should research, evaluate and deploy Digital Virtual Service Desk Agents and FAQs that can answer many of the common queries that the Service Desk Agents handle.

**Observation 8:** The Infrastructure and Operations Division has developed scripts to automate back-end tasks that have improved quality and increased the Unit's productivity. This effort should continue by evaluating additional tools in the marketplace.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division should research, evaluate and deploy Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)-enabled enterprise automation tools to further improve productivity and customer satisfaction. Rapid server provisioning that is template-driven can aid in the quick and secure deployment of applications. Tools such as Ansible and other enterprise automation tools should be evaluated.

**Observation 9:** The Infrastructure and Operations Division has a disaster recovery (DR) strategy that is currently using data centers that are only a few miles apart for location redundancy. Also, DR procedures and plans are now a work in progress.

**Recommendation 9:** The Division is aware of certain vulnerabilities in the current disaster recovery strategy. The Division should create a DR strategy establishing true location redundancy for the Enterprise Operating Environment (servers, storage, network, etc.) that will withstand a major disaster. This design should also establish proper Recovery Point Objective ("RPO") and Recovery Time Objective ("RTO") so that the application owners and their users know the timelines and responsibilities. All options, including cloud-based DR as a service, should be evaluated to address the needs of the County.

There should be periodic (at a minimum annual) DR exercise that identifies and documents weaknesses. Any documented weaknesses should be addressed and corrected for future DR exercises.

**Observation 10:** The Infrastructure and Operations Division has adopted ITIL 4 and implemented some of the ITIL Service Management categories.

**Recommendation 10:** The Division has implemented some portions of the following ITIL "Core" categories (see Appendix A). The full benefits will be realized once the rest of the categories are implemented.



## 3.B.7 Department of Information Technology – Cybersecurity Division

The Cybersecurity Division is responsible for securing Gwinnett County's IT assets. The Division is responsible for defining, administering, and ensuring compliance with the County's Information Security Policy and industry best practices. The Cybersecurity Division works with the end-user County departments to identify security risks, detect potential cyberattacks, and respond as necessary.

The Cybersecurity Division is responsible for leading efforts to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of Gwinnett County's IT assets and data. To accomplish this goal, the Division works with other divisions within ITS and other departments countywide to identify risk, detect potential attacks, and respond as necessary. This Division is also responsible for IT compliance to ensure that the County's IT infrastructure meets legal obligations and industry best practices regarding security.

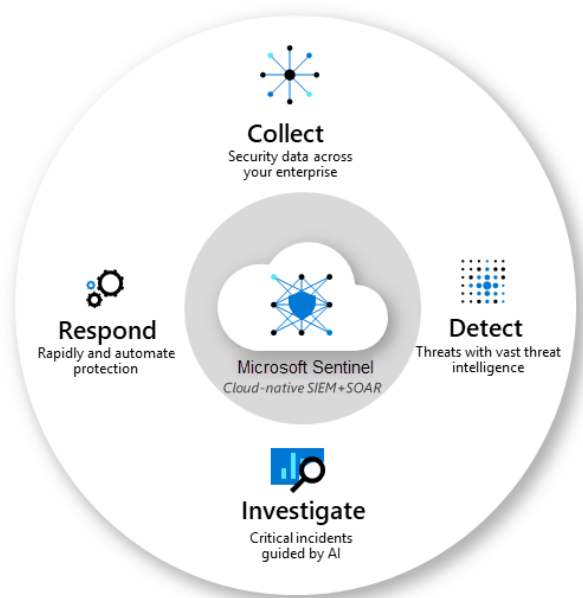
The Cybersecurity Division and the County relied heavily on Symantec products and services till the latter part of 2020.

The July 2020 purchase of Symantec by Broadcom Inc. and subsequent increased licensing and services costs forced the County to re-think the cybersecurity strategy and bring operations in-house. Frequent performance issues for the managed security service also contributed to consolidating services in the Cybersecurity Division. The Division is building the internal team for running a Security Operations Center ("SOC") in-house and will leverage automation to handle incidents. The SOC operates from 8 am to 5 pm, and staff is on-call after business hours. The Enterprise Operating Environment ("EOE") leverages Microsoft Sentinel, Microsoft ATP, and Microsoft Defender.

Microsoft Sentinel is a scalable, cloud-native security information and event management ("SIEM") and security orchestration, automation, and response ("SOAR") solution. Microsoft Sentinel delivers intelligent security analytics and threat intelligence across the enterprise, providing a single solution for attack detection, threat visibility, proactive hunting, and threat response.

Microsoft Sentinel provides a bird's-eye view across the enterprise, alleviating the stress of increasingly sophisticated attacks, increasing volumes of alerts, and extended resolution time frames.

- **Collect data at cloud scale** across all users, devices, applications, and infrastructure, both on-premises and in multiple clouds.
- **Detect previously undetected threats** and minimize false positives using Microsoft's analytics and unparalleled threat intelligence.
- **Investigate threats with artificial intelligence**, and hunt for suspicious activities at scale, tapping into years of cyber security work at Microsoft.
- **Respond to incidents rapidly** with built-in orchestration and automation of common tasks.



Microsoft Sentinel natively incorporates proven foundations, like Log Analytics and Logic Apps, building on the full range of existing Azure services. Microsoft Sentinel enriches the Cybersecurity Division’s investigation and detection with AI, provides Microsoft's threat intelligence stream, and enables the Division to bring other threat intelligence as needed.

The Division has moved away from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (“NIST”) and has adopted the Center for Internet Security (“CIS”) framework for Security. CIS provides user-friendly messaging, prioritization, and auto-prioritization to assist in helping non-technical personnel understand priorities and needed actions. ITS is in the process of developing and documenting standards for adherence county-wide. After getting buy-in from DWR, Courts, and other entities, the standards will be presented to the newly formed Standards Review Committee (“SRC”).

## Key Functions

Essential Divisional functions include the following:

- **Security Operations** – The Security Operations Unit addresses security risks associated with ITS systems and data. Some examples of their responsibilities include vulnerability scans, monitoring and responding to incidents, managing security tools such as anti-virus, and conducting penetration tests.
- **Compliance & Administration** – The Compliance and Administration Unit addresses security risks associated with organization policy and procedures. Some examples of their responsibilities include writing policies and standards, reviewing the efficiency of security controls within ITS, maintaining compliance with Criminal Justice Information Services (“CJIS”) and Payment Card Industry (“PCI”), and conducting risk assessments. The CJIS training is managed by the Cybersecurity Division and is not part of HR onboarding.

## Communications

This section outlines the methods of communication the Division and units use internally to communicate as a team and externally to communicate with customers and/or other departments and divisions.

There are several regularly scheduled meetings between the teams of the Division. Apart from the formal and informal team-centric meetings, the scheduled meetings facilitate communication and exchanging ideas. These were described in the earlier communication Unit for the Infrastructure Operations Division. Apart from the Technical Bulletins, the Cybersecurity Division sends countywide Security Bulletins to keep Gwinnett County departments and employees informed of security-related situations and provide any necessary guidance.

## Strategic Initiatives

Upcoming projects include adopting a Zero Trust (“ZT”) cybersecurity strategy for stricter authentication and bringing the security operations center in-house.

Zero Trust cybersecurity strategy is a journey and will be implemented in phases. Zero Trust is the term for an evolving set of cybersecurity paradigms that move defenses from status and network-based perimeters to focus on users, assets, and resources. Zero Trust assumes there is no implicit trust granted to assets or user accounts based solely on their physical or network location (i.e., local area networks versus the Internet) or based on asset ownership (enterprise or personally owned). Zero Trust requires designing a simpler and more secure architecture without impeding operations or compromising security. The classic perimeter/defense-in-depth cybersecurity strategy has shown to have limited value against well-resourced malicious actors and is ineffective in addressing insider threats.

Zero Trust is a cybersecurity strategy and framework that embeds security throughout the architecture to prevent malicious actors from accessing the most critical assets. It provides zones for visibility and information technology mechanisms positioned throughout the architecture to secure, manage, and monitor every device, user, application, and network transaction occurring at the perimeter and/or within a network. Zero Trust is an enterprise consideration that normally resides in and is managed by the cybersecurity division. The foundational tenet of the Zero Trust model is that no actor, system, network, or service operating outside or within the security perimeter is to be trusted. Instead, anything and everything attempting to establish access must be verified. It is a dramatic change in basic assumptions in the philosophy of securing infrastructure, networks, and data, from verifying once at the perimeter to continually verifying each user, device, application, and transaction.

Zero Trust protects critical data and resources, not just the traditional network or perimeter security. Zero Trust implements continuous multi-factor authentication, micro-segmentation, encryption, endpoint security, analytics, and robust auditing to desktop as a service (“DaaS”), using the seven pillars to deliver cyber resiliency. As the County evolves to become a more agile, more mobile, cloud-instantiated workforce, collaborating with multiple federal, State, County, local and non-governmental entities for various missions, a hardened perimeter defense can no longer suffice as an effective means of enterprise security. In a world of increasingly sophisticated threats, a Zero Trust framework reduces risk and ensures that if a device, network, or user/credential is compromised, the damage is quickly contained and remediated.

State-funded foreign hackers are well-trained, well-resourced, and persistent. The use of new tactics, techniques, and procedures combined with more invasive malware can enable motivated malicious actors to move with previously unseen speed and accuracy. Any new security capability must be resilient to evolving threats and effectively reduce threat vectors, internal and external.

This, and other user education initiatives like Security Awareness Training, will improve the enterprise's security posture. The Cybersecurity Division has tried under difficult circumstances to improve the enterprise's security posture in an iterative and collaborative fashion by implementing security controls in a phased manner. This is a prudent approach that will pay dividends over time and make the County more secure.

### Data and Performance Metrics

Metrics that the Cybersecurity Division is either currently tracking or plans to start monitoring are listed below:

- Total Sentinel incidents
- Sentinel incidents that require human interaction
- Vulnerability tickets closed within SLA
- Percentage of controls implemented on all / most systems state
- Number of emails reported by the Phish Alarm button
- High severity threats blocked by the Palo Alto
- Phishing and Malware emails blocked by Proofpoint
- Vulnerability tickets opened vs. closed last 30 days (about four and a half weeks)

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** As the Cybersecurity Division has taken over the SOC responsibilities from the outsourced provider, a security team had to be quickly assembled. As outlined above, staffing was challenging, and the Division opted to augment the Unit with junior contractors. These contractors were sent to SANS cyber security training to get them up to speed on security skills.

**Recommendation 1:** There does not seem to be a contractual obligation on the part of the contractors to stay in their roles without leaving after having been trained at the County's expense. These contracts should be reviewed and enhanced with contract clauses to protect the County's investment by obligating the individual to stay in the role for a certain period or the contracting company to provide an equally skilled person if their employee resigns or leaves the account.

**Observation 2:** As the County has adopted the CIS security framework, it can benefit and improve its security posture by conducting a formal review of the Microsoft 365 environment against published CIS benchmarks.

**Recommendation 2:** The Center for Internet Security, Inc. (“CIS”) has developed a well-defined, unbiased, and consensus-based set of industry best practices to provide organizations of all sizes with the ability to assess and improve their security. These standards are all available online on a complimentary basis at <https://www.cisecurity.org/cis-benchmarks/>. The Cybersecurity Division should consider performing a formal review of their Microsoft 365 environment against the CIS benchmark configurations to determine misconfigured areas or where services and controls are not enabled. During the risk assessment, any controls that are not compliant with this benchmark should be noted, analyzed based on risk, prioritized for remediation based on risk, and any exceptions should be formally documented with the reasons for the exceptions.

**Observation 3:** The Division does not currently perform formal testing of the Incident Response Plan.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should develop a standardized Incident Response Testing Plan. Document the steps for testing, required roles, the criteria for a successful test, evidence requirements, and reporting. In the spirit of continuous improvement, including a Unit that documents what worked well and opportunities for improvement. Ensure that future tests address previous opportunities for improvement.

The Division should require formal standardized quarterly/annual testing of the Incident Response Plan, record the exercise results and identify any action items to improve the process, track all action items to completion, and regularly provide updates on progress to leadership.

The Division should mandate and develop standardized formal Incident Response Training (including contractors), and Include Incident Response training for all involved personnel and new employees as needed.

Once all steps have been put into place, the Division should establish a means to monitor, manage and report on the Incident Response program, determine roles and responsibilities, establish scorecards, trends, and metrics reporting to evaluate the effectiveness of controls.

**Observation 4:** There does not appear to be an email retention policy defined for the Enterprise Operating Environment.

**Recommendation 4:** We recommend that the Cybersecurity Division (with appropriate input from all departments) create a stated policy for email retention. We suggest that retention (deletion) policies be designed to automatically delete once the emails are no longer required to be kept legally. Suppose retention of emails is needed for years, but those emails are no longer needed for active cases. In that case, it is further suggested to enable policies that limit the time range that an individual user is allowed to keep or synchronize on their local system and, by extension, limit the volume of historical emails that a user can request from the Exchange server. Storing all email history on the cloud-based system may be acceptable if the County Department needs complete history but allowing the user access to all that email should be a conscious decision by policymakers and not by individual users.

**Observation 5:** The County does not consistently utilize Microsoft DLP Policies for the Microsoft 365 environment.

**Recommendation 5:** To maintain compliance and control over sensitive County-owned data, Microsoft has integrated Data Loss Prevention (DLP) security solutions into the Microsoft 365 environment. This functionality is dependent upon Office 365 E5 and Microsoft 365 E5 licenses. DLP will help identify sensitive information across many locations, such as Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business, and Microsoft Teams. It can prevent the accidental sharing of sensitive information and monitors and protect sensitive information in desktop versions of Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. It supports a wide selection of data types, including HIPAA (PHI), Financial Information (Bank Routing), Personal Information (PII/SSN/DL), and others. Policies can be set up to detect sensitive information movement outside of the tenant via Exchange email, SharePoint sites, OneDrive accounts, and Teams chat and channel messages. These policies can be set up with conditions and actions to notify or block data movement if the policy criteria are met. This technology can determine if malicious accesses are being made or if data is being exfiltrated from the organization. DLP is an excellent tool but is complex, mainly when spread across multiple departments with different requirements. It is something that the Cybersecurity Division should review as a potential layered security solution to the cloud environment since many departments deal with sensitive personal information.

**Observation 6:** Security Awareness training is currently in place but can be further enhanced.

**Recommendation 6:** Leadership should communicate that Security Awareness Training is mandatory for all users of the Enterprise Operating Environment. Proofpoint Wombat can be leveraged to assign and administer timely security modules periodically (quarterly/monthly) to all employees, including contractors.

**Observation 7:** Since we did not conduct an exhaustive review of the Security Incident process, here are some suggestions to incorporate into the current process wherever applicable.

**Recommendation 7:** The Division should review and update all current procedures to reflect changes to the processes and addition of any new roles and responsibilities, incorporate a lessons-learned section into the procedural updates (including lessons learned from previous incidents), implement annual review and approval of documents in the revision history, and perform additional process reviews upon any environmental or policy changes as well as any changes in regulatory requirements.

The Division should define a RACI chart that covers roles during the ticket management process. In addition, document the centralized role responsible for overseeing Security Incident tickets from beginning to end and incorporate the workflow into the RACI chart.

As well, identify and document all additional personnel who need to be engaged in Security Incidents and update contact listings, include a listing of escalation personnel and specific criteria for requiring escalations, and update the roles and responsibilities of these functions.

The Division should determine and document the appropriate contacts for the Forensics team and incorporate forensic engagement into the current procedure for Security Incidents (if not currently incorporated). The Forensic connection should be a separate dedicated team or individual and be engaged in identifying the overall impact and extent of data exfiltration or compromise. Identify a specific function (or person) to provide initial notifications and regular communications on all Level 1 and Level 2 Security Incident tickets using updated contact lists. Update the roles and responsibilities section of the procedure to include this function. Ensure that all departments and personnel are notified simultaneously and receive the same message. Develop a tabletop exercise for testing the Incident Response Plan as an initial step. Include defined roles and responsibilities as well as different scenarios of incidents (e.g., Ransomware, data breach, other business continuity scenarios). Schedule a tabletop exercise of the Incident Response Plan.

The Division should develop SLAs and timelines to cover communications, actions taken, escalations, and ticket resolution for each severity level of Security Incident tickets. Document responsibilities and steps involved.

The Division should publish and implement standardized Incident Response training for all departments and associates, track and report on compliance, and conduct additional training upon any material changes to the process (e.g., new incident tools or reporting changes).

The Division should determine the target audience of reporting and frequency, establish scheduled meetings to review results, document the steps for generating and providing reports, note items that are trending in a positive and negative direction, provide root causes of negative trends and future actions to correct issues, report on SLAs for each Ticket Severity Level (acknowledgment, response, escalations, communications, etc.), analyze items that fell short of meeting the specified SLA, and develop criteria and documented steps for reporting Incident Response testing and target recipients.

## 3.B.8 Department of Information Technology – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

Our fieldwork identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may apply to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following Department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities at the Department level rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for Department-wide evaluation and implementation.

Recommendations are grouped into three sub-sections: Governance and Risk Management, Operations, and Continuous Improvement. The Governance and Risk Management Unit focuses on management policy changes that would affect the Department's operation parameters and goals. Operations focus on process and practice changes in how the divisions perform daily business functions. The Continuous Improvement Unit focuses on new or additive technical/communication solutions that achieve improvement and aid in the day-to-day operations.

### Operations

**Observation 1:** The Department recognizes that much of the County's systems and infrastructure is outdated and needs to be upgraded. The Department will require continuous funding to achieve the desired outcomes. According to the Jabian Report, the Department's 2021 budget is \$12 million under industry benchmarks for state and local governments with similar total operation budgets. It is perceived by some staff that IT funding is often secondary to funding citizen services. However, today, technology is the foundation for customer service and operational efficiencies, and continual investment is required. In addition, the County's outdated technology increases the risk of the County's ability to provide network, infrastructure, and application service continuity, defend against cyber-attacks, and recover critical technical infrastructure in the event of disaster recovery.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should develop a multi-year budget aligned with the Department's Strategic Plan that considers ongoing operations costs with projects available to upgrade the County's technology applications and infrastructure. Develop in-depth business cases and presentations for County Leadership explaining the needs and services benefits of the technology initiatives and the risks to the County of remaining with the status quo.

**Observation 2:** Many of the Divisions are understaffed due to staffing challenges.

**Recommendation 2:** The number of unfilled vacancies, the difficulty in attracting appropriate technical talent, the long hiring timeline, the County's ability to provide a competitive total compensation package, etc., all contribute to the divisions being understaffed. Some policies may have to be revisited to attract talent. Remote work has become ubiquitous since the pandemic, and the current technology workforce expects it for at least a few days of the week. A hybrid work policy should be developed for the Department.



Gartner's 2021 Hybrid Work Employee Survey of more than 2,400 knowledge workers in January 2021 reveals that HR can increase employee performance and reduce fatigue by creating a hybrid work model that focuses on *"providing employee-driven flexibility - Employers should adopt an employee-driven approach to flexible working that empowers employees to choose where, when and how they work. To successfully make this shift, employers must destigmatize flexible working by making it the default – not the exception – and developing principles – not policies – around flexible working. Employee-driven flexibility enables individuals to integrate personal and professional obligations to achieve work-life harmonization. The Gartner survey found that organizations with high levels of flexibility are almost three times more likely to see high employee performance. (Gartner, 2021)"*

The time it takes to make offers also needs to be reduced so that the County does not lose great candidates after completing all the interviews. A market compensation study for the technology jobs needs to be completed to determine compensation gaps for the various positions. The Department continuously tries to hire top talent but struggles with funding for competitive salaries. The strategic theme to prioritize quality staff augmentation will address this issue.

A comprehensive analysis of the vacancies should be performed to determine if contracting or outsourcing certain functions strategically will address the issue.

**Observation 3:** A Managed Services Provider ("MSP") will streamline procurement of IT contingent resources, project-based staff augmentation, and enhance transparency.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should evaluate and procure the services of a Managed Services Provider ("MSP"). The MSP will provide a Vendor Management System ("VMS") that automates and supports the IT contingent labor lifecycle and the use of project-based resource services. In addition, the selected MSP can offer an extensive network of Georgia IT companies and staffing providers to supply much-needed temporary talent to the County.

The MSP program will provide the County with complete transparency by using a not-to-exceed price rate card model in the recruitment and selection of IT talent and by using service-level agreements to manage the acquisition, time reporting, and invoice processing. As earlier stated, the MSP program streamlines and standardizes IT procurement, utilizing an open network of IT staffing suppliers to meet the diverse IT needs of Gwinnett County.

To jumpstart this process, Gwinnett County should consider using the State of Georgia Contract for an IT Staffing Managed Services Provider managed by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services <https://doas.ga.gov/state-purchasing/it-temporary-staffing>. The contract is used by state agencies, the colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia, and many local governments. Information regarding the awarded vendor Computer is located at <https://www.cai.io/services/contingent-workforce-solutions/georgia>.

**Observation 4:** The metrics being tracked in Divisions are primarily tactical. We received feedback indicating that there are plans to enhance metrics for the Service Desk and other units. There does not appear to be any monthly trend analysis or programs to improve performance.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should develop a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.

## Governance and Risk Management

**Observation 5:** The Department has documented processes and procedures but needs to enhance them in key areas like Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity, and IT operations.

**Recommendation 5:** Implementing additional ITIL categories will enhance processes and procedures for service delivery. For example, following the Service Design process will mandate creating and updating Service Management Manuals. The ITIL Core, Enhanced, Performance, and Strategic categories are later defined in the Appendix of the report. A Service Organization Control SOC2 Type 2 certification journey will also greatly help identify and fix any weaknesses. A SOC 2 Type 2 report is an internal controls report capturing how an organization safeguards customer/user data and how well those controls are operating. The System and Organizations Control (SOC) offers the best way to demonstrate effective information technology controls.

The SOC report assures user entities that:

- The Department has the required security controls in place to protect customer/user data against known and emerging threats.
- The Department has set up alerts to detect anomalies and violations across the entire ecosystem easily.
- Besides preventing risky situations, the Department can quickly repair damage and restore normalcy in case a rare data breach or system failure occurs.

There are three types of SOC reports. They are SOC 1, SOC 2, and SOC 3.

- SOC 1 compliance focuses entirely on controls directly impacting the user entity's internal controls over financial reporting (ICFR).
- SOC 2 compliance offers reporting options beyond financial objectives. It covers controls relevant to the trust services principles (TSP): security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy.
- Lastly, SOC 3 has a similar look and feel to SOC 2. However, the SOC 3 report is truncated and has free distribution. It is more of a widespread use report as needed.

A SOC 2 report is broken down into two distinct types. There is SOC 2 Type I and SOC 2 Type II.

- The SOC 2 Type I report covers the suitability of design controls and the operating effectiveness of the Department's systems at a specific time. Typically, this is a single day. It affirms that the Department's security systems and controls are working as you have set them to at a particular point.
- The SOC 2 Type II report is like the Type I report but has a few significant differences. First, to prove SOC 2 Type II compliance, the Department undergoes rigorous auditing over a more extended period, usually up to 12 months.

A SOC 2 Type II report focuses on the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) trust service principles. It examines a service provider's internal controls and systems related to security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and data privacy. Moreover, SOC 2 Type II delves into the details of the Department's infrastructure service system throughout the specified period.

It focuses on the following areas:

- **Infrastructure:** The physical and hardware components (networks, facilities, and equipment) that support the IT environment and help the Department deliver services.
- **Software:** The operating software and programs (utilities, applications, and systems) that facilitate data and system processing.
- **People:** The personnel (managers, developers, users, and operators) involved in the management, security, governance, and operations to deliver services to customers/users.
- **Data:** The information (files, databases, transaction stream, and tables) used or processed within the service organization.
- **Procedures:** The manual or automated procedures that bind processes and keep service delivery flawless.

**Observation 6:** Although many of the components are in place, there does not appear to be an overall Enterprise Architecture that dictates all Infrastructure and application expenditure.

**Recommendation 6:** The County should hire an Enterprise Architect with one of the available vacancies, choose an architecture framework, and create an overall Enterprise Architecture framework that will establish governance and controls for all technology projects and investments.

**Observation 7:** From the interviews, it does not appear that there was an established hierarchical governance structure that rolls up to a forum that governs the enterprise.

**Recommendation 7:** The County should establish a hierarchical governance structure that is made up of forums that make up all the Towers of Operation that meet periodically. Establish escalation criteria and procedures where issues are escalated to a higher forum if they cannot be resolved in an established time interval. This will improve the visibility of issues, and Leadership can intervene and help if needed to resolve issues promptly.

**Observation 8:** The County changed its SAP support provider from SAP to Remini Street. While Remini Street offers a lower-cost alternative to SAP support and maintenance, Remini Street does not have access to the SAP's patches and fixes required to keep SAP current for application, technology, and security fixes. While many ERP customers move away from vendor support when selecting a new system, the switch is usually made within a year or two of the production cut-over when the transition to a new system is inevitable.

**Recommendation 8:** The County should reexamine the decision to discontinue maintenance and support from SAP. Should the County choose a different ERP vendor, contract staff may look for new opportunities. Having an outsourced support vendor like Remini Street can mitigate this risk. However, the risk of not having access to SAP support and maintenance may outweigh the cost savings if the County does not have access to critical applications, technology, and security fixes provided by SAP. By not having access to and not applying any of the recommended application security patches for a prolonged period, the Enterprise Operating Environment (EOE) risk level increases dramatically.

## Continuous Improvement

**Observation 9:** There do not appear to be independent customer satisfaction surveys from the Department's user base.

**Recommendation 9:** The Department should conduct periodic (such as quarterly) anonymous surveys, aggregate the user responses, and use the results to improve customer service. Periodic (quarterly or semi-annual) user group forums can also be set up to communicate strategic plans, upcoming changes, training, etc., and obtain valuable user feedback.

**Observation 10:** From the interviews, executive leadership is involved in many decisions and approvals, resulting in process bottlenecks. The involvement in tactical decisions that can be delegated takes time away from working on the Department's strategic initiatives.

**Recommendation 10:** The Department Director should delegate certain decisions within a specific financial or risk tolerance to Division Directors or the Assistant Director once the position is filled. An alternative, an auto-approval procedure, can be implemented that triggers automatic approval after an agreed time. This can be implemented for non-financial decisions such as approval of standards, certain agreed-upon HR actions, etc.

**Observation 11:** There appears to be a lack of effective communication amongst all the Divisions regarding system implementations, upgrades, and maintenance.

**Recommendation 11:** The Department should arrange a monthly meeting with all relevant parties (including Service Desk representation) where strategic plans, upcoming changes, known impact of those changes, etc., are discussed so that all the Divisions are aware of the plans and any changes that may affect operations or service delivery. The Service Desk can plan and be prepared if they are aware of any significant changes that may increase the call volume.

# Attachment A: ITIL Categories and Capabilities

ITIL Category	ITIL Capability	Description
<b>Core</b>	ServiceDesk	The capability to receive and handle end-user requests for incidents, service requests, or information
	Event Management	Aggregate monitored events across the compute, network, and applications environment routing through filtering logic into the incident system
	Incident Management	Focuses on the restoration of failures of services as quickly as possible
	Access Management	The process of enabling users to request access to an IT service and allowing authorized users to access and use a service
	Information Security Management	Ensures the IT information security policies and operations adequately support the overall corporate security policy
	Request Management	The process supporting user service requests includes providing request channels (e.g., service catalog service desk), workflow routing, and status
	Change Management	Manage Changes through to implementation in a controlled and quality manner
	Invoice Management	Capabilities to support IT financial Chargeback operations which provide tailored financial management information to each constituent (e.g., department, enterprise, business Unit)
<b>Enhanced</b>	Service Catalog	Development and Maintenance of an IT Service Catalog that is accessible to end-users and includes requestable IT services which initiate provisioning processes
	Asset & Configuration Management	Manage Asset inventory and connect related items in related configurations to support the other Service Management Processes
	IT Service Continuity	Support the vital business functions by providing disaster recovery plans by IT Service to enable the restoration of applications within an agreed recovery time (RTO) at an agreed recovery point (RPO)
	Project Management	Provides support to plan and coordinate computing and labor resources to achieve the business or project objectives on time and on budget
	Service Validation & Test	Test to ensure that the new or changed services are "fit for purposes" and "fit for use"
<b>Performance</b>	Service Portfolio Management	Method to manage IT services in terms of business value (consumption, cost, benefit) when each service is viewed independently and as an overall portfolio. The objective is to achieve maximum value creation out of the IT build /run investment
	Operational Intelligence	Capabilities to provide meaningful, accessible operational information (reports and analysis) at the enterprise and persona levels

ITIL Category	ITIL Capability	Description
	Service Level Management	Capabilities to ensure IT service performance expectations are agreed upon, documented, and reported
	Problem Management	The process supports diagnosing the underlying root cause of incidents and determines appropriate corrective actions. Includes reactive (ticket driven) and proactive (trend /analysis driven)
	IT Financial Management	Capabilities to support advanced IT financial management activities such as forecasting, budgeting, integrated with Chargeback capabilities
	Business Relationship Management	Facilitates a connection with the business through fully understanding the customer's business objectives, IT service consumption, demand, and performance. Provides an escalation path and collects and addresses satisfaction issues
<b>Strategic</b>	Availability Management	Provides visibility to agreed levels of performance as compared to the actual performance of services along with associated corrective actions
	Capacity Management	Provides visibility to the existing implemented compute and labor utilization as compared to the maximum available capacity
	Demand Management	Brings compute and labor capacity, forecasting, BRM, and strategy together to predict the gap in demand of IT Services to Capacity and, where possible, balance the demand with the available resources
	Risk Management	The process of identifying and analyzing threats to coordinate responsive actions to mitigate, control, and monitor IT risk
	Strategy for IT Services	Links the business demand with the supporting IT strategies and services and service enhancements initiatives, including roadmap, timelines, and high-level costs. Key Output: IT Technology Strategy and Roadmap

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.



**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

## Additional Observations and Recommendations Identified During Phase 4 Assessment

**Observation 12:** As County departments are developing succession plans and workload assessments, there is inconsistent consideration of the changes in generations, and the values and interests of the emerging workforce. Departments and division are often envisioning that new hires will be comparable replacements for tenured staff with institutional knowledge.

**Recommendation 12:** The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workload analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.

## 5. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.

## 6. Strategic Roadmap

The following pages detail the 120 recommendations for the in-scope departments. The recommendations are categorized by applicable owner (enterprise-wide or single department), are assigned a prioritization level for implementation, and include a typical timeframe for implementation. The detailed report should be read in its entirety to better understand the context for the identified observations and recommendations. The County has the ultimate responsibility to determine the prioritization level and timeline for implementation of any of the recommendations in this report.

The County should dedicate resources and engage external specialists where needed to assist with implementation.

“The most dangerous phrase in our language is: *‘we have always done it this way’.*” – Grace Hopper

Category (People, Process, Culture, Performance Assessment)	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
People	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should evaluate staffing models to determine if additional Training Officer allocations are available for the Kennel Team. The Division should consider an additional degree of supervision in the Kennel Team to decrease the number of direct reports for the Kennel Supervisor.	1	1	1
People	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should evaluate staffing models to determine if more specialized positions would help provide a better customer experience for all members of the public participating in the animal welfare process. The Division could hire or promote Animal Control Officers specifically for intake or adoptions to provide additional consistency in those processes. The Division might need to consider increasing the number of Kennel positions in order to allow ACOs to focus on intake, adoptions, or other specialties without being constantly pulled away.	1	2	1
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should work with the Community Engagement and Collaboration Division and the Communications Department to find a more appropriate title for Pre-C16Adoption Application to eliminate any potential of users mistaking the form as means to reserve or adopt an animal.	3	1	3
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	Recommendation 4: The Division should consider providing all new staff customer service, de-escalation, and other training on leading practices for interacting with the public.	1	2	1

Category (People, Process, Culture, Performance Assessment)	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should ensure placement meetings are consistently held by appropriate staff to ensure equitable treatment for all animals. If staff are not able to regularly attend these placement meetings due to staffing concerns, the Division should evaluate its staffing model to reinforce these positions or free up these positions to focus on their own tasks.	2	1	3
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should evaluate its staffing model to ensure enough teams have adequate staff allocated to complete their responsibilities without drawing resources from other teams. The Division should consider increasing the number of staff dedicated to the rescue and foster programs, similar to animal welfare agencies of comparable size and mission.	1	2	1
People	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Departmental leadership should support the Division’s request for four additional Road ACO positions in 2023. The Division should continue to make incremental increases over the next few years to ensure each zone has adequate coverage from ACOs and cut down on ACO windshield time.	1	3	1
Technology	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division should work with the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department to integrate the CAD and ShelterBuddy to eliminate duplication of reports.	2	2	3
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> In addition to increasing the number of Road ACOs, the Division should consider different schedule and staffing models to ensure no staff member is working eight or more days in a row on a recurring basis. The Division should better align the on-call schedule with regular working schedules to ensure staff are not risking working the equivalent of three shifts in under 48 hours.	2	1	3

Category (People, Process, Culture, Performance Assessment)	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Division should not remove any dead animals from roadways where GDOT maintains responsibility, unless Division staff have been properly trained and assigned equipment for performing animal removal services on densely populated roads (interstates and State Route 316).	3	1	3
Culture	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> Divisional leadership should reinforce expectations that staff always follow SOPs, especially for serious matters such as potential abuse cases and bites.	1	1	3
People	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 12:</b> The Division should improve its cross-training policy to ensure staff fully understand the duties, responsibilities, policies, and procedures of every team and section within the Division. While the Division may or may not consider mandated training for a set period of time in the Kennel, on the Day Shift, and on the Night Shift, the Division should ensure each staff member understands all three areas, as well as the Outreach Team, the Special Operations Team, and the duties of the Behaviorist.	2	1	3
People	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 13:</b> The Division should improve its evaluation of candidates for ACO positions. While the Division does not need to fully implement the stringent practices previously employed by the Police Department, the Division should be mindful of the fact that personnel are hired to handle animals and controlled drugs, and should adequately communicate expectations to potential hires.	1	2	3

Category (People, Process, Culture, Performance Assessment)	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Technology	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 14:</b> The Division should conduct an assessment of all equipment utilized by ACOs both in the Kennel and on the Road to ensure equipment is up to date and adequate for its intended purpose. Departmental leadership should support the Division in this effort and incorporate input from members of the Division into the procurement process for replacing worn and outdated equipment.	2	2	1
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 15:</b> Whenever the Division presents the County's live release rate, the Division should include appropriate context, including a comparison to animals taken in, animals turned away, and animals with inordinately long stays in the Kennel. The Division should ensure services provided to the community do not suffer in order to maintain a high live release rate.	1	2	3
Process	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 16:</b> The Division should review how the Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Development Department tracks cases from initial complaint to final close-out, indicating the outcome of said cases, allowing the Code Enforcement Division to track against the goal of compliance over citation. The Animal Welfare and Enforcement Division should employ a similar model to track against their goal of education over citation.	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Animal Welfare and Enforcement	<b>Recommendation 17:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions.	3	1	3



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Process	Community Services - Business Management and Technology Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should work with Department leadership to assess the Prior Authorization Need ("PAN") process and requirements, and update the requirements to require C27e PANs only for purchases that are not within the current approved budget, or those that may exceed purchasing thresholds, such as those set by the Purchasing Division within the County's Finance Department.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Business Management and Technology Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> As the Human Resources and Administration Unit becomes fully staffed and fully defines their role, the Unit should consider creating more customized onboarding breakout sessions that ensure appropriate information is provided relative to the new hire's role. The Unit should also consider recording these trainings to make available to staff as a refresher once they are in their roles.	2	1	3
Process	Community Services - Business Management and Technology Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should review the practice of having all financial staff receive cross-training in all financial functions, and consider creating a more intentional set of cross-training, or create secondary internal reviews to ensure that the same employee did not approve or enter a budget transfer, approve a purchasing request, and also process that same request for payment.	1	2	1
People	Community Services - Community Engagement and Community Collaboration	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should regularly review and assess volunteer hours, to determine if additional program staff would allow for program expansion, or more strategic development of program efforts, partnerships, and activities. If additional program staff is not a strategic priority for the County, the Department should consider creating volunteer management and coordination positions within each Unit, or consider reevaluating workload for current staff to reflect the time needed for program management and volunteer/intern oversight.	2	1	3

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Culture	Community Services - Community Engagement and Community Collaboration	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division needs to work with County leadership to create a refined and clearly defined mission and scope for the staff and programs within the Division. Staff workload should be evaluated on a regular basis, and either supplemented with additional staff and resources for new or expanded programming, or the County needs to develop a process for the Division to refer requests to other departments or community resources to assist in meeting resident needs.	1	2	3
Process	Community Services - Community Engagement and Community Collaboration	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should consider moving CAPS compliance oversight and reporting into the Business Management and Technology Services Division, as this division has already assumed responsibility for grants management and reporting assistance. Separately, the Department should consider assigning the Program Analyst over grants support to assist the Program Supervisor in preparing and submitting these reports.	2	1	3
Process	Community Services - Community Engagement and Community Collaboration	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should move website management under the Digital Engagement Coordinator, and provide staffing to support this function. When marketing or promotional material is developed for use in both digital and traditional efforts, the Division should have a clear process for collaboration on developing and implementing these efforts.	2	2	1

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Performance Assessment	Community Services - Community Engagement and Community Collaboration	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments. The County may want to consider conducting process evaluations, to ensure that the methods and approaches are appropriate for the communities being served.  The Division should also assess the data points currently being collected, to ensure that the data being collected is value-add and assists in program development or performance assessment.	3	3	3
People	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should assess the need for additional Care Manager and direct senior service positions to create an environment where there is no wait list for senior services, or at least reduce the length of time before eligible seniors can begin to receive all eligible services.	1	2	1
Process	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should ensure that formal vendor performance evaluations are conducted to provide formal feedback to the vendors and help ensure that the expected service levels are being performed. The Division should also consider a formal open procurement to potentially alter or enhance the current contracted service providers.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should seek to better integrate existing services provided at One Stop Centers and seek to enhance the co-location of similar services.	2	3	1

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Process	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should formalize the OneStop 4 Help program’s specific functions and educate all Divisional staff about the program’s intent and methods. As the program continues, the Division should develop formal performance measures and outcomes to effectively assess program performance and alter delivery methods as needed. The Division should also enhance internal and external awareness of the OneStop 4 Help program so that service offerings can be communicated by County staff and understood by potential users. The Division should collaborate with other County departments and proactively seek out potential program users as many potential users may not have readily available access to a computer, telephone, or transportation.	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should evaluate options for more formal data tracking and analysis tools for the OneStop 4 Help program.	3	2	3
Process	Community Services - Health and Human Services	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should consider opportunities to expand certain service offerings beyond the senior population as fiscally and operationally possible and without reducing current services+C67.	1	2	1

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Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division needs to prioritize asset management, including expanding the use of Lucity for asset-level tracking, condition assessment, and preventive maintenance scheduling.</p> <p>The Division will need to work with Department leadership and County administration to ensure there is adequate funding to support asset management. This may require a shift in funding priority from construction of new assets to maintenance, management, and upgrade of existing assets to protect the County’s existing investments.</p> <p>As part of asset management, the Division should consider energy efficiency initiatives, such as switching to LED lights, energy utilization assessments for all facilities, utilizing timers on athletic field lights, and water faucet and toilet inventories to proactively identify leaks and consider switching to low-flow faucets and toilets. This may also include introducing more building automation systems.</p>	3	3	2

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Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Parks and Recreation needs to assess the equipment needs of each park and ensure that equipment has been allocated based on those needs. Staff noted the prior existence of an Equipment Committee, which included staff-level participation from both Shared Services and Grounds Maintenance. Re-establishing the Equipment Committee may provide valuable insight into the needs of each site, and leverage institutional knowledge about which equipment is best used for different types of grounds maintenance. The Equipment Committee should also play a role in assessing whether or not existing equipment needs to be replaced or potentially could be used as a backup/loaner vehicle or equipment for use when equipment is at Fleet, as well as providing insight about the needs for additional equipment purchases.</p> <p>The County should also consider including initial maintenance periods in purchase prices for specialized equipment, to ensure that equipment lifespan is maximized through the use of experienced mechanics. The County may also want to consider on-call contracts for specialized equipment maintenance and repair, to provide a supplemental source for these services when Fleet is unable to accommodate needed timeframes.</p>	2	2	2
Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should establish policies for facility staff that clearly outline what should and should not be escalated to an emergency-level call. Coordinators should also be empowered to assess whether or not the call requires an urgent response, or whether it can be addressed during normal business hours.</p> <p>These policies should also provide clear guidance authorizing the Coordinator to determine whether the use of overtime or an on-demand contractor is the most efficient method for resolving the issue.</p>	1	1	3

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Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should consider developing more formal and consistent processes for Recreation to communicate with Grounds Maintenance about upcoming rentals and athletic events, to ensure that Grounds Maintenance can build in time to accommodate needed work. This should include reviewing Rec1 to determine if an internal events calendar could be shared with Grounds Maintenance to help them understand the full scope of upcoming projects. Alternatively, the Division should consider transferring responsibility to Recreation staff to create work orders for all grounds work needed related to athletic events or other rentals.	2	1	3
Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should standardize pavilion rental timeslots of either four or eight hours. This will allow Recreation Park Attendants adequate time to clean the pavilions between the rentals, and would also free up some of the Rental Park Attendant's time to provide other grounds maintenance efforts, and potentially assist coordinators in responding to emergency call issues. Alternatively, the Division should consider assessing budgeted personnel funds that have not been spent due to unfilled positions. The Division should consider using these funds to offer overtime, as funding permits, to allow Grounds Maintenance staff to work weekends assisting with needed grounds maintenance, or to assist in pavilion rentals.	3	1	3

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Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should ensure that staff are participating in evaluating the quality of uniforms provided by current and potential vendors. The Division should also consider stocking basic uniform inventory in the warehouse, to help protect against supply chain challenges which may result in newly hired staff not having uniforms. The Division may need to consider updating uniform design, to better distinguish between staff in different sections and with different responsibilities. Additionally, the County should consider including making samples available as part of bid response assessment and contract renewal consideration, so that staff can ensure accurate sizing and verify quality is appropriate for the work they are performing.	3	2	2
People	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department needs to conduct more formal cost-benefit analysis on the use of on-demand contractors versus allowing staff to earn overtime. This should include formal contractor performance evaluations to understand differences in quality of work performed. The Department should also consider regularly assessing budgeted but unspent personnel funds, due to open or vacant positions, to determine if these funds can be utilized to support overtime budgets and allow staff to use this time to perform needed repairs or corrective maintenance.	2	2	1
People	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division needs to add a Foreman position to the EHC Operations Section to allow the Program Coordinator to operate more strategically in the operations and asset management of the EHC.	2	1	1



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Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should continue to develop formalized mentoring and training programs to develop candidates for promotion and growth. The Division should speak with the Department of Water Resources about the programs they have developed, which include management training for all level III technicians, including management training and understanding of County processes and policies related to timesheet review, budget and financial management, and similar responsibilities that tend to increase as staff are promoted.	2	2	3
Process	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Division should regularly assess its outreach materials, signage, and other public-facing information to ensure that it is appropriate and accessible to more of Gwinnett County's residents.	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Parks and Recreation	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Division should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments.  The Division should also assess the data points currently being collected, to ensure that the data being collected is value-add and assists in program development or performance assessment. The Division should, as part of a more holistic asset management strategic initiative, develop and implement consistent asset-level condition assessments, with regular reviews of condition levels, and utilization of this information to inform funding decisions around rehabilitating, repairing, or replacing existing assets versus constructing new assets or facilities.	3	2	3

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Performance Assessment	Community Services - UGA Extension Gwinnett	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As Gwinnett County consists of large populations of multiple nationalities, the Division should seek to expand its ability to effectively communicate in other represented languages such as Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.	1	3	3
Technology	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should talk to other County departments about solutions for handling calls as a call center, such as the IVR and switchboard systems utilized by the Support Services Department’s Fiscal and Solid Waste Management Division, the Communications Department’s Fiscal and Administration Division, and the Department of Water Resources’ Fiscal and Administration Division.	3	3	1
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider identifying a permanent location for the Division to host training. The Division should consider reserving certain units for training and leave those units at the training facility to avoid unreasonable delays due to set-up and break-down.	2	3	2
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should determine a less manual process for poll official payroll. The Division should conduct a needs assessment to define the poll official payroll process requirements and build the business case for procuring a system or similar tool to increase automation and internal controls for the process. The Division should consider reviewing WhenToWork, used by other divisions in the Department, as a potential solution or model for a solution.	2	1	1

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Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should work with the ITS Department to ensure staff are present in Divisional facilities during elections to help troubleshoot technology issues. Departmental and County leadership should reinforce the expectation that the ITS Department will have personnel present at the Baldwin Building and/or Elections Warehouse during each election. The ITS Department should develop a hypercare plan to ensure the Department has adequate staffing and escalation procedures during elections.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division, the Department, and the County should review contracts with temp agencies to ensure expectations are being properly communicated to the vendors and from the vendors to their workers. The Division should work with the Financial Services Department to develop a process for formal evaluations and identified issues about vendor performance. This information should be leveraged, as appropriate, when vendors are being considered for future bid awards.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should conduct a needs assessment for the fleet vehicles allocated to the Division and consider requesting a change in allocation if the assessment determines the Division needs additional or different vehicles.	2	1	2
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Before the Department solidifies plans to move the Elections Warehouse, the Department should conduct a spacing audit to determine the spacing needs for the Division and ensure the space selected adequately addresses the full range of storage and activity needs.	2	1	2

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Technology	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division should consider either working with the ITS Department to link FileNet to EasyVote and/or ElectionNet to ensure applications and other documents can be easily accessed from voters' records, or scanning applications and other documents directly to voters' records in the County-owned or State-mandated voter management system.	2	1	2
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should consider resources, tools, equipment, and systems that can partially or completely automate processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness on Election Day. The Division should observe and record leading practices implemented by other major metropolitan counties, especially in the Atlanta metro region, and Departmental and County leadership should work with the Division to find reasonable means and methods to implement those leading practices in Gwinnett County.	1	1	2
Culture	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Division should develop a standard for new hire orientation and onboarding. Leadership and administrative staff in the Division should either be responsible for offering these orientations or providing training to Division staff to ensure consistent onboarding and information is provided to all new hires.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> Divisional leadership should ensure their weekly or daily leadership meetings are being used for effective planning of staff workloads, schedules, and other resources. When leadership conducts planning of resource utilization, leadership should communicate expectations to staff in a timely enough manner to avoid last-minute requests and inefficient uses of resources as much as possible.	1	1	3

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Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 12A:</b> The Division should clearly define the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the Department and the Elections Board and ensure all staff are aware of each body's area of authority.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 12B:</b> The Division should consider an independent third-party assessment of the Election Board to determine the Election Board's legally mandated governance, as well as adherence to applicable statutes.	2	3	2
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Voter Registration and Elections	<b>Recommendation 13:</b> The Division should consider collecting and analyzing available performance metrics that align with Divisional strategic initiatives and priorities. The Division should consider how to utilize performance data to make strategic decisions	3	1	3
Technology	Community Services: Animal Welfare and Enforcement - Technology Recommendations	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Animal Welfare and Enforcement should conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified within ShelterBuddy. The Department should use this information to define system requirements and either develop the associated projects and business cases, or prepare to issue a procurement for a new system based on the needs assessment results.	1	1	3
Technology	Community Services: Business Management and Technology Services - Technology Recommendations	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Business Management and Technology Services should continue to work with Finance on the new ERP to determine how it will meet their needs. If the new ERP does not meet all of their needs, the Division should consider assessing contract management strategies in other Departments to determine if a software or less manual solution may fit their needs.	2	1	1

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Process	Community Services: Business Management and Technology Services - Technology Recommendations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Business Management and Technology Services should leverage leading practices utilized in the Department of Transportation and Department of Support Services, and utilize SharePoint workflow for invoice processing. This should reduce the manual communications and tracking of documentation, and allow for more insight into delays or roadblocks to processing. Processes should be developed and end-users should be trained on how to utilize the SharePoint. These processes should include escalation as needed for untimely review or response to requests for review or approval.	2	2	3
Technology	Community Services: Community Engagement and Community Collaboration - Technology Recommendations	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County has acquired Hive, a project management system for use in the Communications Department. As Hive has been customized specifically for use in managing marketing and communications projects, Community Engagement and Community Collaboration should reassess its use of Lucity as a work order management system and discuss the potential for leveraging Hive in the future.	2	1	3
Technology	Community Services: Community Engagement and Community Collaboration - Technology Recommendations	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should work with ITS to determine the best way to make internet available to staff who frequently work in the field. This may include cell phones or tablets with internet capabilities, or exploring expanded Wi-Fi within the parks.	1	2	2

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Technology	Community Services: Parks and Recreation - Technology Recommendations	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Parks and Recreation should work to create Lucy work order templates for common or standardized tasks, that are pre-filled based on average time spent, and general notes for what tasks were performed. Processes should be updated to require more detailed work order entry to tasks outside of the normal, or to document additional materials, supplies, or chemicals/pesticides needed to complete the task.</p> <p>Parks and Recreation should also prioritize the transformation of Lucy for comprehensive asset management, including contract staff to assist with the transition.</p> <p>Parks and Recreation should also communicate with Finance on determining if Lucy could potentially communicate with the new ERP, to allow for less duplicative entry.</p>	1	2	3
Technology	Community Services: Parks and Recreation - Technology Recommendations	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Parks and Recreation should conduct fit-gap sessions or a comprehensive, detailed needs assessment to define the requirements to address the gaps identified within Rec1. The Department should use this information to define system requirements and either develop the associated projects and business cases, or prepare to issue a procurement for a new system based on the needs assessment results.</p>	2	2	3
Technology	Community Services: Parks and Recreation - Technology Recommendations	<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Department should work with ITS to determine the best way to make internet available to staff who frequently work in the field. This may include cell phones or tablets with internet capabilities, or exploring expanded Wi-Fi within the parks. This should be completed before Lucy Mobile is launched.</p>	1	1	1

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People	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department needs to work with County HR to assess whether additional titles can be utilized to better delineate between roles and responsibilities. The Department should ensure that growth and promotional responsibilities are appropriate for each role, rather than compared against Department or county-wide use of the title.	3	1	3
People	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should conduct a functional assessment to reorganize the department by functional responsibilities, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level.	2	2	2
Culture	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department needs to work with County leadership to develop a refined, specific mission and scope for each of the divisions, as well as a way to refer requesters to other departments or community organizations. The Department also needs to formally and consistently evaluate staff workload, and identify a plan to either add additional staff and resources to support the current programming, or reduce programming to better reflect what can be reasonably accomplished with current staffing levels.	3	1	3
Process	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department Director needs to turn day-to-day responsibilities over to the lower-level departments and managers and refocus energies on strategic planning and broader departmental priorities.	1	1	3
Process	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Department leadership need to work with each division to ensure that policies either allow adequate authority to modify them to provide efficient and effective operating practices for each division, or move towards developing division-level policies and procedures, rather than department-wide policies and procedures.	2	1	3



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Culture	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> As appropriate, Section, Division, Department, and County leadership should defer to the expertise of their staff and better respect staff’s understanding of specific issues and unique circumstances. Leadership should balance the needs of all and understand the potential precedents that are set by responses to common issues. Leadership should not promise or uniformly encourage escalation to vocal complainants. When in doubt, all complainants should be encouraged to communicate directly with appropriate division staff, so that the subject matter experts who are best equipped to address the specific issue can do so.	3	1	3
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Department should identify and consistently collect customer data to assist in decision-making. This may include website analytics, such as commonly searched words and phrases, and time spent on individual pages and bounce rates. This should also include more targeted customer survey questions, needs assessments, and process evaluation.	2	1	3
Culture	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> Department leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all divisions. Communication should include both formal Departmental announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions between coworkers. Leadership should seek to understand the duties and responsibilities of all functional areas within the Department and ensure leadership isn’t only becoming involved with certain functional areas only when issues arise.	2	1	3

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Culture	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Department should reassess its stance on teleworking and consider introducing teleworking to positions whose job functions could be performed from home at last part of the time.	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Community Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Department should review the internal KPIs and data points and revise the Management Framework reported data to better demonstrate the depth and breadth of operational efforts and customer service. Divisions should be consulted to provide insight on data they believe best reflects the current workload, as well as leading and lagging indicators of performance.	2	1	3
People	Information Technology - Office of CIO	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should continue the search to fill the Assistant Director and vacant position within the Emerging Technology and Digital Transformation Division or promote from within and backfill one of the Division Director positions.	1	1	1
Performance Assessment	Information Technology - Office of CIO	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should expand the information provided on the daily network operations and enterprise application reports to be consistent with the daily information security report. Determine which metrics provide the information to monitor performance and identify areas of improvement. Develop a program to collect the metrics required for the new performance indicators with a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.	3	2	1

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Culture	Information Technology - Office of CIO	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should expand the Road Show concept to create more forums for discussion with County Departments that are less presentation and more collaborative conversation. This concept could be implemented at multiple levels within ITS, such as an executive forum or a forum focused on a specific business application or technology.	3	2	3
Process	Information Technology - Business Strategic Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As part of the overall Department recommendation regarding expanding the Department’s telework policy, the Division needs to consider how the policy is impacting its services providers and adjust the policy accordingly. For more information, refer to Department Level Observation 2.	3	1	3
People	Information Technology - Business Strategic Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department Director, Department Human Resources Administration staff, and the County’s Human Resources Department should coach the Division Director on managing the Division’s workload and repairing the fractures within the Business Strategic Services Division. The Department Director and the County’s Human Resources Department should monitor progress and intervene if necessary.	1	1	3
People	Information Technology - Business Strategic Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should examine the workload and demand for the Business Relationship Managers and determine if the Division needs additional staff. Due to the nature of the work and the importance of effective business cases, the Division should see additional business analysts can be provided by consulting firms or from the Project Management Service Provider our hire outside consulting firms to complete the business cases for critical initiatives.	2	1	2

Category (People, Process, Culture, Performance Assessment)	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Information Technology - Business Strategic Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should revisit the existing project management standards, tools, and templates. The PMO Unit should work as a team to update the standards to account for multiple project management methodologies (Waterfall, Agile, and Waterfall/Agile Hybrid) and require the use of the method for all projects.	3	2	3
Technology	Information Technology - Business Strategic Services	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should validate the requirements for a comprehensive project management system and conduct a fit-gap analysis of the requirements against Microsoft Project Online. If Microsoft Project Online meets the requirements, complete the current implementation based on the requirements validations. If Microsoft Project Online does not meet the requirements, conduct a vendor selection for a replacement.	3	3	1
Process	Information Technology - Enterprise Applications and Support	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should create user communities for standard business functions (finance, HR, procurement) or applications (Lucity, eBuilder, Asset Works) that includes end-users, Business Relationship Managers, Business Analysts, Enterprise Application Staff, and the Office of Strategic Excellence to provide a single forum to gather business requirements, agree on standard business process and identify and prioritize the resulting system enhancements.	3	2	3
People	Information Technology - Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should continue to work towards completing the build-out of the new Division. Without staffing the key position, the County is not making any advances in Emerging Technologies. If staff cannot be recruited externally, consider promoting from within as the new positions will offer growth opportunities for existing staff.	1	1	1

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Process	Information Technology - Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider consolidating application resources and experts in the other departments to the IT Department or create user communities for applications (GIS, Accela, etc.) that includes Department expertise, Business Relationship Managers, Business Analysts, and application support staff to provide a single forum to gather business requirements, agree on standard business process and identify and prioritize the resulting system enhancements.	3	2	3
Technology	Information Technology - Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should reexamine the asset tracking implementation in RemedyForce and the use of smart coding. The Division should conduct a fit-gap analysis between the asset tracking requirements and RemedyForce implementation, and consider adding additional data fields that provide the required information for device asset tracking.	3	2	2
Process	Information Technology - Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The IT Department and Planning and Development Departments must work together to define a process and expected timeframes for updating GIS and Public Safety System with new addresses.	1	1	3
People	Information Technology - Fiscal and Administrative	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Fiscal and Administrative Division should complete a more in-depth functional assessment and determine if the workload supports converting some of the part-time positions to full-time positions.	3	2	1

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Process	Information Technology - Fiscal and Administrative	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The HR and Administrative Services Unit should work with Departmental leadership to create an inventory of all equipment and/or materials assigned to Department employees. This should include a form that employees should sign during the onboarding process to acknowledge receipt of the equipment and materials and their responsibility to return the materials to the Department upon separation. Each division's leadership should be responsible for providing updates to the HR and Administrative Services unit when there are updates within their Division.	3	2	1
Process	Information Technology - Fiscal and Administrative	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The HR and Administrative Services Unit should develop forms to ensure that complete and timely information is provided consistently for all changes in employment status. Division leadership should assist in ensuring consistent adoption of the forms.	3	3	3

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Technology	Information Technology - Fiscal and Administrative	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should consider using SharePoint for workflow management for essential division functions to allow for more automated tracking of workflow and timing, and allow for insight into process delays, and potential automated escalation when needed. Other divisions, such as Support Services Fiscal and Solid Waste Management, successfully use SharePoint to obtain invoice approvals and workflow management for payment-processing related functions.</p> <p>The Division should also work with Department leadership to reduce the number of approvers required for each purchase. Senior leadership’s time should not be spent reviewing and approving small-value purchases, or those that have already been approved through the budget development process. The Division should work with senior leadership to update approval policies and only escalate to division and department leadership for large-value purchases, or those that are not part of the originally approved budget for the division or unit.</p>	3	3	1
People	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Review of currently gathered metrics and the independent study that calculated that 18 FTEs were required to handle the current volume of tickets. Based on the results of the review, adjust staffing as needed.</p>	2	2	1
Process	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Facility planning, and office space must be proactively evaluated based on the division's head count and growth plans.</p>	3	3	3

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Process	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should accelerate the move to onsite spare management. This will reduce Mean Time To Repair ("MTTR") and improve customer satisfaction.	2	2	1
Technology	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Microsoft offers a Windows Virtual Desktop solution that can be evaluated to determine if it is appropriate for some users. It can be a cost-effective solution that is secure and can be deployed quickly. It can also address any delays in obtaining laptops caused by supply chain issues.	2	1	1
Technology	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County should evaluate, acquire, and implement an automated password resetting tool. This can significantly improve the productivity of the Service Desk and employees. There are several cloud-based and on-premise tools that can be evaluated after establishing the County's requirements. This will free up Service Desk Agents' time to take on other tasks currently performed by the Level 2 desk after appropriate training.	2	1	1
Technology	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Division should develop, implement, and maintain a knowledge base to help Service Desk Agents. Provide incentives to enhance the knowledge base by making it a part of performance appraisals of Service Desk Agents.	3	2	1
Technology	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Division should research, evaluate and deploy Digital Virtual Service Desk Agents and FAQs that can answer many of the common queries that the Service Desk Agents handle.	3	2	1



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Technology	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division should research, evaluate and deploy Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)-enabled enterprise automation tools to further improve productivity and customer satisfaction. Rapid server provisioning that is template-driven can aid in quick and secure deployment of applications. Tools such as Ansible and other enterprise automation tools should be evaluated.	3	2	1
Process	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should create a DR strategy establishing true location redundancy for the Enterprise Operating Environment (servers, storage, network, etc.) that will withstand a major disaster. This design should also establish proper RPO (Recovery Point Objective) and RTO (Recovery Time Objective) so that the application owners and their users know the timelines and responsibilities. All options, including cloud-based DR as a service should be evaluated to address the needs of the County. There should be periodic (at a minimum annual) DR exercise that identifies and documents weaknesses. Any documented weaknesses should be addressed and fixed for future DR exercises.	1	1	1
Process	Information Technology - Infrastructure Operations	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Division has implemented some portions of the ITIL “Core” categories. The full benefits will be realized once the rest of the categories are implemented.	2	2	2
Process	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> There does not seem to be a contractual obligation on the part of the contractors to stay in their roles without leaving after having been trained at the County’s expense. These contracts should be reviewed and enhanced with contract clauses to protect the County’s investment by obligating the individual to stay in the role for a certain period or the contracting company to provide an equally skilled person if their employee resigns or leaves the account.	3	2	3

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Process	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Center for Internet Security, Inc. (CIS) has developed a well-defined, unbiased, and consensus-based set of industry best practices to provide organizations of all sizes with the ability to assess and improve their security. These standards are all available online on a complimentary basis at <a href="https://www.cisecurity.org/cis-benchmarks/">https://www.cisecurity.org/cis-benchmarks/</a>. The Cybersecurity Division should consider performing a formal review of their Microsoft 365 environment against the CIS benchmark configurations to determine misconfigured areas or where services and controls are not enabled. During the risk assessment, any controls that are not compliant with this benchmark should be noted, analyzed based on risk, prioritized for remediation based on risk, and any exceptions should be formally documented with the reasons for the exceptions.</p>	1	1	2

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Process	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should develop a standardized Incident Response Testing Plan. Document the steps for testing, required roles, the criteria for a successful test, evidence requirements, and reporting. In the spirit of continuous improvement, including a Unit that documents what worked well and opportunities for improvement. Ensure that future tests address previous opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>The Division should require formal standardized quarterly/annual testing of the Incident Response Plan, record the exercise results and identify any action items to improve the process, track all action items to completion, and regularly provide updates on progress to leadership.</p> <p>The Division should mandate and develop standardized formal Incident Response Training (including contractors), and Include Incident Response training for all involved personnel and new employees as needed.</p> <p>Once all steps have been put into place, the Division should establish a means to monitor, manage and report on the Incident Response program, determine roles and responsibilities, establish scorecards, trends, and metrics reporting to evaluate the effectiveness of controls.</p>	1	1	2

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Process	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> We recommend that the Cybersecurity Division create a stated policy for email retention, and that retention policies be designed to automatically delete once the emails are no longer required to be kept legally. Suppose retention of emails is needed for years, but those emails are no longer needed for active cases. In that case, it is further suggested to enable policies that limit the time range that an individual user is allowed to keep or synchronize on their local system and, by extension, limit the volume of historical emails that a user can request from the Exchange server. Storing all email history on the cloud-based system may be acceptable if the County department needs complete history but allowing the user access to all that email should be a conscious decision by policymakers and not by individual users.	2	1	3

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Technology	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> To maintain compliance and control over sensitive County-owned data, Microsoft has integrated Data Loss Prevention (DLP) security solutions into the Microsoft 365 environment. This functionality is dependent upon Office 365 E5 and Microsoft 365 E5 licenses. DLP will help identify sensitive information across many locations, such as Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business, and Microsoft Teams. It can prevent the accidental sharing of sensitive information and monitors and protect sensitive information in desktop versions of Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. It supports a wide selection of data types, including HIPAA (PHI), Financial Information (Bank Routing), Personal Information (PII/SSN/DL), and others. Policies can be set up to detect sensitive information movement outside of the tenant via Exchange email, SharePoint sites, OneDrive accounts, and Teams chat and channel messages. These policies can be set up with conditions and actions to notify or block data movement if the policy criteria are met. This technology can determine if malicious accesses are being made or if data is being exfiltrated from the organization. DLP is an excellent tool but is complex, mainly when spread across multiple departments with different requirements. It is something that the Cybersecurity Division should review as a potential layered security solution to the cloud environment since many departments deal with sensitive personal information.	1	1	1
Process	Information Technology - Cybersecurity	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Leadership should communicate that Security Awareness Training is mandatory for all users of the Enterprise Operating Environment. Proofpoint Wombat can be leveraged to assign and administer timely security modules periodically (quarterly/monthly) to all employees, including contractors.	3	3	1

<p>Process</p>	<p>Information Technology - Cybersecurity</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Division should review and update all current procedures to reflect changes to the processes and addition of any new roles and responsibilities, incorporate a lessons-learned section into the procedural updates (including lessons learned from previous incidents), implement annual review and approval of documents in the revision history, and perform additional process reviews upon any environmental or policy changes as well as any changes in regulatory requirements.</p> <p>The Division should define a RACI chart that covers roles during the ticket management process. In addition, document the centralized role responsible for overseeing Security Incident tickets from beginning to end and incorporate the workflow into the RACI chart.</p> <p>As well, identify and document all additional personnel who need to be engaged in Security Incidents and update contact listings, include a listing of escalation personnel and specific criteria for requiring escalations, and update the roles and responsibilities of these functions.</p> <p>The Division should determine and document the appropriate contacts for the Forensics team and incorporate forensic engagement into the current procedure for Security Incidents (if not currently incorporated). The Forensic connection should be a separate dedicated team or individual and be engaged in identifying the overall impact and extent of data exfiltration or compromise. Identify a specific function (or person) to provide initial notifications and regular communications on all Level 1 and Level 2 Security Incident tickets using updated contact lists. Update the roles and responsibilities section of the procedure to include this function. Ensure that all departments and personnel are notified simultaneously and receive the same message. Develop a tabletop exercise for testing the Incident Response Plan as an initial step. Include defined roles and responsibilities as well as different scenarios of incidents (e.g., Ransomware, data breach, other business continuity scenarios). Schedule a tabletop exercise of the Incident Response Plan.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>1</p>
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		<p>The Division should develop SLAs and timelines to cover communications, actions taken, escalations, and ticket resolution for each severity level of Security Incident tickets. Document responsibilities and steps involved.</p> <p>The Division should publish and implement standardized Incident Response training for all departments and associates, track and report on compliance, and conduct additional training upon any material changes to the process (e.g., new incident tools or reporting changes).</p> <p>The division should determine the target audience of reporting and frequency, establish scheduled meetings to review results, document the steps for generating and providing reports, note items that are trending in a positive and negative direction, provide root causes of negative trends and future actions to correct issues, report on SLAs for each Ticket Severity Level (acknowledgment, response, escalations, communications, etc.), analyze items that fell short of meeting the specified SLA, and develop criteria and documented steps for reporting Incident Response testing and target recipients.</p>			
Process	Information Technology - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should develop a multi-year budget aligned with the Department’s Strategic Plan that considers ongoing operations costs with projects available to upgrade the County’s technology applications and infrastructure. Develop in-depth business cases and presentations for County Leadership explaining the needs and services benefits of the technology initiatives and the risks to the County of remaining with the status quo.</p>	2	2	2

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People	Information Technology - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The number of unfilled vacancies, the difficulty in attracting appropriate technical talent, the long hiring timeline, the County’s ability to provide a competitive total compensation package, etc., all contribute to the divisions being understaffed. Some policies may have to be revisited to attract talent. Remote work has become ubiquitous since the pandemic, and the current technology workforce expects it for at least a few days of the week. A hybrid work policy should be developed for the Department.</p> <p>The time it takes to make offers also needs to be reduced so that the county does not lose great candidates after completing all the interviews. A market compensation study for the technology jobs needs to be completed to determine compensation gaps for the various positions. The Department continuously tries to hire top talent but struggles with funding for competitive salaries. The strategic theme to prioritize quality staff augmentation will address this issue.</p> <p>A comprehensive analysis of the vacancies should be performed to determine if contracting or outsourcing certain functions strategically will address the issue.</p>	1	1	2



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Process	Information Technology - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should evaluate and procure the services of a Managed Services Provider (MSP). The MSP will provide a Vendor Management System (VMS) that automates and supports the IT contingent labor lifecycle and the use of project-based resource services. In addition, the selected MSP can offer an extensive network of Georgia IT companies and staffing providers to supply much-needed temporary talent to the County.</p> <p>The MSP program will provide the County with complete transparency by using a not-to-exceed price rate card model in the recruitment and selection of IT talent and by using service-level agreements to manage the acquisition, time reporting, and invoice processing. As earlier stated, the MSP program streamlines and standardizes IT procurement, utilizing an open network of IT staffing suppliers to meet the diverse IT needs of Gwinnett County.</p> <p>To jumpstart this process, Gwinnett County should consider using the State of Georgia Contract for an IT Staffing Managed Services Provider managed by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services <a href="https://doas.ga.gov/state-purchasing/it-temporary-staffing">https://doas.ga.gov/state-purchasing/it-temporary-staffing</a>. The contract is used by state agencies, the colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia, and many local governments. Information regarding the awarded vendor Computer is located at <a href="https://www.cai.io/services/contingent-workforce-solutions/georgia">https://www.cai.io/services/contingent-workforce-solutions/georgia</a>.</p>	2	1	1
Performance Assessment	Information Technology - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should develop a dashboard to consolidate daily and monthly metrics and establish baseline performance. Track monthly performance against the baselines and implement programs to improve performance.</p>	3	2	1

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Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> Implementing additional ITIL categories will enhance processes and procedures for service delivery. For example, following the Service Design process will mandate creating and updating Service Management Manuals. The ITIL Core, Enhanced, Performance, and Strategic categories are later defined in the Appendix of the report. A Service Organization Control SOC2 Type 2 certification journey will also greatly help identify and fix any weaknesses. A SOC 2 Type 2 report is an internal controls report capturing how an organization safeguards customer/user data and how well those controls are operating. The System and Organizations Control (SOC) offers the best way to demonstrate effective information technology controls.	2	2	2
Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The County should hire an Enterprise Architect with one of the available vacancies, choose an architecture framework, and create an overall Enterprise Architecture framework that will establish governance and controls for all technology projects and investments.	2	2	1
Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The County should establish a hierarchical governance structure that is made up of forums that make up all the Towers of Operation that meet periodically. Establish escalation criteria and procedures where issues are escalated to a higher forum if they cannot be resolved in an established time interval. This will improve the visibility of issues, and Leadership can intervene and help if needed to resolve issues promptly.	2	2	1

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Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The County should reexamine the decision to discontinue maintenance and support from SAP. Should the county choose a different ERP vendor, contract staff may look for new opportunities. Having an outsourced support vendor like Remini Street can mitigate this risk. However, the risk of not having access to SAP support and maintenance may outweigh the cost savings if the county does not have access to critical applications, technology, and security fixes provided by SAP. By not having access to, and not applying any of the recommended application security patches for a prolonged period, the Enterprise Operating Environment (EOE) risk level increases dramatically.	1	1	1
Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Department should conduct periodic (such as quarterly) anonymous surveys, aggregate the user responses, and use the results to improve customer service. Periodic (quarterly or semi-annual) user group forums can also be set up to communicate strategic plans, upcoming changes, training, etc., and obtain valuable user feedback.	3	2	1
Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Department Director should delegate certain decisions within a specific financial or risk tolerance to Division Directors or the Assistant Director once the position is filled. An alternative, an auto-approval procedure, can be implemented that triggers automatic approval after an agreed time. This can be implemented for non-financial decisions such as approval of standards, certain agreed-upon HR actions, etc.	2	1	3

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Process	Information Technology - Department	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Department should arrange a monthly meeting with all relevant parties (including Service Desk representation) where strategic plans, upcoming changes, known impact of those changes, etc., are discussed so that all the Divisions are aware of the plans and any changes that may affect operations or service delivery. The Service Desk can plan and be prepared if they are aware of any significant changes that may increase the call volume.	2	1	3



## Executive Summary

### **Phase 5 Operational and Performance Assessment – *Department of Corrections, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, and Police Department***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

October 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 2
- 3. Departments..... 4
  - 3.A Department of Corrections..... 5
  - 3.B Department of Fire and Emergency Services ..... 12
  - 3.C Police Department..... 26
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 36
- 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations..... 40
- 6. Conclusion ..... 44

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This Executive Summary report represents the work product of Phase 5 which includes the Corrections, Fire and Emergency Services, and Police departments. Phase 5 fieldwork began in July 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Executive Summary report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This Executive Summary report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”  
– Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 5 scope included the following departments:

- Corrections
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Police

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of “what is working well,” “what needs improvement,” and “areas for potential risk or concern”
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

### Approach

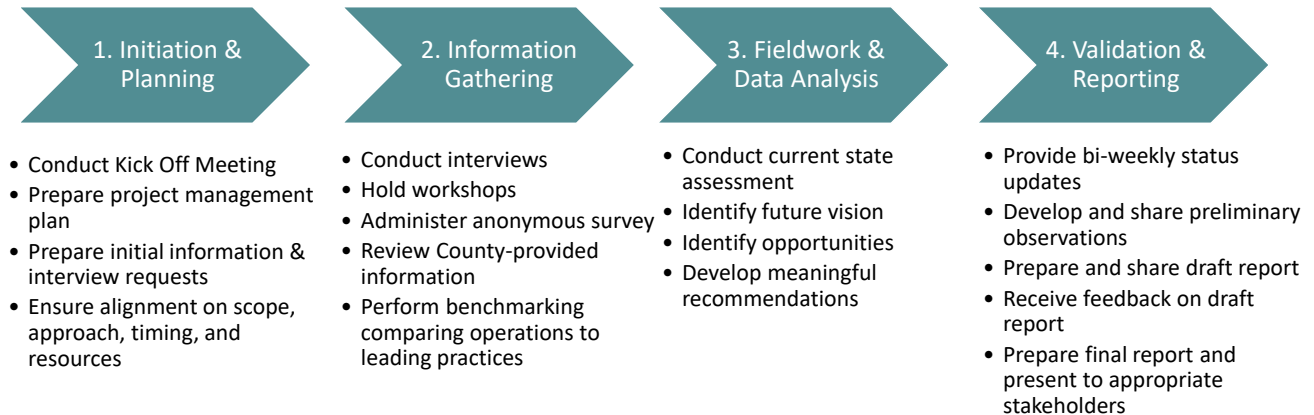
Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.





We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 75 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel
- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This Executive Summary report summarizes analysis and fieldwork completed between July and September 2022. Our detailed report should be read in its entirety to gain additional insight and context.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Corrections
- B. Fire and Emergency Services
- C. Police

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Leadership and Management
- Survey
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

# 3.A Department of Corrections

## Corrections at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Contribute towards maintaining and protecting a just, peaceful, and safe society by enforcing court-imposed sentences and detaining inmates in a safe and secure environment that encourages positive change and provides quality services that make a difference.
- 2 | Provide rehabilitation, education, and training for inmates that pass through the Department of Corrections.
- 3 | Provide the citizens of Gwinnett County with Inmate Work Detail services throughout the County, and the assurance that inmates are securely supervised and housed.

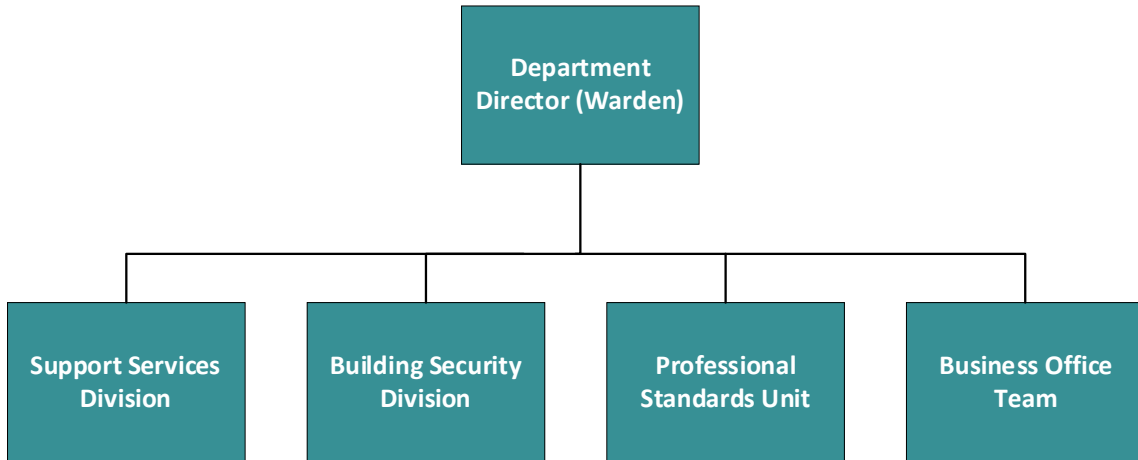
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$20,290,571</b>	<b>\$56,500</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

		through August 2022	Corrections
FTE	Filled		112
	Allocated		138

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



### Compliance and Accreditation



The Department of Corrections takes pride in the Department's consistent American Correctional Association ("ACA") accreditation and Department-wide policies and procedures based on ACA standards.

### Inmate On-the-Job Training



The Department of Corrections offers on-the-job training for inmates to learn new skills for application after release. This program is run through partnerships with Gwinnett Technical College, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and the Center of Industry and Technology.

### Correctional Officer Training



The Gwinnett Department of Corrections works hard to ensure staff are trained in accordance with ACA and Georgia Department of Corrections standards. On top of the the 20 annual training hours Officers in the State of Georgia are required to have, the Department requires an additional 20 hours of training each year for Correctional Officers.

### Work Release Program



The Work Release Program is a court-sentencing program that allows for an alternative form of prison time for qualified offenders. This program allows offenders to work in the positions they previously held before their sentence during the day, or the night, and then come back to the prison after their job shift. This allows for qualified offenders to keep their current jobs and earn income while they serve their sentence. This program is often used in, but not limited to, child support cases.

## Introduction

A primary purpose of the Gwinnett Department of Corrections is to house residents and inmates and provide County services through Work Details. The facility, which consists of one main building and one exterior building, houses several different programs for inmates and residents. State and County inmates can be housed by the Department for a portion, or the duration of their sentence

The Department of Corrections is responsible for safely housing inmates and providing a variety of cleanup and landscaping services around Gwinnett County. The safety of the citizens, inmates, and Correctional Officers is a priority of the Department.

## Organization

The Department of Corrections is led by the Warden, who serves as the Department Director. There are two divisions, one team, and one unit that report directly to the Warden:

- Support Services Division
- Building Security Division
- Business Office Team
- Professional Standards Unit

## Support Services Division

The Support Services Division is comprised of four main sections within the division:

- Care and Treatment Team
- Field Operations
- Classification
- Job Training

The Division is led by a Division Director of Support Services, who also the Deputy Warden. The main function of the Deputy Warden is to ensure each section under the Deputy Warden's command is following policies and procedures. The Deputy Warden is also the Grievance Coordinator. Any inmate grievance is given directly to the Deputy Warden to review and act on. Counselors are also involved in the process to attempt to resolve the dispute internally rather than have any grievance go to a lawsuit. There are two positions that report directly to the Deputy Warden: the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain, and the Correctional Job Training Coordinator.

The Correctional Job Training Coordinator ("Coordinator") reports directly to the Deputy Warden and is responsible for the management of all educational training and on-the-job training ("OJT") for the inmates. There is one Assistant Job Training Coordinator that reports directly to the Coordinator. The programs offered are designed to give inmates the experience and the training to go to an employer, once out of the facility, and apply for a job with a set of skills. The Department of Corrections offers a variety of programs. These include, but are not limited to, janitorial, food preparation, and welding programs, and GED classes for the inmates. These programs are made possible through partnerships with local education and training organizations, such as Gwinnett Technical College, who administers the welding program. The Job Training Coordinator is responsible for managing this partnership.

The Job Training Coordinator is also responsible for informing inmates of the available programs. Inmates initially learn about the OJT and educational programs while in new-inmate orientation, but there are also fliers posted on bulletin boards in the housing dorms. Inmates can access applications for these programs by requesting an application through email on the in-dorm computer kiosk.

The Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain ("Captain") reports directly to the Deputy Warden and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Support Services Division except for the Job Training Coordinator. There are three positions that report directly to the Captain: the Care and Treatment Team/Compliance Manager, the Field Operations Lieutenant, and the Classification Sergeant. Within the Field Operations Subdivision, the Captain is responsible for overseeing the Work Detail, Work Release, Work Alternative Programs, and the Building Coordinator. The Captain also acts as the Assistant Grievance Coordinator underneath the Deputy Warden.

The Care and Treatment/Compliance Manager ("Lieutenant") is a sworn officer that reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain and is responsible for all American Correctional Association ("ACA") and Prison Rape Elimination Act ("PREA") standards in order to ensure accreditation. Medical Services, the Food Services Team, five facility Counselors, and one facility Chaplain all report directly to the Care and Treatment/Compliance Manager.

The Classification Sergeant (“Sergeant”) is responsible for the inmate intake and discharge out of the facility. The Sergeant reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain.

### *Field Operations*

The Field Operations Unit within the Support Services Division is led by a Field Operations Lieutenant (“Lieutenant”) who reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain. Field Operations includes the Work Detail Program and the Work Release Program. The Lieutenant is also responsible for the five part-time employees that work in the Work Alternative Program.

The Field Operations Sergeant (“Sergeant”) is responsible for the Work Detail Program and reports directly to the Field Operations Lieutenant. The purpose of this position is to coordinate and manage the Correctional Officers assigned to the Work Detail Program to efficiently provide services to the County. There are two Field Operations Corporals that report to the Field Operations Sergeant.

### *Building Security Division*

The Building Security Division is responsible for monitoring all inmate and resident activities and ensuring the safety of all inmates and officers within the facility. The Building Security Division is comprised of a Division Director, three Shift Lieutenants, six Shift Sergeants who supervise the Correctional Officers within each shift, and 80 Correctional Officers who monitor their respective posts assigned each day. Building Security is organized into a Morning, Day, and Night Shift.

The Division Director of the Building Security Division (“Deputy Warden”) oversees the Division and reports directly to the Warden. The Deputy Warden’s main function is to ensure the safety of both inmates and Correctional Officers within the facility. The Deputy Warden is also responsible for policy and procedure compliance in the Building Security Division, responding to employee grievances, and all Building Security employee appraisals.

The Building Security Division Correctional Officer Captain (“Captain of Building Security”) answers directly to the Deputy Warden of Building Security and has three direct reports. The Captain of Building Security oversees three Correctional Officer Lieutenants: one for the Evening Shift Team, one for the Day Shift Team, and one for the Morning Shift Team. The primary responsibilities of the Captain of Building Security include daily staffing appraisals for each shift, daily checks on the inmates and the Isolation and Segregation Units of the facility, appraisal of all incident reports, weekly maintenance reports, and officer training coordination. The Shift Lieutenant’s responsibilities include daily roll call with the Correctional Officers on shift, daily walkthroughs through the facility, handling disciplinary action that makes its way through the chain of command, and keeping up with time sheets.

Each of the three Shift Lieutenants have two Correctional Officer Sergeants (“Shift Sergeants”) to supervise. These Shift Sergeants report directly to their respective Shift Lieutenant. The daily responsibilities of the Shift Sergeants are to hold roll call for all Correctional Officers on their Shift, hold periodic institution-wide counts of inmates, coordinate work detail assignments for the inmates, assign overtime when needed, and perform dorm walkthroughs.

There are 67 Correctional Officers that report to the six Shift Sergeants. The Department is allocated 80 Correctional Officer positions in this division. Correctional Officers in the Building Security Division are assigned to one shift – Morning, Day, or Night. The Correctional Officers rotate shift assignments once every year. The primary duties of the Correctional Officers on shift are to attend daily roll call meetings held by the Shift Lieutenant and Shift Sergeant, and to monitor all areas of the building and inmate activities within their assigned area. Correctional Officers are responsible for submitting their own time as well as keeping track of their overtime.

### Business Office Team

The Business Office Team is responsible for all financial aspects of the Department of Corrections. The Business Office Team is led by a Section Manager who reports directly to the Warden. The Section Manager is responsible for all accounts payable and receivable. This includes all administrative and daily fees collected from individuals participating in the Work Alternative Program and the Work Release Program, support item purchases, any contracts, commissary purchasing through a third-party vendor, and budgeting for the entire department. The Business Team utilizes the County SAP system for finance functions.

The Section Manager submits a budget plan to the Warden each year for the entire Department. Revenue in the Department is collected through various sources such as the Inmate Welfare Fund, which is funded through commissary purchases, vending machines within the facility, lost ID replacement fees, and the General Fund.

### Professional Standards Unit

The Department of Corrections includes a Professional Standards Unit that handles the recruiting and onboarding process for all new Department employees. The Professional Standards Unit is run by a Correctional Officer Lieutenant (“Lieutenant”). This individual reports directly to the Warden.

The Lieutenant oversees applicants through a multi-step process to determine eligibility to work within the facility. Internal investigations involving Correctional Officers will be the responsibility of this individual in the future.

### Leadership and Management

Leadership within the Department begins with the Warden. Staff feel that the Warden is very “inmate friendly.” While prioritizing the wellbeing of inmates is not a bad thing, staff feel that this has contributed to the inability to offer full inmate Work Details. With the growing size of the County meaning a greater need for the Work Details, shifting priorities to staffing the Work Detail program will benefit staff perception and overall success of the Work Detail Program.

Staff feel that the Warden can tend to micromanage certain aspects of the facility. Being detail oriented is not a bad thing but being able to step back and allow staff to accomplish the responsibilities they are assigned to do could be a way to show that the Warden trusts the staff.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Thirty-six responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 29%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from the Department of Corrections employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens
3. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role

The lowest three scores from the Department of Corrections employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job
2. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
3. My department maintains a culture of cohesion and collaborations among members of each unit and among different units

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the camaraderie with coworkers and staff members' passion for the job as the Department's greatest strength – and the primary reason personnel remain with the Department.
- Respondents requested additional opportunities for training, ranging from field training to training in soft skills, such as decision making and leadership. Respondents expressed the desire for promotions to be based on skills, such as those learned through training, rather than the perceived preference for high test scores.
- Respondents suggested morale issues stem from poor communication from executive leadership coupled with the perception executive leadership is dismissive of non-supervisory staff's input. The perception of being ignored by executive leadership has led to some respondents not feeling valued. Other respondents suggested executive leadership belittles non-supervisory staff, making them feel replaceable.



- Respondents expressed concerns that management engages in a culture of favoritism, resulting in inconsistent treatment of Corrections Officers based upon their relationship with their supervisors. Officers perceived to be favorites of their supervisors are not held accountable, according to respondents.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level and division-level recommendations.

**Observation 1:** Current staffing shortages have increased the need for overtime within the Department. Current staff note exhaustion and decreased morale due to the expectation of overtime, as well as the perceived lack of proactive communications around overtime shifts.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should ensure that staffing and assignment of overtime occurs regularly enough to provide more than 24 hours' notice of scheduled overtime, barring emergency or unplanned circumstances.

Currently, staff do not have a specific say in what days they work overtime or not. This could cause issues if an event scheduled by an Officer in their personal life conflicts with the required overtime. Allowing staff to coordinate which days they cannot work overtime further in advance could allow for better work-life balance and raise morale among the Officers.

**Observation 2:** Many Department staff believe there is not enough empathy training done for Officers within the facility. This training allows for Officers to be able to handle inmate and coworker interactions with more empathy and understanding.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to potentially create a healthier environment for both inmates and Officers, a stronger emphasis on empathy and soft-skills training should be introduced into the current training process of new and current Officers.

# 3.B Department of Fire and Emergency Services

## Fire and Emergency Services at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Provide emergency medical services and fire protection to the residents of Gwinnett County, including fire suppression and hospital transports
- 2 | Meet the needs of any County emergency through special response teams including technical rescue, hazardous materials, swift water, and mass casualty
- 3 | Educate County residents on fire and personal safety through demonstrations, seminars, and training programs
- 4 | Reduce community risks through prevention and enforcement inspections, public education, and investigations of incidents and trends throughout the County
- 5 | Provide services for Department personnel and maintain the equipment, apparatus, and stations dedicated to emergency incident response

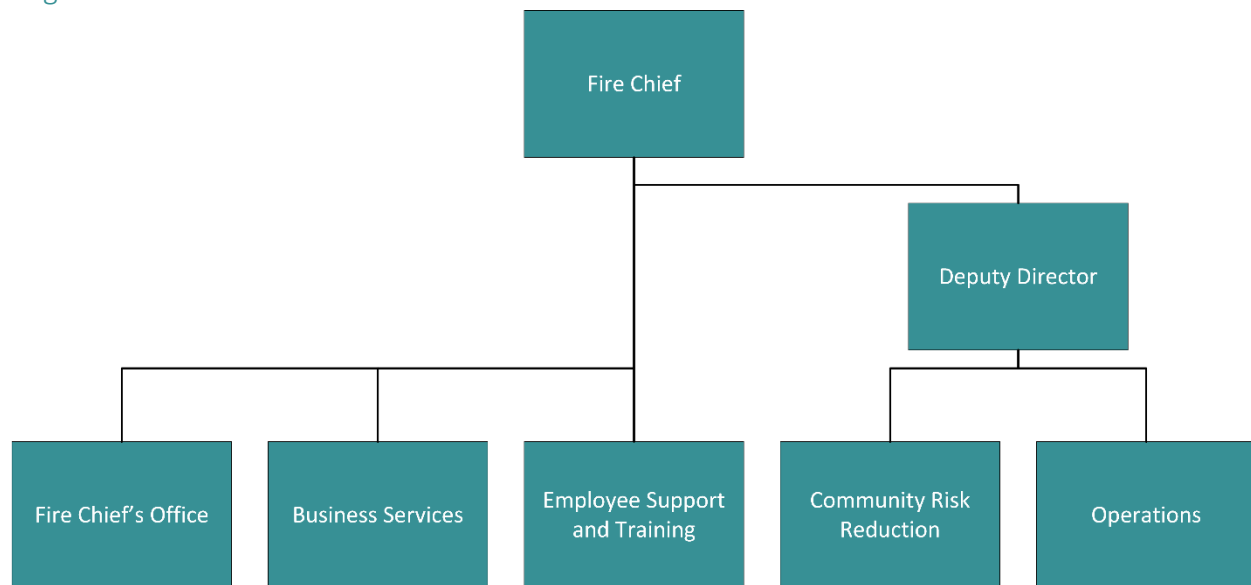
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$137,315,973</b>	<b>\$9,132,981</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	through August 2022	Fire and Emergency Services
	Filled	
Allocated		1,018

## Organization Structure



### Triple Accreditation



The Department maintains accreditation from three organizations: the Paramedic College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”), the Fire Investigations Section is accredited by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”), and the Department overall is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”).

### Management Framework as a Tool



The Department utilizes Management Framework as a comprehensive project management tool – identifying strategic priorities and initiatives. The Department uses Management Framework to track project progress and collect performance data in order to make data-driven decisions.

### Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”) Team



More than 40 personnel spread throughout the Department comprise the CISM Team, which helps first responders mitigate the emotional and physical impact of responding to emergencies. The Team helps peers identify mental health and other resources available to employees.

### Citizens Fire Academy



A seven-week course provides members of the public first-hand knowledge of the Department’s organization and services. Participants take classes at the Training Academy, run through firefighter drills, and witness life at the stations. The Department has established a Hispanic Citizens Academy specifically for Spanish-speaking residents and has offered classes in Korean when possible.

### Saving Time and Money on Training



The Department maintains a comprehensive Training Academy which provides both recruit training and continuing education in Gwinnett County. The capabilities of the Training Academy allow the Department to save time and money by training in-house, rather than sending recruits or incumbent personnel to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth.

## Introduction

The Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services (“GCFES” or “Department”) provides fire protection and emergency medical services (“EMS”) to Gwinnett County residents, visitors, and passers-through. The Department responds to fire, EMS, and other incidents in the Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Medical Services District, which encompasses unincorporated Gwinnett, as well as 15 of the County’s 16 municipalities: Auburn, Berkeley Lake, Braselton, Buford, Dacula, Duluth, Grayson, Lawrenceville, Lilburn, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, Rest Haven, Snellville, Sugar Hill, and Suwanee. Additionally, the Department responds to emergency medical incidents in the Loganville EMS District – the portion of the city in Gwinnett County; the Loganville Fire Department provides fire rescue services in the city.

In addition to fire protection and emergency medical services, the Department also provides fire prevention and personal safety education, specialized services (such as swift water rescue and hazardous materials), medical transports, fire incident investigations, and fire safety building inspections for the County.

As a State-licensed fire department, ambulance service, and medical first responder agency, GCFES adheres in total or in part to standards set by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (“OCGA”), Georgia Office of Commissioner of Insurance Safety Fire and State Fire Marshal’s Office, Georgia Department of Public Health and the Region III EMS Council, the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (“GFSTC”), and National Fire Protection Agency (“NFPA”). Additionally, the Department, or a component of the Department, is accredited by the following three agencies:

- Commission on Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”)
- Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”)
- Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (“CoAEMSP”) in cooperation with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”)

Since 2017, GCFES has maintained a rating of 2/2X from the Insurance Services Office (“ISO”) – the second-highest rating offered by the organization. ISO is used by insurance companies to help set annual premiums for residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

## Organization

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is led by the Fire Chief, who serves as Department Director, and a Deputy Director at the Assistant Chief level. Department staff are organized into five divisions:

- Fire Chief’s Office
- Business Services
- Community Risk Reduction
- Employee Support and Training
- Operations

### Fire Chief’s Office

The Fire Chief’s Office is led by the Fire Chief and is responsible for the overall administration of the Department, strategic planning, Departmental accreditation, and public information.

An Office Manager reports directly to the Fire Chief, providing oversight of the Fire Headquarters and the two part-time Staff Assistants II who serve in the Headquarters’ reception area.

In addition to the administrative staff, the Fire Chief’s Office contains two sections:

- Public Information Section
- Strategic Planning Section

The Public Information Section comprises of an active-duty Captain and Lieutenant who serve as Public Information Officers (“PIOs”). The Section is responsible for distributing information to the public and facilitating internal communications within the Department. Because the PIOs are also active-duty firefighters, they can be called into the field for incident response, occasionally leaving Headquarters without a consistent Public Information staff presence.

The Strategic Planning Section is led by a Chief of Staff with the rank of Battalion Chief, and includes a Program Analyst II, a Business Analyst, and an Office Services Coordinator. The Section is responsible for Departmental accreditation and performance measurement. The Chief of Staff role is approved at the District Commander level, but is currently underfilled at the Battalion Chief level.

Finally, the Fire Chief manages the contracts with the Department's two Medical Directors who provide oversight of emergency medical services and reporting, and produce the Department's Standing Medical Orders ("SMOs"). One Medical Director primarily provides medical oversight of the Operations Division while the other works primarily with the Training Academy.

### Business Services

The Business Services Division is led by a Division Director at the Assistant Chief level. The Division provides administrative support for the other divisions through oversight of the Departmental budget process; information technology ("IT") support; and maintenance of equipment, apparatus, and supplies. The Division encompasses three sections:

- Fire Facilities Management Section
- Finance Section
- Logistics Section

The Fire Facilities Management Section is led by a Section Manager and comprises five Trades Technician positions and one part-time Staff Assistant II. The Section manages all Departmental facility maintenance, whether performed in-house or through a contracted vendor.

The Finance Section is led by a Business Manager, who is supported by two Staff Assistants II and three Administrative Services Coordinators III. The Section manages payroll, EMS billing, and budgeting for the Department, as well as the purchasing of and contracts for services.

Two sections – Apparatus Management and Resource Management – comprise the Logistics Section. The Apparatus Management Section Manager and Resource Management Section Manager both report to the Battalion Chief over the Logistics Section.

The Apparatus Management Section consists of two units: Fire Apparatus and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus ("SCBA"). The Fire Apparatus Unit is led by a Fire Apparatus Lieutenant, who is supported by two Firefighter Driver/Engineers and one Firefighter III. The Fire Apparatus Unit manages the maintenance schedule for fire apparatus and other vehicles, as well as apparatus testing and development of specifications for new apparatus purchases. The SCBA Unit is led by a Warehouse Manager, who is supported by a Firefighter Driver/Engineer and two Apparatus Maintenance Coordinators. The SCBA Unit maintains and tests the primary equipment firefighters use for breathing while suppressing fires. Both Unit leads, as well as a Business Services Associate II, report to the Section Manager.

The Resource Management Section consists of two units: the Office and the Warehouse. The Office Unit is led by a Business Services Associate III, who is supported by three Business Services Associates II. The Office Unit manages the purchasing of and contracts for goods. The Warehouse Unit is led by a Warehouse Manager, who is supported by two Firefighter Driver/Engineers (one position is currently underfilled by a Firefighter III) and a Warehouse Coordinator. The Warehouse Coordinator in turn is supported by one Warehouse Technician III and two Warehouse Technicians II. The Warehouse Unit manages common commodities for GCFES, the Department of Corrections, and the Police Department.

In addition to the personnel who staff each section, the Division includes an Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) IV and a Program Analyst II who provide support to the Division Director.

### Community Risk Reduction

The Community Risk Reduction (“CRR”) Division is led by the Deputy Director and consists of two sections:

- Prevention and Enforcement Section
- Education and Investigations Section

An ASA III reports directly to the Deputy Director and provides overall administrative support for the Division.

The Prevention and Enforcement Section conducts fire safety inspections of buildings throughout the County. The Section is led by an Assistant Fire Marshal, whose position is classified at the Section Manager paygrade. The Assistant Fire Marshal directly oversees the four Senior Fire Inspectors responsible for permit inspections of those developments requiring a Certificate of Occupancy. The Section’s ASA II also reports directly to the Assistant Fire Marshal. Compliance inspections are conducted by three units within the section:

- Apartments and Mercantile Establishments Unit (“Apartments Unit”)
- Hotels and Places of Public Assembly Unit (“Assembly Unit”)
- Special Occupancy Unit

Each unit is led by a Fire Inspections Captain and is responsible for compliance inspections of specific types of structures as mandated by OCGA Title 25. The Apartments Unit is staffed by four Senior Fire Inspectors and one Fire Inspector; the Assembly Unit is staffed by five Senior Fire Inspectors; and the Special Occupancy Unit is staffed by two Senior Fire Inspectors and three Fire Inspectors.

Two sections – Community Education and Fire Investigations – comprise the Education and Investigations Section. The Community Education Section Manager and Fire Investigations Section Manager both report to the Assistant Fire Marshal over the Education and Investigations Section, whose position is classified at the Section Manager level.

The Community Education Section provides fire and medical safety education to members of the public. Six Fire Educators report to the Section Manager, as does a Firefighter Driver/Engineer position which is currently underfilled at the Firefighter II level. The six Fire Educator positions are all approved up to the Senior Fire Educator level.

The Fire Investigations Section is accredited as a law enforcement agency by GACP. Five Senior Fire Investigators positions report to the Section Manager – currently each position is underfilled at the Fire Investigator level, allowing for promotional opportunities within each position. A Fire Investigations Captain paygrade does exist, but the role had been supplanted by the Section Manager role in 2018. The Fire Investigations Section determines the origin of all fires in a residential or commercial setting and conducts investigations of any incendiary incidents caused as a result of criminal activity. The Section additionally conducts background checks and some internal investigations for the Department. Currently, all members of the Section are certified as peace officers through the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (“POST”) and arson investigators through the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (“GPSTC”).

An ASA II reports directly to the Education and Investigations Assistant Fire Marshal, providing administrative support to both the Community Education Section and Fire Investigations Section.

### Employee Support and Training

The Employee Support and Training (“ES&T”) Division is led by a Division Director at the rank of Assistant Chief. The Division provides wrap-around services for employee safety, well-being, HR support, and education. ES&T encompasses three sections:

- Employment-HR Section
- Risk Management-Marketing Section
- Training Academy

An ASA IV reports directly to the Division Director and provides overall administrative support for the Division. The position is authorized as a Resources and Marketing Specialist but is current filled as an ASA IV – the two job classifications are of equal paygrade.

The Employment-HR Section oversees the recruiting, hiring, and retention of staff for the Department. The Section is led by an ASA IV, who is supported by two Public Safety Staffing Specialists and an ASA II.

The Risk Management-Marketing Section provides guidance, programs, and data on Departmental and personnel safety, infection control, risk, and wellness. The Section is comprised of a Safety Officer at the rank of Captain, a Safety Officer at the rank of Lieutenant, and two ASAs III.

The staff at the Training Academy provides basic training for all new recruits and continuing education for incumbent sworn personnel. The Training Academy additionally manages promotional exams. The Training Academy is led by a Chief of Training and a Battalion Chief of Training – each position is classified as a Section Manager, with the Chief of Training classified at a higher paygrade. While the Chief of Training handles overall strategic decision making and coordination with Departmental command staff, the Battalion Chief of Training oversees the day-to-day operations of the Training Academy.

An ASA IV reports to the Chief of Training, providing administrative support to the Training Academy, as well as overseeing recruits assigned to transitional duty at the Training Academy.

The Training Academy is divided into three units:

- Fire/Rescue Recruit Training Unit
- Medical Training Unit
- Career Development/Special Training Unit

The Fire/Rescue Training Unit provides education to new recruits to prepare those recruits to meet the requirements of the National Professional Qualifications (“NPQ”) Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazardous Materials (“HazMat”) Awareness, and HazMat Operations certifications. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain who oversees two Firefighter Lieutenants, each of whom oversees three Instructors at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer and Firefighter III levels. An ASA III also reports to the Captain, providing administrative support for the Unit.

The Medical Training Unit provides education to both new recruits and incumbent staff to meet the Emergency Medical Technician (“EMT”) and Paramedic licensure qualifications as set by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (“NREMT”). Currently, recruits are trained to the EMT level and any sworn firefighter may return to the Training Academy to train to the Paramedic level. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain who oversees three Firefighter Lieutenants. One Lieutenant serves as the Clinical Coordinator, overseeing hands-on training for Recruit Classes and Paramedic Classes. One Lieutenant serves as the Lead Instructor for EMT training, and oversees four Course Coordinators and one American Heart Association (“AHA”) Training Manager – these Course Coordinators and AHA Training Manager include personnel at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer, Firefighter III, and Firemedic levels. The third Lieutenant serves as the Lead Instructor for Paramedic training, and oversees three Instructors at the Firefighter Lieutenant, Firefighter III, and Firemedic levels. Both the EMT and Paramedic training programs hire adjunct instructors as necessary. Two ASAs II provide administrative support to the Unit.

The Paramedic training program is formally known as the Paramedic College and is accredited by CAAHEP upon the recommendation of CoAEMSP. The Chief of Training serves as the Dean of the Paramedic College.

The Career Development/Special Training Unit provides continuing education opportunities to incumbent staff. The Unit also coordinates promotional courses and examinations. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain, who oversees two Firefighter Lieutenants. One Lieutenant serves as the lead for the Driving Program/Career Development Program and oversees three instructors at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer level. The second Lieutenant serves as the lead for the Incumbent Training Group and oversees two Special Project personnel at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer and Firefighter III levels. A part-time ASA II provides administrative support to the Unit.

Ranks for Instructors, Course Coordinators, the AHA Training Manager, and Special Project personnel are current as of our fieldwork. However, Departmental personnel may transition between the Training Academy and active duty in the Operations Division, so the actual paygrades for each of these positions is dependent on the current staff member in the position.



The members of each Recruit Class are classified as non-active Firefighters I until they have passed their NPQ Firefighter I exam. They then retain the rank of Firefighter I until passing their NPQ Firefighter II exam. All recruits at the Training Academy report through their Instructors, Lieutenants, Captains, Battalion Chief of Training, and Chief of Training as their command structure.

## Operations

The Operations Division responds to incidents in Gwinnett County, providing fire suppression, emergency medical, HazMat, rescue, and other emergency and non-emergency mitigation services. The Division is led by a Division Director at the Assistant Chief rank. The Division Director reports to the Deputy Director. The Division is divided into three shifts and one section:

- A Shift
- B Shift
- C Shift
- Continuous Improvement Section

Each shift is responsible for incident response during a 24-hour timeframe. All active-duty personnel are assigned to a shift and work for the 24 hours assigned to that shift, with the next 48 hours dedicated to rest. Each shift is led by a District Commander, who oversees all incident response and scheduling during their respective shift. Three District Commanders lead the active-duty personnel.

The County is divided into five battalions based on geographic regions. Each battalion contains six to seven stations for a total of 31 stations spread throughout the County (including Station 13, which is currently operating incident response from nearby stations as a new facility is constructed). A Battalion Chief heads each battalion during each shift, with responsibility over the operations of the stations within that battalion for their respective shift. Fifteen Battalion Chiefs oversee the County's five battalions.

The officers of each station report to their respective Battalion Chief. Operations Division officers at the station level are either a Firefighter Captain or a Firefighter Lieutenant. Fourteen stations are currently managed by a Firefighter Captain on each shift. All stations include at least one Firefighter Lieutenant in the command structure for each shift. Those stations without a Captain are managed by the Lieutenant. Three stations have two Lieutenants per shift. One station has one Lieutenant for two shifts and two Lieutenants for the third shift. As of our fieldwork, 42 active-duty Firefighter Captains and 103 Firefighter Lieutenants serve in the stations.

Below the officer levels, field personnel receive the following ranks based upon their respective qualifications. The following ranks are listed from highest paygrade to lowest.

- Firefighter Driver/Engineer
- Firefighter III
- Firemedic
- Firefighter II
- Firefighter I

While it is uncommon for active-duty firefighters to hold the rank of Firefighter I, the position may be held when staff are recruited from other fire departments or are unable to complete their recruit training (such as those who take leave for military duty). Firefighters I, Firefighters II, Firefighters III, and Firefighter Driver/Engineers have met those respective NPQ levels, while Firemedics have met the requirements for any of those positions in addition to achieving licensure as a Paramedic. The Department announced implementation of a new Senior Firemedic level during the timeframe of our fieldwork as an additional promotional opportunity for Department personnel.

Advancement through the Firefighter III level is possible through automatic promotion upon meeting the necessary requirements. Promotion to Firefighter Driver/Engineer, Firefighter Lieutenant, Firefighter Captain, and above is only considered for those meeting the qualifications when a position at each level is open.

As of our fieldwork, there were 597 active-duty firefighters assigned to the stations. Each station requires a minimum number of firefighters per shift in order to meet minimum staffing requirements for the fire apparatus located at that station. The following chart indicates how many firefighters are required for each type of fire apparatus. The County considers ambulances as fire apparatus due to the Department’s qualifications for operation; ambulances are listed in the table as Advanced Life Support (“ALS”) Medical Units.

Apparatus	Minimum Personnel
Squad Truck	4
Engine	3
Ladder Truck	3
ALS Medical Unit	2
HazMat Unit	2
Air and Light Truck	1
Special Response Unit	1

The table above does not include the vehicles solely or primarily operated by Battalion Chiefs, District Commanders, or Medical Supervisors. The table also does not include Specialty Team vehicles which are staffed on an as-needed basis.

Each shift also has a Medical Supervisor (or “MS Officer”), at the rank of Firefighter Lieutenant, who reports to the District Commander. The MS Officer liaises between the Department and hospitals to which the Department provides transport, reviews medical reports, oversees field training for EMTs and Paramedics, handles medical complaints, tries to mitigate the overutilization of ALS Medical Units, and responds to incidents as necessary. Historically, the Department staffed two MS Officers each shift, however staffing challenges midway through the last decade resulted in a dissolution of the second position. As a result, the remaining MS Officer position has become primarily reactive.

A Deputy Chief of Operations at the District Commander rank serves as the backup for the Division Director and oversees the Specialty Teams, Support Teams, and Continuous Improvement Section. The Department has four Specialty Teams, each of which is based at a different station and staffed with that station’s on-duty personnel.

The Department's Specialty Teams are:

- Hazardous Materials Team
- Swiftwater Rescue Team
- Technical Rescue/Georgia Search and Rescue Team
- Mass Casualty Incident Team

Three Support Teams provide wrap-around support services for both Department staff and members of the public, ranging from quick response medical support to identification of medical health resources after an incident. The Department's Support Teams are:

- Bike Medic Team
- Critical Incident Stress Management Team
- Honor Guard

The Deputy Chief of Operations provides administrative support for the Specialty and Support Teams, approving budgets, specialty training, and events – however, the Battalion Chiefs manage the day-to-day operations and staffing of the Specialty and Support Teams that fall within their respective stations.

The Continuous Improvement Section provides quality improvement (“QI”) and quality assurance (“QA”) services for the Department through report review, program appraisals, and policy updates. The Section is led by a Battalion Chief who reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations. Three QA/QI Lieutenants report to the Battalion Chief.

### Sworn Personnel

The majority of the Department's staff are sworn personnel. The following positions unique to the County's public safety departments or specifically to GCFES are considered sworn positions:

- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Firemedic
- Firefighter III
- Firefighter Driver/Engineer
- Community Risk Reduction Lieutenant
- Fire Apparatus Lieutenant
- Firefighter Lieutenant
- Firefighter Captain
- Fire Inspector
- Senior Fire Inspector
- Fire Inspections Captain
- Fire Investigator
- Senior Fire Investigator
- Fire Investigations Captain
- Fire Educator
- Senior Fire Educator
- Firefighter Battalion Chief
- Firefighter District Commander
- Division Director, Sworn
- Deputy Director, Sworn
- Department Director, Sworn

Of the positions, the Department does not currently have any approved positions (sworn or non-sworn) at the Community Risk Reduction Lieutenant or Fire Investigations Captain ranks. Additionally, the newly announced Senior Firemedic position will be a sworn position.

While the list of sworn positions includes the majority of sworn personnel in the Department, the County lacks a sworn equivalency for the Section Manager level. As a result, personnel in these roles manage and are managed by sworn positions, and perform the duties of sworn personnel without the designation.

## Leadership and Management

Leadership, as previously discussed, focuses on data-driven decisions, strategic planning, and continuous improvement in an effort to manage the Department in a proactive manner. This push for proactivity trickles down through the command structure, encouraging forward-thinking and planning throughout the Department. Leadership is focused on succession planning to ensure quality of service continues as staff take leave, separate from the Department, or retire.

During our interviews, staff indicated leadership takes a very active role in operations and decision-making throughout the Department. Executive leadership participates in meetings at the Division and Section level and encourages all employees to approach executive leadership with ideas and suggestions. This involvement, however, results in perceptions of micromanagement and excessive levels of approval, with nearly all decisions ultimately made by the Fire Chief. Excessive levels of approval slow down processes and projects, with some projects taking months longer than necessary, according to staff, due to executive leadership requiring their involvement. The Department requires paper forms for most internal actions, and those forms require numerous signatures within the chain of command, delaying action on necessary decisions. Staff suggested a lack of trust stemming from Departmental and County leadership results in personnel not feeling empowered to make the decisions within their functional area. A perceived lack of trust in addition to the perception leadership only visit facilities other than Headquarters for required events or admonition results in lowered morale and risks increased turnover.

There exists a group of personnel within the Department who have rotated between many of the upper middle management roles in the Department. Leadership seemingly identifies those staff who prove themselves competent at learning new roles and increasingly assign these individuals additional responsibilities that don't always match their current position. A majority of individuals in management roles wear multiple hats, sometimes due to a lack of administrative support, a lack of additional middle management positions, and/or due to responsibilities staying with an employee rather than with a role.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Eighty-nine responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of nine percent. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services were in response to the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role
3. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens

The lowest three scores from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services were in response to the following questions:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I trust Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County
3. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner

In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the Department's first responders as its greatest asset – staff on the frontlines provide high quality service to the public.
- Respondents expressed appreciation for the amount of funding allocated to the Department, the Department's ability to budget those funds, and the Department's competitive payrates.
- Respondents suggested the Department maintains industry-leading equipment and resources which, along with the staff, are an incentive to stay with the Department.
- Respondents expressed concerns with lack of trust and effective communication from executive management. Micromanagement and hesitancy to delegate led to questions of transparency in decision making and perceptions of limited change in the Department. Respondents suggested executive management rarely interacts with frontline staff, limiting the ability for frontline staff to provide input and creating a perception that executive management is disconnected from operations in the field.
- Respondents identified the shift to focus field operations on EMS as a concern, especially to those frontline staff who joined the Department to be firefighters, rather than EMTs or Paramedics. Staff fear a loss of firefighting culture and history as the Department begins to be run more like a business.
- Respondents' greatest concern was the Department's overtime scheduled ("OTS") policy. Respondents emphasized the stress and loss of morale caused by OTS and suggested executive management don't fully understand the strain caused by the policy.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level and division-level recommendations.

**Observation 1A:** While Section Manager positions are often filled by sworn personnel and both report to and manage sworn positions, the Department does not have a sworn equivalency to the County's Section Manager paygrade as it does for Division Directors, Deputy Directors, and Department Directors.

**Observation 1B:** During our fieldwork we identified several areas in which sworn staff were performing duties that non-sworn personnel could potentially take over, freeing up sworn staff to focus on more strategic and managerial responsibilities.

**Observation 1C:** During our fieldwork, we noted a select group of personnel have rotated between many of the upper middle management roles in the Department, often wearing multiple hats and accepting responsibilities not appropriate for their current position.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider an in-depth functional assessment to determine if staffing levels across the Department are appropriate for the job functions required, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level with the appropriate sworn or non-sworn designation.

**Observation 2:** Maintaining the Department's accreditation is a major priority for Departmental leadership. Some staff perceived leadership as being singularly focused on accreditation, with initiatives and suggestions not aligned with recommendations from the accreditation reports ignored in favor of those included within the reports. Some staff suggested the emphasis on data and accreditation removes some of the human element from Departmental decision-making and focus.

**Recommendation 2:** While Departmental accreditation may be a key initiative for the Department, leadership should ensure all necessary needs of the Department – and its personnel – are being met. Leadership should consider proposed strategic priorities and initiatives even if not included in the accreditation report, and should ensure staff understand why certain initiatives are or are not approved.

**Observation 3A:** During fieldwork, staff indicated perceptions of micromanagement from executive leadership, with executive leadership heavily involved in day-to-day operations and decision making at all levels. Staff suggested a lack of trust stemming from Departmental and County leadership results in personnel not feeling empowered to make the decisions their functional area should be responsible for.

**Observation 3B:** The Department requires paper forms for most internal actions and those forms require numerous signatures within the chain of command, with many reaching the Fire Chief for final sign-off and approval. Excessive levels of approval slow down processes and projects, with some projects taking months longer than necessary.

**Recommendation 3:** Departmental leadership should identify routine processes, procedures, and decisions which can be made by lower-lever management and allow downline managers to oversee and execute those processes, procedures, and decisions. Departmental leadership should work to eliminate unnecessary steps in approval workflows in order to make processes more efficient and effective, and instill a feeling of trust and empowerment in staff at all levels in the Department.

# 3.C Police Department

## Police at a Glance

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- 1 | Serve the community through the delivery of professional law enforcement services in an unbiased and compassionate manner
  - 2 | Recruit and train high-quality Officers in order to provide exceptional police services within Gwinnett County
  - 3 | Provide fast and attentive 911 operator services to Gwinnett County
  - 4 | Investigate a variety of misdemeanor and felony criminal offenses with the goal of ensuring justice in all cases
  - 5 | Provide proactive emergency management services in the event of a natural disaster or emergency scenario

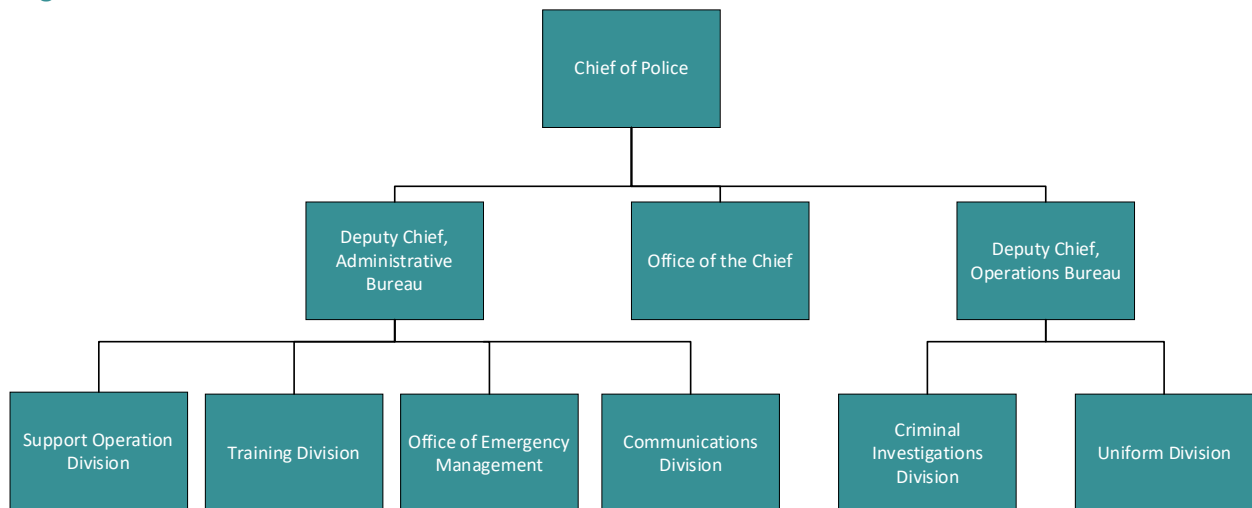
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$160,110,413</b>	<b>\$3,474,944</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	through August 2022	Police
FTE	Filled	929
	Allocated	1,256

## Organization Structure





## Commendations

### CALEA Accreditation



The Gwinnett County Police Department has achieved the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (“CALEA”) accreditation as a law enforcement agency since 1993. Recently, the Department has additionally received accreditation for the Communications Division as well as the Training Division. This makes the Gwinnett County Police Department the first department in the State of Georgia to obtain CALEA Tri-Arc status.

### Exceeding State-Mandated Training Standards



The State of Georgia requires 400 hours of training for new Officers. The Gwinnett County Police Department exceeds that requirement, providing an additional 400 hours of training to new Officers.

### Emphasis on Community Outreach



There is a strong emphasis from leadership throughout the Department on the importance of community outreach. In addition to regular Officer-community interactions, the Department organizes and participates in numerous events in the community in order to foster relationships and perceptions.

### Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center (“SACRC”)



The Department is in the final stages of implementing a real time crime center that has the ability to leverage cameras throughout the County to provide real-time viewing and recording. The SACRC will provide the ability to observe crimes as they are committed and provide a greater sense of oversight and security to Officers responding to situations.

### Technology Investment



The County and the Police Department have made significant strategic investment to maintain leading system technologies and data analysis tools to proactively prevent and reactively solve crimes. The SACRC is an example of this strategic investment in action.

## Introduction

The Gwinnett County Police Department serves the citizens of Gwinnett County by providing professional law enforcement services that prioritize compassion and improving the quality of life for citizens within the community.

## Organization

The Police Department (“Department”) is led by the Chief of Police. The Department has seven primary functions. One function is led by the Office of the Chief and six functions are organized under two bureaus – the Administrative Bureau and the Operations Bureau. Each Bureau is led by a Deputy Chief, with the remaining function led by the Chief of Staff. The seven primary functions are as follows:

- Office of the Chief
- Administrative Bureau
  - Support Operations Division
  - Training Division
  - Office of Emergency Management
  - Communications Division

- Operations Bureau
  - Criminal Investigations Division
  - Uniform Division

### Office of the Chief

The Office of the Chief is led by the Chief of Police (“Chief”) and consists of a Chief of Staff, who supervises one Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III and one Public Information Supervisor. The Public Information Supervisor directly oversees two Public Information Officers.

The Chief of Police is responsible for overseeing all police operations in all unincorporated Gwinnett County as well as within cities within the County that do not have police departments of their own. Strategic decisions involving all aspects of the Department fall under the purview of the Chief.

The Chief of Staff, under the direction of the Chief, supervises the Office of the Chief. Key responsibilities of the Chief of Staff include overseeing public communications, the coordination of the promotional process, serving as a liaison to the Law Department, preparing budgets for the Chief’s office, managing the Public Information Office, serving as a liaison for the Gwinnett County Police Citizen’s Advisory Board, creating Department goals and objectives, setting the agenda for all biweekly executive staff meetings, coordinating all volunteer boards, and managing award ceremonies.

### Administrative Bureau

The Administrative Bureau is led by a Deputy Chief and is supported by two Assistant Chiefs and two Directors. The Administrative Bureau is responsible for providing internal administrative and support services for the Department. The Administrative Bureau consists of the following divisions:

- Support Operations Division
- Training Division
- Office of Emergency Management
- Communications Division

### Support Operation Division

The Support Operations Division (“Division”) consists of six sections, and is supervised by a Division Commander. Each section is supervised by a Section Manager. The following are the six sections within Support Operations:

- Fiscal Management Section
- Support Section
- Office of Professional Standards
- Accreditation Section
- Human Resources
- Records/GCIC/Permits

The responsibilities of the Division Commander are to coordinate and control the operations within the Support Operations Division. The Division Commander also directly supervises an Aide to the Division Commander position.

A Section Manager supervises operations within the Fiscal Management Section. The Section Manager oversees 12 positions and is responsible for planning and managing the budget, grants and capital funding, and the Alarm Reduction Unit. The Alarm Reduction Unit is responsible for billing individuals with alarm systems when alarms are triggered and there is no emergency.

The Support Section is supervised by a Section Manager whose responsibilities consist of supervising the Fleet Operations Unit, and the Facilities Management and Building Security Unit. The Fleet Operations Unit is responsible for coordinating purchasing, replacing, and maintaining all vehicles used by the Department with the Fleet Management Division within the Gwinnett County Department of Support Services. The Facilities Management and Building Security Unit is responsible for maintaining and managing all Department facilities. This includes maintenance for all buildings, coordination of any Department construction projects, and overseeing outsourced services such as the custodial and landscaping services the Department requires.

The Office of Professional Standards is supervised by a Section Commander. The Section Commander manages one Assistant Commander. There are three Sergeants reporting to the Assistant Commander – two Background Investigations and Recruiting Unit Sergeants, and one Internal Affairs Unit Sergeant.

The Background Investigations and Recruiting Unit is responsible for recruitment for the whole Department as well as screening and reviewing the backgrounds for applicants to the Department. The Internal Affairs Unit is responsible for managing and investigating Department policy compliance and internal and external Department complaints.

There is a Section Manager that supervises the Accreditation Section within the Division. The Accreditation Section currently includes only the Section Manager. The Accreditation Section is responsible for ensuring the Department maintains its accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (“CALEA”) as well as State Police Department Accreditation.

The Human Resources Section is supervised by a Section Manager. The Section is allocated two Administrative Support Associates, but currently both positions are vacant. The Section Manager serves as a liaison to the Gwinnett County Human Resources Department, handles FMLA and Military Leave, manages personnel file management, workers’ compensation claims, payroll and timesheets, and separations.

A Section Commander oversees the Records/GCIC/Permits Section. Within the Section, there are two units; the Records and Permits Unit and the Georgia Crime Information Center (“GCIC”) Unit. The Records and Permits Unit is responsible for completing open records requests, reviewing Officer reports, reviewing individual or business requests for permits such as alcohol and solicitor permits. The GCIC Unit is responsible for updating the GCIC files for property that has been stolen or recovered.

### *Training Division*

The Training Division (“Division”) consists of three sections and is led by a Division Commander. The Division Commander oversees and coordinates operations within the Division and serves as the Training Academy Director.

The Division consists of the following are the three sections:

- Community Affairs Section
- Training Section
- Research and Planning Section

The Community Affairs Section is led by a Section Manager. There are five positions which report directly to the Section Manager. The responsibilities of the Community Affairs Section are to engage in community outreach by coordinating different events that allow officers to positively interact with the community. The Section also includes Crime Prevention Officers that are responsible for promoting crime reduction within the County by providing educational and safety programs.

The Training Section is led by a Training Commander. Training is held at the Gwinnett County Police Department Training Center. The Training Commander oversees one Administrative Support Associate IV, one Program Analyst, and three Assistant Academy Directors. The Training Section is responsible for guiding new officers through the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training (“POST”) certification and conducting the Police Officer Academies. All sworn officers are required to complete firearms training at the Training Center at least once a year. The Training Section primarily operates out of the training facility within the County.

The Planning and Research Section is led by a Section Manager. There are two units with three positions that report directly to the Section Manager – the Inspections Unit and the Technical Support Unit. The Inspections Unit is responsible for collecting data regarding CALEA standards, completing employee and Section Commander interviews, reviewing employee evaluation files, reviewing Officer written citations, and compiling citation reports. The Technical Support Unit is responsible for researching, recommending, and implementing new technology that could be beneficial for the Department.

#### *Office of Emergency Management*

The Office of Emergency Management is led by an Office Director. The Office Director directly oversees one ASA II and five Emergency Management Specialists. The Office Director is responsible for coordinating County preparations for emergencies of any kind. The Division as a whole is responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness exercises and ensuring all County Departments are provided with emergency processes and procedures. The Division also works with School Safety Coordinators within the County to draft school emergency plans.

#### *Communications Division*

The Communications Division (“E-911”) is led by a Communications Director. The Communications Director is responsible for overseeing all operations within E-911. E-911 employees are responsible for taking all emergency calls 24/7 within the County, and then dispatching necessary units and Officers to the specific situation. E-911 serves as dispatch for the Police Department and Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Communications is staffed by employees who receive calls/texts, and dispatchers who work with units around the County to dispatch the necessary services to the situation.

## Operations Bureau

The Operations Bureau, led by a Deputy Chief, consists of two Divisions – the Criminal Investigations Division (“CID”) and the Uniform Division (“Uniform”). Each Division is overseen by an Assistant Chief. The purpose of the Operations Bureau is to oversee criminal investigations and the Uniform Officers that patrol the County every day.

### *Criminal Investigations Division*

Led by an Assistant Chief, the Criminal Investigations Division (“CID”) is responsible for criminal investigations as well as crime scene evidence recovery and analysis. It is the Assistant Chief’s responsibility to coordinate all operations within the CID. The CID consists of three separate sections: Crime Scene Investigations Section, Criminal Investigations Section, and Special Investigations Section.

The Crime Scene Investigations Section (“CSI”) is responsible for the collection, documentation, and scientific testing of evidence for all criminal investigations. The Section is led by a Section Manager. There are six positions that report directly to the Section Manager. These include one ASA II, four CSI Supervisors, and one Evidence Unit Sergeant.

The Criminal Investigations Section (“CIS”) is led by the CIS Commander and consists of an Electronic and Financial Crime Unit, a Computer Forensic Lab Unit, a Special Victims Unit, a Robbery Unit, a Homicide Unit, a Burglary Unit, a Motor Vehicle Theft Unit, and a General Investigations Unit. Each unit is responsible for investigating the specific type of crime assigned to the unit.

The Special Investigations Section (“SIS”) is led by a SIS Commander with four direct reports. The SIS Commander is responsible for the budget within SIS and for coordinating all units within the Section. The SIS consists of five units and one team:

- Alcohol and Vice Unit
- Crime Intelligence Unit
- Gang Task Force
- Narcotics Unit
- Technical Intelligence Support Unit
- Parcel Interdiction Team

The Alcohol and Vice Unit is led by a Unit Sergeant and is responsible for the enforcement of alcohol related County Ordinances. The Unit is also responsible for enforcing laws regarding prostitution, gambling, and counterfeit items. The Unit also works with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to investigate sex trafficking. The Alcohol and Vice Unit is led by a Unit Supervisor.

The Crime Intelligence Unit is responsible for collecting and tracking crime data throughout the County in order to make crime predictions and analyze crime trends. The Crime Intelligence Unit consists of one Supervisor and 10 Analysts. The Gang Task Force is led by two Sergeants who are responsible for tracking criminal gang activity within the County in order to prevent possible crimes and enforce the law in high-crime areas. The Narcotics Unit is led by an Assistant Section Commander. Four Unit Sergeants report directly to the Assistant Section Commander. The Narcotics Unit is responsible for the investigation and interception of illegal substances within the County. The Technical Intelligence Support Unit (“TIS”) is led by a Unit Supervisor and is responsible for collecting information about individuals or groups to anticipate, prevent, or monitor criminal activity. The TIS Unit consists of three sections: Asset Forfeiture, Joint Terrorism Task Force, and Technical Support. The Asset Forfeiture is responsible for all seized assets, including the recording and management of seized items. The Joint Terrorism Task Force partners with the US and State Department of Justice to monitor and track data around the County relating to crimes that are terroristic in nature. Technical Support is responsible for the maintenance and servicing of camera systems used within the SIS. The Parcel Interdiction Team is responsible for working with package and mail services around the County with the goal of intercepting packages containing illegal items and substances. The Parcel Interdiction Team is trained to identify certain characteristics about packages that deem them suspicious.

### *Uniform Division*

The Uniform Division within the Department is comprised of six Police Precincts around the County, a Special Operations Division, and a Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit. The Division is led by an Assistant Chief who oversees eight Majors, and is responsible for Special Operations, the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit, and the overall operations at each precinct including staffing, Division communication, and general operations.

There are six precincts within Gwinnett County. These include the North, South, East, West, and Central precincts. Additionally, the Bay Creek Precinct was added recently to cover the Southeast area of the County. Precincts are responsible for serving and protecting their specific geographic area of the County. This is primarily achieved through responding to E-911 dispatch calls, preventative patrol, incident reporting, and through community outreach and relationship building.

Within the Uniform Division there is a recently created Behavioral Health Unit (“BHU”). Under the supervision of a Lieutenant Aide to the Assistant Chief, the purpose of the BHU is to provide counselors for situations which might involve mental health issues.

Within the Uniform Division is the Special Operations Section (“Section”). The Section is led by a Section Commander and consists of six units who are each led by a Lieutenant. The six units are as follows: the Accident Investigation Unit (“AIU”), the Aviation Unit, the DUI Unit, the K-9 Unit, the Motor Unit, and the Special Weapons and Tactics Team/Hazardous Device Unit (“SWAT/HDU”).

The Uniform Division also has a Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit which is led by a Unit Sergeant. Teleserve consists of taking reports from individuals in the community by phone or in person and monitoring the online reporting system. RedSpeed is a system that checks speeding in school zones. The Unit Sergeant has one Sergeant that monitors the RedSpeed system. This system allows for the license plates to be pulled and checked for vehicles that are captured speeding by the cameras.

## Leadership and Management

Staff perception of the new Chief of Police is generally very positive. Staff feel that the Chief genuinely cares about the success of the Department and is making positive steps to improve various aspects about Department operations and processes.

Communication was a focal point of commendation from staff. The Chief has made it a priority to visit a different precinct each week in order to stay connected with what the needs are of the precinct and provide invaluable face-to-face time with the Officers during weekly roll calls.

Leadership has recognized that staffing and retention are both issues within the Department (as is the case with other County departments and organizations throughout the Country at this point in time). One leadership objective is to create a mentorship program within the Department. The goal of this being to continue to find ways to invest in people and encourage retention by mentoring employees and Officers.

Leadership has shown that the needs of Officers are a priority. One example is leadership increasing the distance that Officers are allowed to take their vehicle home from 15 miles to from the 30 miles outside of the County. This new policy allows for Officers to take their vehicles home even if they live up to 30 miles away from the County which improves efficiency and morale.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. Three hundred and forty-one responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 36%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.

The highest three scores from Police Department employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I understand how my work relates to the success of the County
2. I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role
3. I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens

The lowest three scores from Police Department employees were in response to the following questions:

1. I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role
2. I trust Management to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County
3. Management clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner

In addition to the previous statements, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified teamwork between frontline staff and training opportunities offered by the Department as the Department's greatest strengths. Staff take pride in serving Gwinnett County as members of the Police Department.

- Some respondents felt the quality of leadership and the connection between the Chief’s Office and frontline staff are generally good; however, other respondents suggested a disconnect exists between management and frontline staff, suggesting that communication can be improved and decisions (especially promotional decisions) could be more consistent and transparent.
- Respondents suggested updated the Department’s technology and systems would improve operations – especially integration between the records management system and computer-aided dispatch. Respondents raised concerns that current systems and processes are outdated, including the reliance on hard copies for all documentation.
- Respondents suggested executive leadership focuses too heavily on the Department’s image in the media, resulting in a hesitancy to embrace certain changes, such as Officers’ uniforms and appearances. Respondents felt the current uniforms are not suitable for the job and policies against facial hair and, until recently, tattoos are antiquated. Respondents recommended command staff promote qualified individuals with new perspectives, instead of only promoting like-minded individuals similarly resistant to change.

## Department Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation. Our detailed report contains department-level and division-level recommendations.

**Observation 1:** The perception among current civilian staff is that there is not a specific promotional path for civilian positions within the Department. Staff feel that the only way currently to be promoted is to work for a different Department or join the private sector.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider adding Promotional pathways to raise the retention rate among civilian staff. Allowing civilian staff the opportunity to move up in the Department could raise civilian interest and fill vacant positions where the Department is currently lacking.

**Observation 2:** Communications from leadership within the Department is currently sufficient. However, there is communicative disconnect between the different divisions and sections within the Department.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to potentially bridge the communication gap between the divisions and sections, the Department should consider looking into holding an annual internal “State of the Department” event. This event could allow for the Chief to speak to the entire Department regarding current successes and struggles within the Department.

This could also be an opportunity for the different divisions and sections to make a connection. By bringing people in the Department together to meet each other, this could promote conglomeration and improve overall morale, which in turn, could improve retention.



**Observation 3:** During the course of fieldwork, we heard frustrations of the length and timeliness of procurement activities when working with the Purchasing Division within the Financial Services Department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should ensure that service level agreements are established and communicated so that expectations are clear for all County departments when leveraging the Purchasing Division of the Financial Services Department. As certain procurements for the Department relate to public safety, the County should evaluate the potential exceptions to expedite the procurement process when needed.

**Observation 4:** During analysis of the employee survey, we heard frustrations regarding the Department policy regarding the permissance of facial hair on Officers.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider looking into the policy regarding Officer facial hair. The Department should consider allowing for a facial hair permissance policy in comparison to the Department's new policy which allows visible tattoos on Officers. This could potentially strengthen morale and provide for greater retention within the Department.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

**Observation 12:** As County departments are developing succession plans and workload assessments, there is inconsistent consideration of the changes in generations, and the values and interests of the emerging workforce. Departments and division are often envisioning that new hires will be comparable replacements for tenured staff with institutional knowledge.

**Recommendation 12:** The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workload analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.

## 5. “Quick-Wins” Considerations

County leadership should consider the following “quick win” recommendations extracted from the full report for each of the Phase 4 In-Scope Departments. These recommendations may provide an opportunity for executive leadership to make an immediate approval/decision or prompt action to provide rapid successes.

### Department of Corrections

#### Support Services Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 1:** The Department should coordinate to create a formal process and set of specific requirements that inmates must meet to participate in Work Detail. This should include forms or checklists to ensure consistent review and assessment of all inmates.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 2:** The Division should continue to move towards a paperless, electronic process for documenting compliance before the ACA and PREA audits. Electronic document management should alleviate any potential risk for lost documents and allow for easily accessible documentation during the three-year audit cycle.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 3:** The Division should coordinate with Human Resources to create and fill the position for a Sanitation Officer.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 4:** In situations where an inmate does not complete or graduate a specific educational course, the specific reason should be tracked in order to assess the data and trends over time to potentially reduce/prevent future incompletions in the future.

#### Business Office Team

**Quick-Win Recommendation 5:** The Department should introduce quarterly budget-to-actual and strategic initiative progress meetings. More frequent meetings will help to ensure relevant stakeholders are aware of current progress and allow for discussion of potential changes in approach or adjustment to budgets based on actual revenues received or projected additional expenditures.

#### Professional Standards Unit

**Quick-Win Recommendation 6:** The Unit should put more emphasis on active recruiting by reaching out to County Human Resources in order to become involved with County career fairs and strategically advertising open positions as other County departments do (billboard advertisements, social media, etc.).

**Quick-Win Recommendation 7:** The Unit should work with County ITS and HR to transition the orientation booklet to an electronic format that can be easily completed and submitted electronically. This may improve the completion rate and increase the number of applicants that the Department can consider for employment. This could also speed up the process for getting applicants through the hiring process with the elimination of required paper documents.

## Department of Fire and Emergency Services

### Fire Chief's Office

**Quick-Win Recommendation 8:** Departmental leadership should work with the ITS Department to develop means of effective communication, including videos, that comply with County security policies.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 9:** The Fire Chief's Office should consider means of more strategic communication to ensure staff receive information relevant to their specific job functions and needs. Solutions might include fewer emails with more targeted information delivered to teams rather than Department-wide emails, or regular communiques down the chain of command with suggestions of what supervisors recommend their staff prioritize reading.

### Business Services Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 10:** The Division should work with the Financial Services and Law Departments to develop contracts with stronger enforcement powers and should review the process by which vendors are selected to ensure the Department contracts with the best possible vendors.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 11:** The Department should work with the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to identify an electronic checkoff system to automatically notify the Business Services Division of issues with fire apparatus and equipment when identified by active-duty personnel.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 12:** The Division should track and report leading and lagging indicators for each priority initiative to help determine the causes and results of trends in performance metrics. Additionally, the Division should utilize benchmarks to help indicate whether priority initiatives are achieving set goals.

### Community Risk Reduction Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 13:** The Division should consider developing online forms for use by residents to register for participation in community programs. The Division should work with the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to determine the best solution for the forms, such as the Division's ArcGIS Survey123 tool.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 14:** The Division should work with the ITS and P&D Departments to determine if the Prevention and Enforcement Section can leverage Accela to autogenerate annually recurring compliance inspections.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 15:** The Division should review its priority initiatives and ensure each one is measured through outcome data with adequate context to indicate whether progress is being made toward achieving goals.

### Employee Support and Training Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 16:** The Division should ensure recruits are trained to an appropriate level to limit the amount of on-the-job training necessary (understand there will always be some). Departmental leadership should seek ways to address and mitigate concerns of rushed training. Departmental leadership should also expeditiously and transparently address concerns regarding decisions contrary to Training Academy staff recommendations to hire and retain recruits.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 17:** Departmental leadership, along with project managers either in GCFES or the Department of Support Services, should regularly communicate status of the Burn Module construction project to staff at the Training Academy. If progress has not been made on the project, the Department should encourage action be taken.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 18:** The Division should review strategic initiatives and priorities to ensure data collected appropriately indicates whether the Division is successfully meeting those priorities and making progress toward goals.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 19:** The Division should revisit how metrics on the number of auto accidents, equipment/losses, and OJIs reported each month are phrased to ensure personnel don't feel pressured to not report events in order for the Division to achieve reporting goals.

### Operations Division

**Quick-Win Recommendation 20:** The Department should continue to investigate alternative shift models, such as peak-demand shifts for Paramedics, as a means to mitigate the number of overtime shifts required. The Department should also consider conducting cost-benefit analyses of other staffing models, such as part-time staffing, additional peak-demand shifts, public service internships, continuous staffing, etc.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 21:** The Department should work with the Human Resources Department to understand staff concerns regarding the perceived discouragement of taking leave as it relates to overtime pay. The Departments should consider means to mitigate and address concerns regarding the leave and overtime pay relationship, such as stipends or other pay incentives for staff who work more than 24 continuous hours.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 22:** The Division should consider incremental benchmarks for tracked performance metrics which help the Division set achievable goals that change over time as each successive benchmark is met.

### Police Department

#### Office of the Chief

**Quick-Win Recommendation 23:** Citizen survey respondent numbers could benefit from more Department-wide promotion and advertising of survey availability. This could include greater quantity of posts on social media platforms to improve awareness. Mailers from the Department outlining the survey details and how to access it may increase awareness for those individuals who may not use social media.

The Office of the Chief should consider also utilizing more County resources to achieve this goal. Survey postings on the County website and County social media pages could allow for a broader viewing of the survey in order to potentially receive more respondents.

#### Administration Bureau

**Quick-Win Recommendation 24:** The Department and the County should evaluate if the inventory and PPE items currently in the 50-yard firearms range could be housed elsewhere in the County. Once the PPE is cleared out, the Department should continue its construction and build-out of the 50-yard range.



**Quick-Win Recommendation 25:** The Department and the County should consider discussing the current social media allowances provided to the Department. Being able to use social media to advertise job openings could help the Department in better reaching new applicants for hire.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 26:** The Department should consider moving the Planning and Research Section from the Training Division to the Office of the Chief. The Planning and Research Section completes a large portion of their responsibilities in close coordination with the Office of the Chief. This could allow the Section and the Office of the Chief to work more congruently.

#### Operations Bureau

**Quick-Win Recommendation 27:** The Department should assess whether the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit can be moved to an area of the facility with a larger number of workspaces, or if there is additional flex space that could be utilized to accommodate the Unit's increase in personnel.

The number of light duty Officers that are being reported on every month could affect the amount of flex space that is provided to the Unit in order to potentially alleviate the current cramped working conditions.

**Quick-Win Recommendation 28:** The Department should consider providing cellphones to Officers working within the Uniform Division of the Department. Officers could be able to take work calls on the provided cellphones as well as take any necessary photographs at the specific incident they are responding to. The Department should consider looking into the regular inspection of these phones if provided.

The new Central Square CAD system that is being implemented around the Department has the ability for a cellphone app. This app would allow for Officers to view CAD call data on their phone. This potential implementation could raise retention and morale within the Department.

## 6. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.



**Phase 5 Operational and Performance  
Assessment – *Department of  
Corrections, Department of Fire and  
Emergency Services, and Police  
Department***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

October 2022



# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1**
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 3**
- 3. Departments ..... 6**
- 3.A Department of Corrections ..... 7**
- 3.A.1 Department of Corrections – Support Services Division ..... 18
- 3.A.2 Department of Corrections – Building Security Division ..... 26
- 3.A.3 Department of Corrections – Business Office Team ..... 31
- 3.A.4 Department of Corrections – Professional Standards Unit ..... 33
- 3.A.5 Department of Corrections – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 35
- 3.A.6 Department of Corrections– Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 36
- 3.B Department of Fire and Emergency Services ..... 37**
- 3.B.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Fire Chief’s Office ..... 55
- 3.B.2 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Business Services Division ..... 60
- 3.B.3 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Community Risk Reduction Division ..... 67
- 3.B.4 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Employee Support and Training Division ..... 73
- 3.B.5 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Operations Division ..... 81
- 3.B.6 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 87
- 3.B.7 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 89
- 3.C Police Department ..... 91**
- 3.C.1 Police Department – Office of the Chief ..... 105
- 3.C.2 Police Department – Administrative Bureau ..... 109
- 3.C.3 Police Department – Operations Bureau ..... 118
- 3.C.4 Police Department – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 127
- 3.C.5 Police Department – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 128
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 129**
- 5. Conclusion ..... 133**
- 6. Strategic Roadmap ..... 134**

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This report represents the work product of Phase 5 which includes the following departments:

- Corrections
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Police

Phase 5 fieldwork began in July 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 5 scope included the following departments:

- Corrections
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Police

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

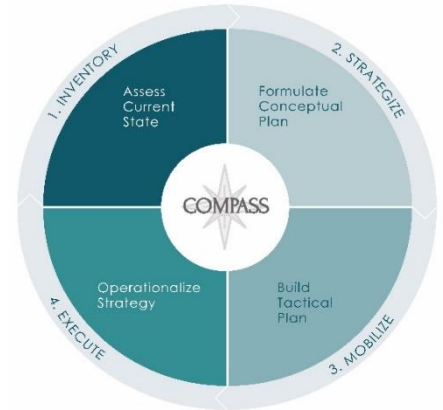
- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of "what is working well," "what needs improvement," and "areas for potential risk or concern"
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

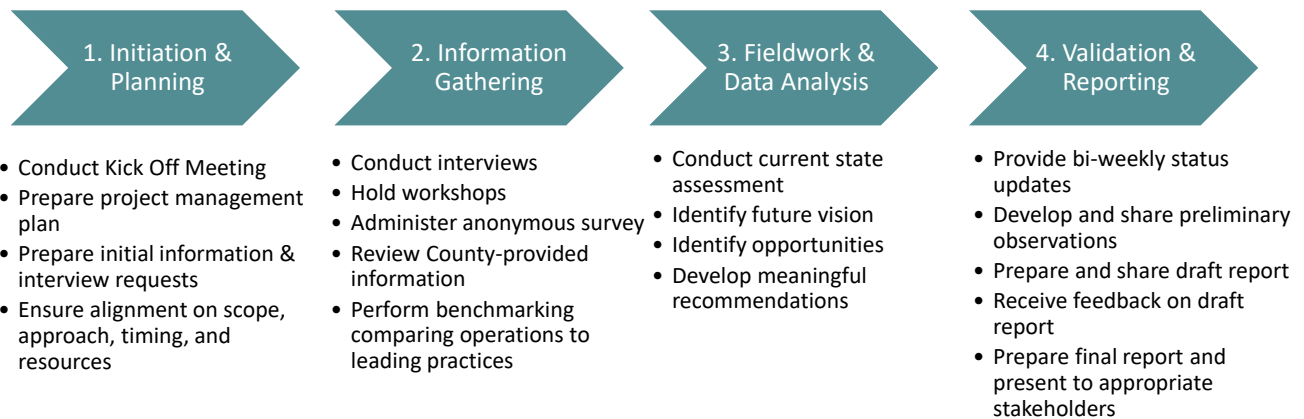
## Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 75 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel



- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This report represents the culmination of our Phase 5 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between July and September 2022.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- A. Corrections
- B. Fire and Emergency Services
- C. Police

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Strategic Priorities
- Leadership and Management
- Technology
- Customer Service
- Survey
- Technology Observations and Recommendations
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

Also within each departmental section, divisions are described and contain the following divisional attributes:

- Introduction
- Key Functions
- Communications
- Strategic Initiatives
- Systems and Applications
- Data and Performance Analysis
- Division-specific Observations and Recommendations

# 3.A Department of Corrections

## Corrections at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Contribute towards maintaining and protecting a just, peaceful, and safe society by enforcing court-imposed sentences and detaining inmates in a safe and secure environment that encourages positive change and provides quality services that make a difference.
- 2 | Provide rehabilitation, education, and training for inmates that pass through the Department of Corrections.
- 3 | Provide the citizens of Gwinnett County with Inmate Work Detail services throughout the County, and the assurance that inmates are securely supervised and housed.

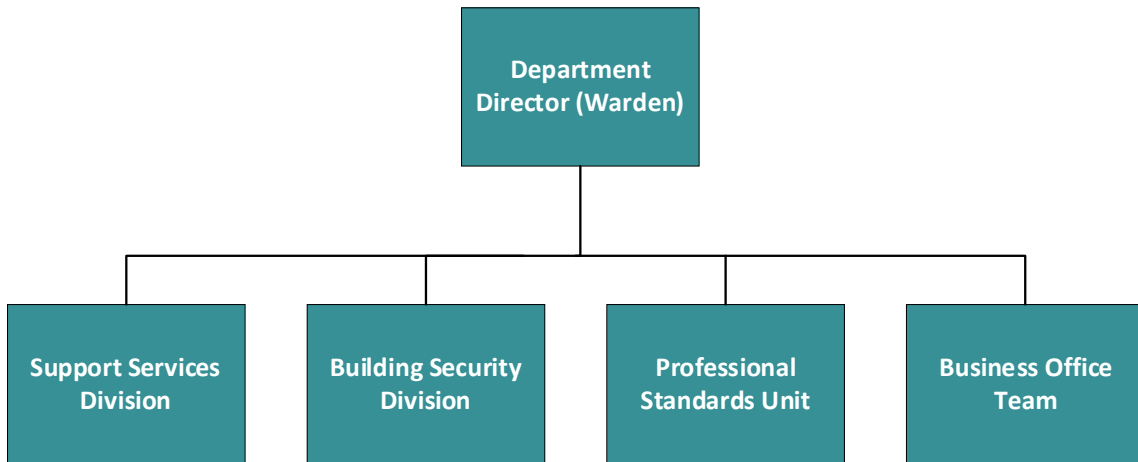
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$20,290,571</b>	<b>\$56,500</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

		through August 2022	Corrections
FTE	Filled		112
	Allocated		138

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



### Compliance and Accreditation



The Department of Corrections takes pride in the Department's consistent American Correctional Association ("ACA") accreditation and Department-wide policies and procedures based on ACA standards.

### Inmate On-the-Job Training



The Department of Corrections offers on-the-job training for inmates to learn new skills for application after release. This program is run through partnerships with Gwinnett Technical College, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and the Center of Industry and Technology.

### Correctional Officer Training



The Gwinnett Department of Corrections works hard to ensure staff are trained in accordance with ACA and Georgia Department of Corrections standards. On top of the the 20 annual training hours Officers in the State of Georgia are required to have, the Department requires an additional 20 hours of training each year for Correctional Officers.

### Work Release Program



The Work Release Program is a court-sentencing program that allows for an alternative form of prison time for qualified offenders. This program allows offenders to work in the positions they previously held before their sentence during the day, or the night, and then come back to the prison after their job shift. This allows for qualified offenders to keep their current jobs and earn income while they serve their sentence. This program is often used in, but not limited to, child support cases.

## Introduction

A primary purpose of the Gwinnett Department of Corrections is to house residents and inmates and provide County services through Work Details. The facility, which consists of one main building and one exterior building, houses several different programs for inmates and residents. State and County inmates can be housed by the Department for a portion, or the duration of their sentence

The Department of Corrections is responsible for safely housing inmates and providing a variety of cleanup and landscaping services around Gwinnett County. The safety of the citizens, inmates, and Correctional Officers is a priority of the Department.

## Organization

The Department of Corrections is led by the Warden, who serves as the Department Director. There are two divisions, one team, and one unit that report directly to the Warden:

- Support Services Division
- Building Security Division
- Business Office Team
- Professional Standards Unit

## Support Services Division

The Support Services Division is comprised of four main sections within the division:

- Care and Treatment Team
- Field Operations
- Classification
- Job Training

The Division is led by a Division Director of Support Services, who also the Deputy Warden. The main function of the Deputy Warden is to ensure each section under the Deputy Warden's command is following policies and procedures. The Deputy Warden is also the Grievance Coordinator. Any inmate grievance is given directly to the Deputy Warden to review and act on. Counselors are also involved in the process to attempt to resolve the dispute internally rather than have any grievance go to a lawsuit. There are two positions that report directly to the Deputy Warden: the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain, and the Correctional Job Training Coordinator.

The Correctional Job Training Coordinator ("Coordinator") reports directly to the Deputy Warden and is responsible for the management of all educational training and on-the-job training ("OJT") for the inmates. There is one Assistant Job Training Coordinator that reports directly to the Coordinator. The programs offered are designed to give inmates the experience and the training to go to an employer, once out of the facility, and apply for a job with a set of skills. The Department of Corrections offers a variety of programs. These include, but are not limited to, janitorial, food preparation, and welding programs, and GED classes for the inmates. These programs are made possible through partnerships with local education and training organizations, such as Gwinnett Technical College, who administers the welding program. The Job Training Coordinator is responsible for managing this partnership.

The Job Training Coordinator is also responsible for informing inmates of the available programs. Inmates initially learn about the OJT and educational programs while in new-inmate orientation, but there are also fliers posted on bulletin boards in the housing dorms. Inmates can access applications for these programs by requesting an application through email on the in-dorm computer kiosk.

The Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain ("Captain") reports directly to the Deputy Warden and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Support Services Division except for the Job Training Coordinator. There are three positions that report directly to the Captain: the Care and Treatment Team/Compliance Manager, the Field Operations Lieutenant, and the Classification Sergeant. Within the Field Operations Subdivision, the Captain is responsible for overseeing the Work Detail, Work Release, Work Alternative Programs, and the Building Coordinator. The Captain also acts as the Assistant Grievance Coordinator underneath the Deputy Warden.

The Care and Treatment/Compliance Manager ("Lieutenant") is a sworn officer that reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain and is responsible for all American Correctional Association ("ACA") and Prison Rape Elimination Act ("PREA") standards in order to ensure accreditation. Medical Services, the Food Services Team, five facility Counselors, and one facility Chaplain all report directly to the Care and Treatment/Compliance Manager.

The Classification Sergeant (“Sergeant”) is responsible for the inmate intake and discharge out of the facility. The Sergeant reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain.

### *Field Operations*

The Field Operations Unit within the Support Services Division is led by a Field Operations Lieutenant (“Lieutenant”) who reports directly to the Care and Treatment/Accreditation Captain. Field Operations includes the Work Detail Program and the Work Release Program. The Lieutenant is also responsible for the five part-time employees that work in the Work Alternative Program.

The Field Operations Sergeant (“Sergeant”) is responsible for the Work Detail Program and reports directly to the Field Operations Lieutenant. The purpose of this position is to coordinate and manage the Correctional Officers assigned to the Work Detail Program to efficiently provide services to the County. There are two Field Operations Corporals that report to the Field Operations Sergeant.

### *Building Security Division*

The Building Security Division is responsible for monitoring all inmate and resident activities and ensuring the safety of all inmates and officers within the facility. The Building Security Division is comprised of a Division Director, three Shift Lieutenants, six Shift Sergeants who supervise the Correctional Officers within each shift, and 80 Correctional Officers who monitor their respective posts assigned each day. Building Security is organized into a Morning, Day, and Night Shift.

The Division Director of the Building Security Division (“Deputy Warden”) oversees the Division and reports directly to the Warden. The Deputy Warden’s main function is to ensure the safety of both inmates and Correctional Officers within the facility. The Deputy Warden is also responsible for policy and procedure compliance in the Building Security Division, responding to employee grievances, and all Building Security employee appraisals.

The Building Security Division Correctional Officer Captain (“Captain of Building Security”) answers directly to the Deputy Warden of Building Security and has three direct reports. The Captain of Building Security oversees three Correctional Officer Lieutenants: one for the Evening Shift Team, one for the Day Shift Team, and one for the Morning Shift Team. The primary responsibilities of the Captain of Building Security include daily staffing appraisals for each shift, daily checks on the inmates and the Isolation and Segregation Units of the facility, appraisal of all incident reports, weekly maintenance reports, and officer training coordination. The Shift Lieutenant’s responsibilities include daily roll call with the Correctional Officers on shift, daily walkthroughs through the facility, handling disciplinary action that makes its way through the chain of command, and keeping up with time sheets.

Each of the three Shift Lieutenants have two Correctional Officer Sergeants (“Shift Sergeants”) to supervise. These Shift Sergeants report directly to their respective Shift Lieutenant. The daily responsibilities of the Shift Sergeants are to hold roll call for all Correctional Officers on their Shift, hold periodic institution-wide counts of inmates, coordinate work detail assignments for the inmates, assign overtime when needed, and perform dorm walkthroughs.

There are 67 Correctional Officers that report to the six Shift Sergeants. The Department is allocated 80 Correctional Officer positions in this division. Correctional Officers in the Building Security Division are assigned to one shift – Morning, Day, or Night. The Correctional Officers rotate shift assignments once every year. The primary duties of the Correctional Officers on shift are to attend daily roll call meetings held by the Shift Lieutenant and Shift Sergeant, and to monitor all areas of the building and inmate activities within their assigned area. Correctional Officers are responsible for submitting their own time as well as keeping track of their overtime.

### Business Office Team

The Business Office Team is responsible for all financial aspects of the Department of Corrections. The Business Office Team is led by a Section Manager who reports directly to the Warden. The Section Manager is responsible for all accounts payable and receivable. This includes all administrative and daily fees collected from individuals participating in the Work Alternative Program and the Work Release Program, support item purchases, any contracts, commissary purchasing through a third-party vendor, and budgeting for the entire department. The Business Team utilizes the County SAP system for finance functions.

The Section Manager submits a budget plan to the Warden each year for the entire Department. Revenue in the Department is collected through various sources such as the Inmate Welfare Fund, which is funded through commissary purchases, vending machines within the facility, lost ID replacement fees, and the General Fund.

### Professional Standards Unit

The Department of Corrections includes a Professional Standards Unit that handles the recruiting and onboarding process for all new Department employees. The Professional Standards Unit is run by a Correctional Officer Lieutenant (“Lieutenant”). This individual reports directly to the Warden.

The Lieutenant oversees applicants through a multi-step process to determine eligibility to work within the facility. Internal investigations involving Correctional Officers will be the responsibility of this individual in the future.

### Strategic Priorities

Current Department strategic initiatives involve increasing inmate labor to meet the demands of the County and creating succession plans for officer positions. During COVID-19, inmate Work Details were restricted. The purpose of the restriction was to reduce the spread of the virus into the facility. Now that the spread of the virus has slowed, Work Details are being allowed back into the County.

Within the 2022 Business Development Plan created by the Department, the Department has prioritized the need to gain the needed internal resource levels in order to meet the current demand for Work Details around the County. Staff feel that Work Details are a primary purpose of the Department and that increasing the number of details allowed out of the facility to perform inmate labor should increase. Safely maximizing Work Details allow inmates to perform physical tasks outside the Correctional Building which reduces pent up aggression from remaining sedentary, and reduces the likelihood of physical altercations within the Corrections Building.

Succession planning within the Department was shown as a significant concern by many Department employees. People felt as though individuals were reluctant to train people at their position due to concerns of them losing their position to the trained individual. This internal issue can cause staff culture to be negatively affected. The Department has recognized the need for formal and proactive succession planning and has committed to “implement a succession planning and leadership development program” in the Department’s 2022 Business Plan Presentation.

## Leadership and Management

Leadership within the Department begins with the Warden. Staff feel that the Warden is very “inmate friendly.” While prioritizing the wellbeing of inmates is not a bad thing, staff feel that this has contributed to the inability to offer full inmate Work Details. With the growing size of the County meaning a greater need for the Work Details, shifting priorities to staffing the Work Detail program will benefit staff perception and overall success of the Work Detail Program.

Staff feel that the Warden can tend to micromanage certain aspects of the facility. Being detail oriented is not a bad thing but being able to step back and allow staff to accomplish the responsibilities they are assigned to do could be a way to show that the Warden trusts the staff.

## Technology

The following describe the Department’s current technology:

### SmartCOP Jail Management

SmartCOP is a jail-management system utilized by the Department to manage inmate information. SmartCOP gives officers the ability to access inmate information such as property tracking, sentence length, disciplinary reports, work release information, and inmate program participation. The County’s Sheriff’s Office utilizes SmartCOP and is the County’s administrator for SmartCOP. The Department uses an instance of the Sheriff’s license for SmartCOP.

### In-Dorm Kiosks

The Department utilizes in-dorm kiosks that serve as a way for inmates to request medical service within the facility. By contacting the medical clinic, inmates are able to be seen 24 hours a day, seven days a week with any issue relating to their health. Inmates are also able to request information regarding the educational programs the Department offers by emailing the Education Coordination Officer.

### Ocularis Camera Surveillance System

Cameras are placed throughout the facility in key viewpoints to track activities inside and outside of the facility. A central control room inside the facility provides Officers the ability to monitor all cameras as well as lock and unlock all doors. Supervisors are also provided with access to all cameras from their offices in order to monitor activities.

### Axon Body Cameras

All Officers within the facility wear Axon body cameras on their chest in order to have a record of events in case of any rules violation or any situation involving use of force.



### PowerDMS Data Management

PowerDMS is a data management system that the Department utilizes. This system allows for the Department to store, manage, and access policies. PowerDMS also has the ability to track training for the Officers within the Department.

### Correctional Officer Time Logging

Correctional Officers log their time at the end of each week in the Gwinnett Online Employee Portal. The Shift Sergeants review time logged at the end of each week to make sure that the time inputted matches the time he/she has reported within the system.

### NeoGov Recruitment

NeoGov is a Human Relations software used by the County to post job openings. The software also serves as a portal for applicants to submit their information and apply. The Unit uses this system to check for new applicants and send out pre-orientation booklets to applicants who qualify.

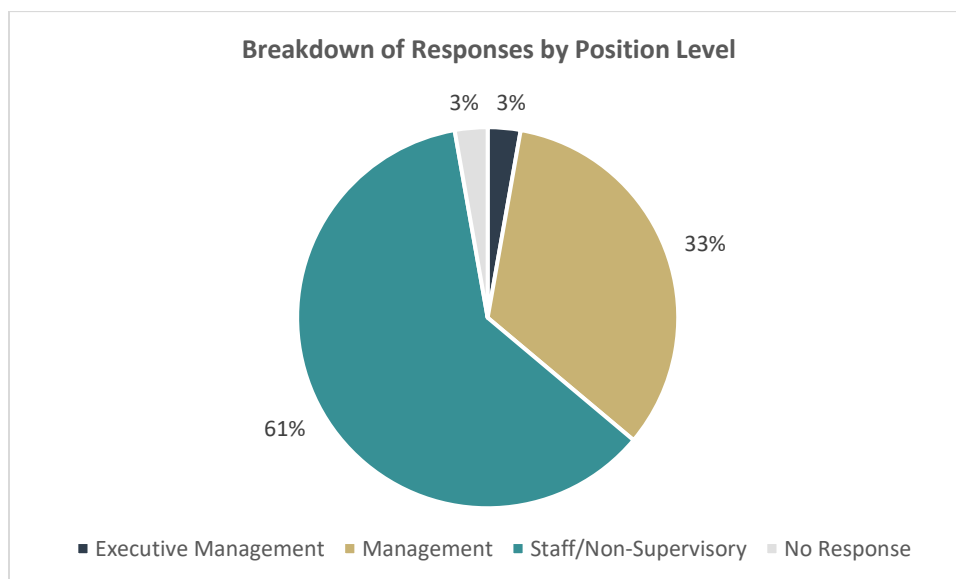
### SAP Financial Management

The Team utilizes the County SAP program to record all financials within the Department. Financial data is pulled from the SAP system as well.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Thirty-six responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 29%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

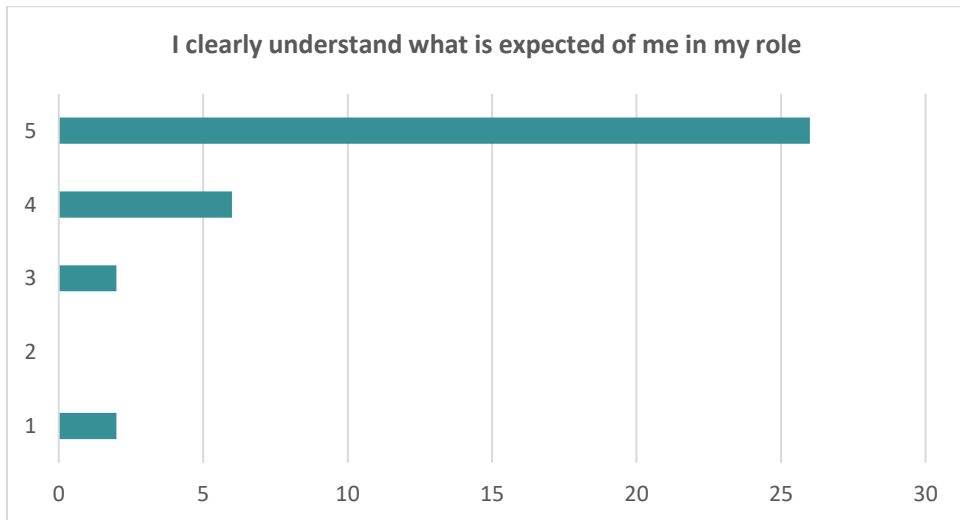
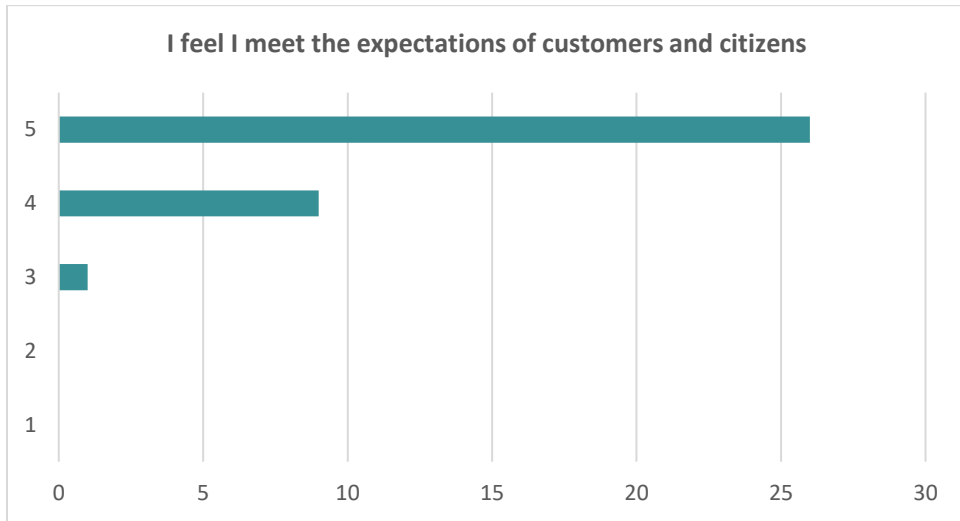
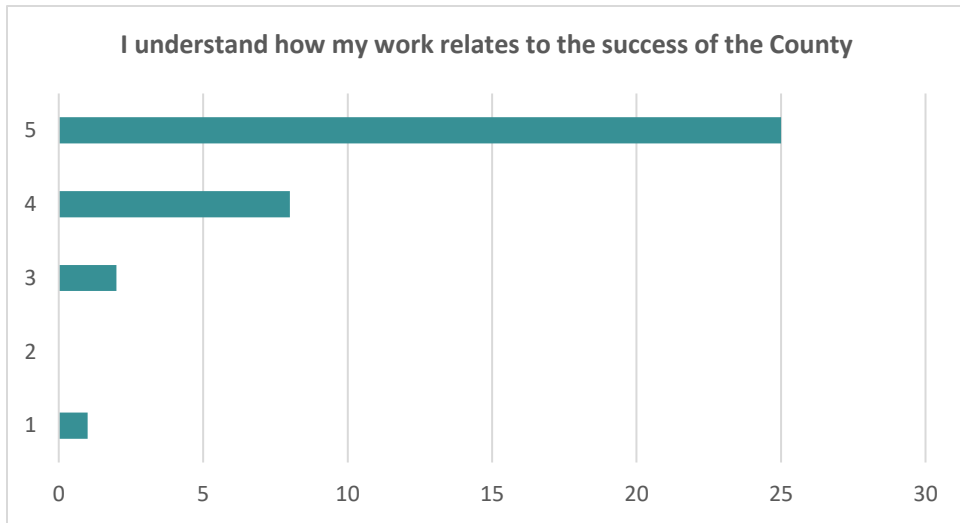
The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

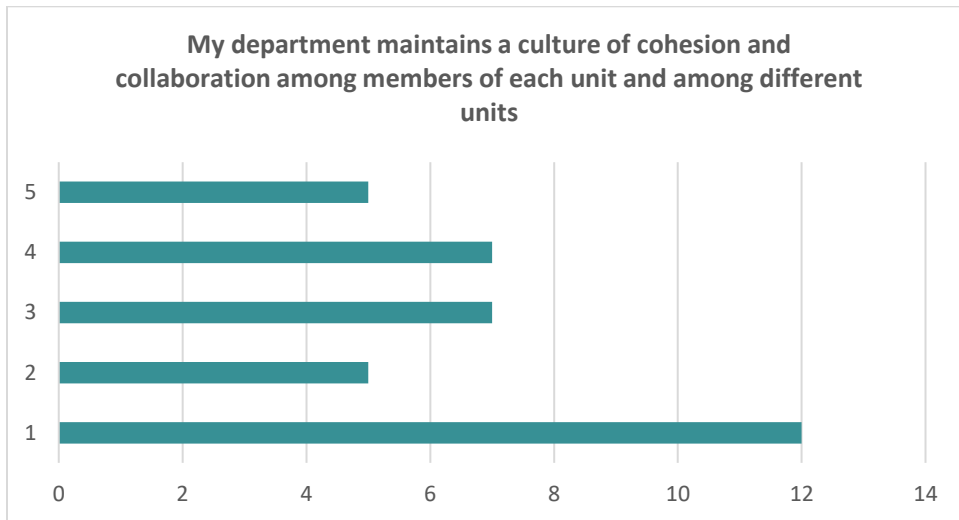
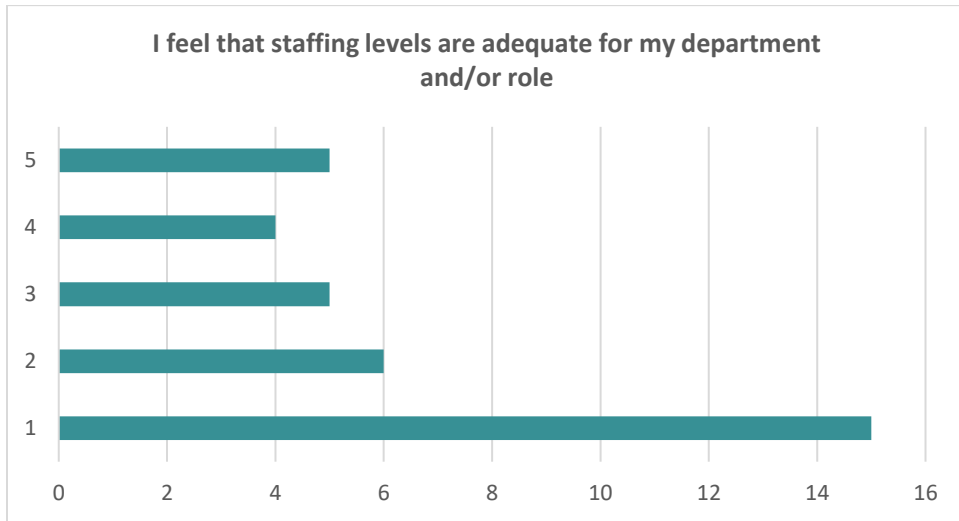
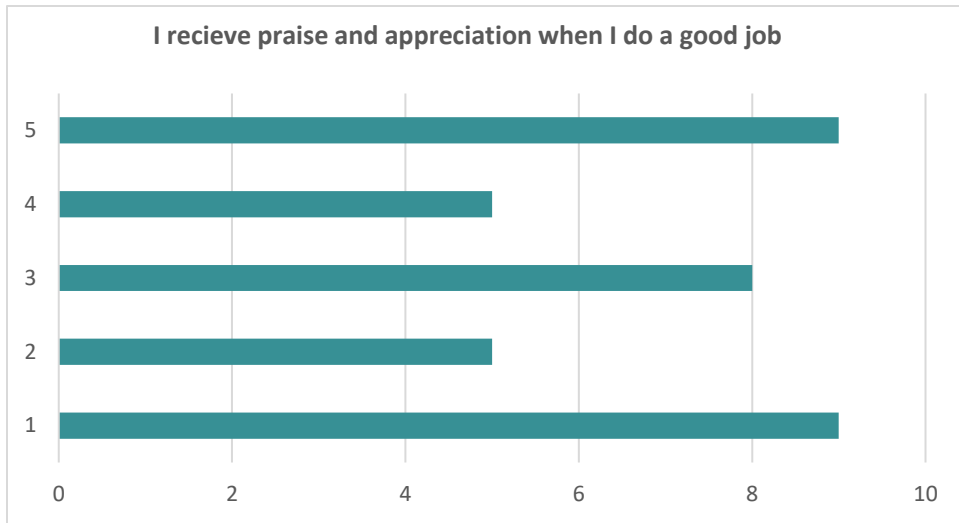
Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.6
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.5
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.9
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.7
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.7
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.4
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.8
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.0
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.5
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.4
My direct supervisor encourages my professional development	3.5
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Warden) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.9
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Warden) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.6
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Warden) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.3
I am proud to work for the County	4.3
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.1
I receive the necessary training to successfully respond to public safety situations and interact with residents	3.8
My department maintains a culture of cohesion and collaboration among members of each unit and among different units	2.7

The average score for all the survey statements is 3.7. The lowest score is 2.4 and the highest score is 4.7.

The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the camaraderie with coworkers and staff members' passion for the job as the Department's greatest strength – and the primary reason personnel remain with the Department.
- Respondents requested additional opportunities for training, ranging from field training to training in soft skills, such as decision making and leadership. Respondents expressed the desire for promotions to be based on skills, such as those learned through training, rather than the perceived preference for high test scores.
- Respondents suggested morale issues stem from poor communication from executive leadership coupled with the perception executive leadership is dismissive of non-supervisory staff's input. The perception of being ignored by executive leadership has led to some respondents not feeling valued. Other respondents suggested executive leadership belittles non-supervisory staff, making them feel replaceable.
- Respondents expressed concerns that management engages in a culture of favoritism, resulting in inconsistent treatment of Corrections Officers based upon their relationship with their supervisors. Officers perceived to be favorites of their supervisors are not held accountable, according to respondents.

## 3.A.1 Department of Corrections – Support Services Division

The Support Services Division (“Division”) is responsible for the health and wellbeing of the inmates and residents, the accreditation and compliance of all divisions, and the Work Detail, Work Alternative, and Work Release Programs.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Inmate Classification, Intake, and Transport
- Inmate Medical, Rehabilitative, and Food Services
- Work Detail and Work Alternative Program
- On-the-Job Training and Educational Programs
- Accreditation

### Inmate Classification, Intake, and Transport

The Classification Unit is the initial point of interaction for new inmates and transport inmates when they arrive at the facility. The primary responsibility of the Classification Sergeant is to process inmates during intake, discharge, and transfers (if applicable). For incoming inmates, the Sergeant completes a warrant and criminal history check. Incoming inmates are given a specific date to show up to the facility to be booked. Inmates are asked to fill out specific documents and forms when they arrive. These include, but are not limited to, urinalysis forms and forms to sign for property and cash assets. Inmates are then given uniforms, a haircut, and a shave. Next, their picture is taken, and they are allowed one phone call outside of the facility. Lastly, they are passed on to case workers and medical services for an initial physical assessment.

Classification also intakes all Work Release residents (“Residents”). Residents are individuals that are a part of the Work Release Program. The Residents are allowed to leave the facility daily to go and work a new/pre-existing job, and then come back to the facility once they are finished working their shift. The Classification Sergeant checks in all residents and searches each individual before allowing them back into Resident population.

Classification is set up in one room that houses all inmate belongings, inmate uniforms, work detail and work release uniforms, and desks for the two Classification Sergeants.

### Inmate Medical, Rehabilitative, and Food Services

Inmate medical services are contracted out to a third-party medical provider, *NaphCare*, which specializes in correctional facility medical services. Medical care is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If emergency medical services or more extended/intensive care is required, inmates can be transported to the hospital. Residents within the Work Release program do not have access to the *NaphCare* medical services and are responsible for their own healthcare.

The contracted medical team is housed in a clinic that is always readily available to treat the inmates. When necessary, inmates are able to access the clinic by submitting a request through the in-dorm computer kiosk or through a Correctional Officer.

*NaphCare* provides basic medical services as well as pharmaceutical services. *NaphCare* provides inmates with daily required medication and lab tests when necessary. *NaphCare* tracks monthly data within the clinic such as the number of screenings performed, number of patients being monitored, all pharmacy and lab data, any inmate chronic conditions, any sick calls, any offsite services used, and a count of infectious diseases active within the facility.

Inmates are provided Caseworkers and Counselors within the facility. Caseworkers serve as a liaison between the inmates and the courts. For inmates, Caseworkers manage case files and coordinate inmate schedules in regard to court appearances. For residents of the Work Release program, Caseworkers are responsible with verifying employment and keeping track of the resident's work schedule. Counselors are responsible for the rehabilitative process of the inmate's stay in the facility. Counselors are required to have a college degree and be certified as a professional counselor before taking the position within the facility. Counselors discuss individual cases with the inmates and residents and provide counseling services to these individuals. This includes working with inmates to design specific rehabilitation plans.

The Department has a Chaplain at the facility that assists with any religious requests. The Chaplain provides services to all inmates, residents, employees, and volunteers within the Department.

The Kitchen is managed by a Food Services Manager who oversees the inmates working within the kitchen and the Food Services Team ("Team"). The Team consists of five Food Services Team positions. As of our fieldwork, the Team has a single vacant position.

The Team's main responsibility is to manage the inmates that have been assigned to work in the kitchen. The kitchen serves three meals a day to both officers and inmates. Inmates cook, clean, and serve all food. Inmates can request to be placed in the kitchen and have the opportunity to learn cooking skills while learning from the Kitchen Team.

### Work Detail and Work Alternative Program

The Work Detail Program is one of the primary functions of the Gwinnett Department of Corrections. Groups of inmates called "details" are allowed to leave the prison under Department supervision and work within the County on various projects that are requested by other departments in the County. This includes, but is not limited to, roadside cleanups, vandalism cleanups, and other County Department groundskeeping and cleanup work. Inmates are also placed on Work Details within the prison. These inmates work on janitorial, landscape, and other tasks within or at the facility. Inmates who are eligible for Work Detail Program work ten hours a day; four days a week. Inmates' eligibility is based on the seriousness of their crime, and whether or not they exhibit good behavior within the facility. There are not formal guidelines for assessing and determining inmate eligibility for program participation. Staff understanding is that the Warden determines the eligibility for each inmate. Staff feel that the program is not able to meet the demand of the County due to the current low number of inmates participating in the program. The Work Detail population is low primarily because of COVID-related measures to reduce the number of people transported in Department buses, and the low number of Department staff that are available to supervise larger number of Work Details.

Offsite Work Details are taken to their specific job sites by orange passenger busses. These busses can hold 12 inmates at a time. Currently, only six inmates are allowed be in a single detail at a time. This originally stems from COVID social-distancing requirements but has not reverted to previous numbers.

Staffing is lacking in numbers within Work Detail. Field Operations is allocated 12 Correctional Officers to supervise the Work Details. Currently, they are staffed at nine officers. Field Operations currently does not employ a Sanitation Officer to handle all in-house janitorial and cleaning chemical management. Therefore, higher ranking officers are having to complete these duties.

The Work Release Program is used by the court system to allow for individuals who are convicted of a crime to keep their current job by allowing them to leave during the day/night to go work their shift and return afterwards. Residents in the Work Release Program are housed in dorms that are separate from the general population of inmates. Residents are also provided more amenities within their dorms such as vending machines. Individuals are assigned to Work Release Program by a judge and are required to pay administrative and daily fees to pay for the cost of the program. This program has been most successful with individuals who have failed to pay child-support. Instead of having to leave their job to serve their sentence, they retain their position, which allows for the continued payment of child support.

Currently, residents who violate the rules of the Work Release Program are being sent to general population within the Department.

The Work Alternative Program is a community service-based program managed within the facility. This allows for offenders, who are first time offenders whose crimes are not deemed serious enough for jail time, to perform community service with the Department of Corrections. Participants in this program are required to pay an administrative and daily fee to pay for the cost of the program. Participants travel on their own to the Corrections Building, are transported to various County locations for community service, then returned to the Correction Building where they depart on their own.

### On-the-Job Training and Educational Programs

Within the Department, inmates are provided with opportunities for on-the-job training and various educational programs. The on-the-job training and educational programs are directed by an Education Coordinator Officer. These programs provide inmates with activities to participate in while they are at the facility.

To participate within the programs, inmates are required to be in good standing and free of any recent disciplinary action. Additionally, inmates who wish to participate in these programs are required to have between six to eight months left on their respective sentence so that they are learning a new skill just before being released.

The available programs range from barber courses to an in-house welding program. The Department partners with Gwinnett Technical College to provide programs such as GED and literacy classes. Once inmates complete these programs, they are considered “graduated” from the program and are awarded a certificate. Once graduated and their sentence is over, inmates are kept in touch with by the Education Officer to help ensure they are able to find work outside of the facility.



Inmates are able to find out about the programs in the orientation they are given once they get to the facility. Also, fliers are posted within the dorms. Applications to the programs can be requested on the kiosks within the dorms by submitting a request to the Education Officer through email, who provides applications to interested inmates.

Currently the education classrooms are housed in the same wing as the inmates. This is a potential issue since inmates within the classes could be distracted by the inmates within the dorms.

### Accreditation

The Department is audited every three years by the American Correctional Association (“ACA”) and by a certified Prison Rape Elimination Act (“PREA”) Auditor in order to maintain accreditation/certification from each entity. The Department has held ACA accreditation since 2006. The Department employs a Compliance Manager, currently at the rank of Lieutenant, to ensure audit preparedness and coordinate with the auditors.

To ensure ACA accreditation, the Lieutenant leverages the *ACA Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions* Book. The ACA audits the facility every three years, and it is the Lieutenant’s responsibility to ensure that the Department is following all 579 of the ACA accreditation standards. The Lieutenant is also responsible for overseeing the facility’s contract with *NaphCare*, the third-party medical team.

The Lieutenant is responsible for all PREA certification. All officers and inmates are required to complete annual training on PREA compliance. PREA audits occur once every three years and are conducted in three phases. The pre-onsite phase includes a notice of the upcoming audit, facility questionnaire, initial Auditor review and discussion with the PREA Compliance Manager, and the Auditor review of the questionnaire/facility policies and procedures. The onsite phase of the PREA audit includes a facility tour, document review, and interviews of specific staff and inmates. The post-onsite phase consists of the necessary steps the PREA auditor must take before writing the report and submitting a corrective action plan. Within the prison, the inmates are given information and pamphlets about PREA reporting that provide ways to stay out of compromising situations as best as possible.

Currently, both ACA accreditation and PREA certification require a large volume of paperwork and reliance on the rest of the Department to assist in keeping up with compliance. The Lieutenant is responsible for keeping up with documentation and examples proving that the Department complies with standards for both audits. Currently, the compliance tracking process is manual, with all documentation physically maintained by the Lieutenant. The COVID pandemic and the lack of an electronic accreditation/certification documentation process, has caused the process of compiling pre-audit accreditation/certification documents to fall behind.

### Communications

Before the start of each shift, Officers meet to discuss a variety of topics such as work detail assignments and events that occurred in the previous shift in order to be aware of potential situations. Staff meetings are held monthly with all senior leadership; consisting of the Warden, the Deputy Wardens, the Captains, the Managers, the contracted medical personnel, and the Compliance Manager.

Most other communication within the Division is informal. Email and phone calls are how the department communicates the most.

## Strategic Initiatives

ACA accreditation is a main priority of the Division. The Division is working towards moving away from the manual process of accreditation that is currently in place, in order to streamline the documentation process.

The purpose of the education/training programs is to allow inmates to prepare for successful reentry back into society. The Division is assessing the addition of more programs such as additional welding classes and a diesel mechanics course in the future. The welding program is perceived as a very successful program within the Department and is highly sought after by inmates. The addition of more supplies and instructors would allow for more inmates to be able to participate in the program.

The Division is interested in providing more services to the County through Work Details but does not have the staffing or the perceived inmate eligibility to run a full capacity Work Detail program. The Division is currently working to add more inmates on to the roster of available inmates for Work Detail.

## Systems and Applications

### In-Dorm Kiosks

The in-dorm kiosks serve as a way for inmates to request medical service within the facility. By contacting the medical clinic, inmates are able to be seen 24 hours a day, seven days a week with any issue relating to their health. Inmates are also able to request information regarding the educational programs the Department offers by emailing the Education Coordination Officer.

### PowerDMS

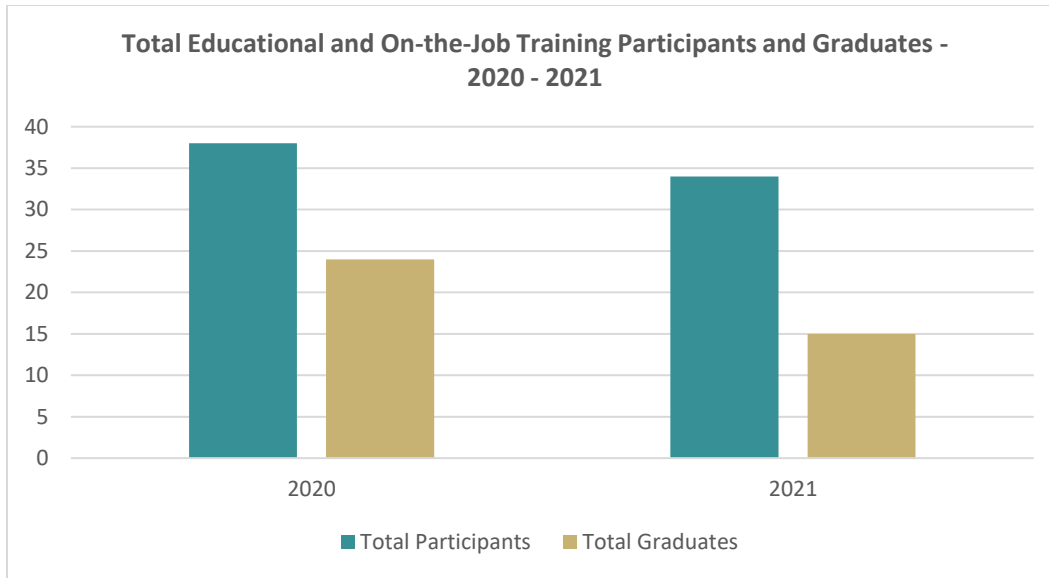
PowerDMS is a data management system that the Department utilizes. This system allows for the Department to retain, track, and manage policies. PowerDMS also has the ability to track training for the Officers within the Department.

## Data and Performance Analysis

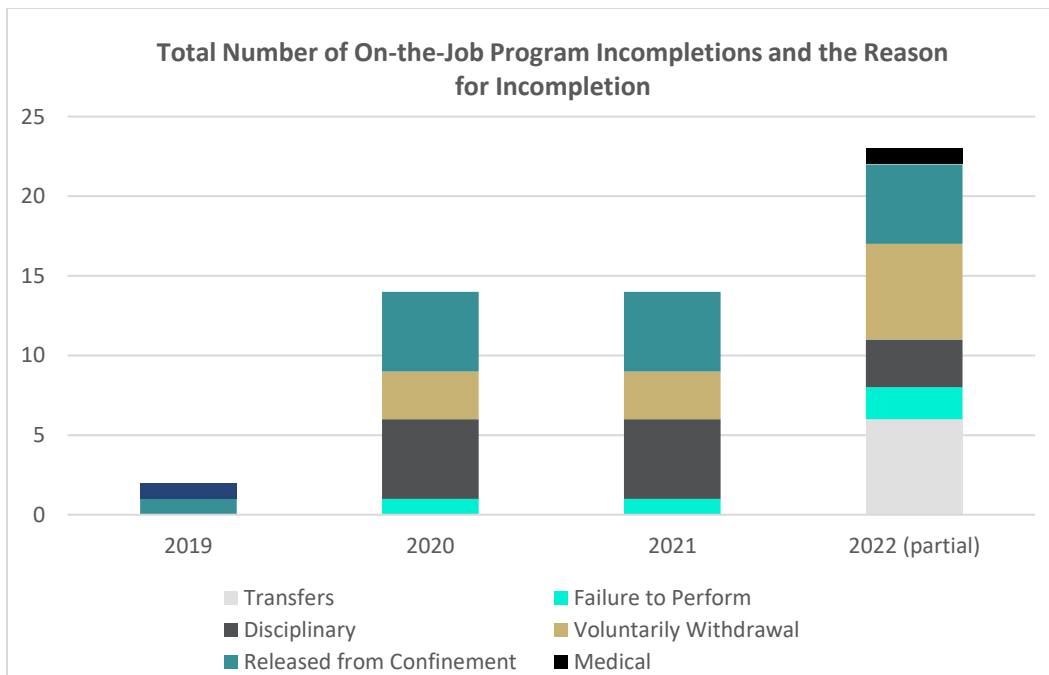
The Compliance Manager tracks data for accreditation for ACA and PREA audits. This data is mainly tracked on physical paper. The Division is currently working on transferring the process of accreditation to an electronic format.

Field Operations tracks data for the Work Detail program. Field Operations tracks the number of inside and outside details along with the number of inmates participating on these details per month. There is no data being kept regarding the number of inmates eligible or ineligible for the Work Detail programs. Therefore, it is difficult to track broader trends about population eligibility or participation rates within the Work Detail program.

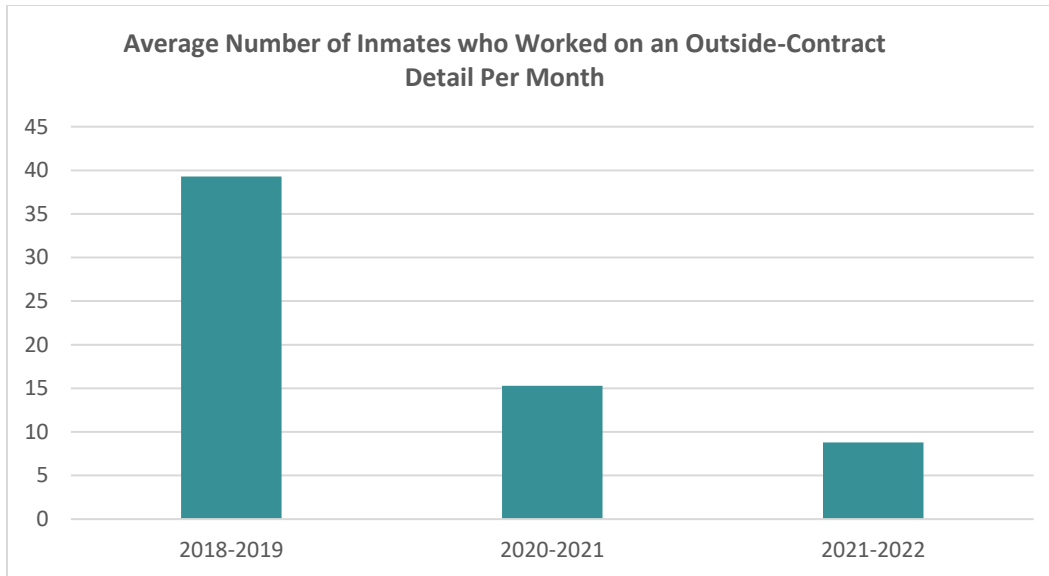
The number of inmates who participate in educational programs and on-the-job training and the number of participation hours are tracked. The number of graduated inmates from these programs are also tracked. The following graph demonstrates the total number of inmates who participated in educational and on-the-job training programs along with the number of inmates who graduated from these programs.



The Department’s educational programs for the inmates is a highlight of the Department as a whole. The Department is not formally tracking reasons for inmates not completing educational programs. However, the Department is tracking the reasons for inmates not completing the On-the-Job Training Program as shown in the following graph from 2019 to 2022 (partial year).



Fewer inmates are being allowed to participate in Work Detail. Work Detail data is tracked year to year from July to June. Different details such as to number of outside contract details, outside non-contracted details, and inside details are tracked as well as the number of inmates per month which work in each of these details. The following graph shows the average amount of inmates allowed to work on outside-contract details per month. M&J was not provided the numbers for 2019 to 2020.



From 2018 to 2019, an average of 39.3 inmates worked on an outside contract detail per month. From 2020 to 2021, an average of 15.3 inmates worked on an outside contract detail per month. COVID required the number of inmates who worked on detail to decrease due to health concerns. This trend continued into 2021 to 2022 data where from July to October, the average amount of inmates that worked outside contract details per month was 8.8.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Department does not currently have a formal process for evaluation of inmate eligibility for participation in Work Detail. It is the current perception of the staff within the Support Services Division that the Warden is responsible for qualifying inmates for Work Detail. Without a formal process outlining the specific reasons for allowing or disallowing inmates to work, there may be inconsistent understanding or application of determining inmate eligibility.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should coordinate to create a formal process and set of specific requirements that inmates must meet to participate in Work Detail. This should include forms or checklists to ensure consistent review and assessment of all inmates.

**Observation 2:** Pre-audit documentation is required to be filled out and completed for both ACA accreditation and PREA certification. Documentation currently is all being prepared in paper form that is maintained and managed by the Compliance Manager.

The process for documenting all compliance within the Department is slow because of manual nature, which in turn, has caused for the accreditation and certification processes to be slow.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should continue to move towards a paperless, electronic process for documenting compliance before the ACA and PREA audits. Electronic document management should alleviate any potential risk for lost documents and allow for easily accessible documentation during the three-year audit cycle.

**Observation 3:** The Work Detail program within the Division currently does not have a Sanitation Officer. In order to keep track of all in-house Work Detail sanitation supplies, Officers are having to add this responsibility onto their own current responsibilities. In numerous instances, certain Officers working below their qualifications and not adding the value they could to operations.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should coordinate with Human Resources to create and fill the position for a Sanitation Officer.

**Observation 4:** In certain circumstances, Residents are in, or have currently been in, the Work Release program who violate rules within the program or are convicted of another crime outside of the facility, resulting in them being sent to the general population within the Department as inmates. This may create opportunities for inmates and former residents to communicate about the operational and physical aspects of different sides of the prison, which may result in an increase in criminal activity.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider designating a specific dorm for Residents who become inmates while they are in the Work Release program or seek to have them transferred to another correctional facility. This may assist in alleviating the concern of inmates learning about the processes and procedures of the Work Release program. Since Residents are allowed to leave the facility to work in their previous jobs, restricting communication between the inmates and residents should discourage cross-division illegal activities.

**Observation 5:** The educational programs within the facility are a chance for inmates to learn new skills and gain resume credit that helps to receive jobs once they have left the facility.

Currently, only inmates without disciplinary reports who have six to eight months left on their sentence are allowed to participate in the educational programs. This excludes a number of inmates at the facility from participating in the programs. This coupled with the lower number of inmates allowed to go on Work Detail leaves a number of inmates who are eligible for the programs left with idle time.

**Recommendation 5:** In order to keep inmates from growing restless within the facility, the Department should coordinate and relook at the current length inmates need to have left on their sentence before they may participate in educational programs. Moving the current requirement back farther than six to eight months could allow inmates to have another activity they can invest in and help reduce the likelihood of the inmates growing restless within the facility.

**Observation 6:** The Department is not formally tracking reasons for inmates not completing educational programs. However, the Department is tracking the reasons for inmates not completing the On-the-Job Training Program.

**Recommendation 6:** In situations where an inmate does not complete or graduate a specific educational course, the specific reason should be tracked in order to assess the data and trends over time to potentially reduce/prevent future incompletions in the future.

## 3.A.2 Department of Corrections – Building Security Division

The Building Security Division (“Division”) is responsible for the operations and security of the inmate dorms and entrances/exits of the facility. This includes monitoring inmate activity, enforcing rules within the facility, and maintaining a positive environment for all inmates and employees.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Officer Post Coordination and Scheduling
- Officer Training and Certification
- Facility Operations and Security

#### Officer Post Coordination and Scheduling

There are three different shifts that Correctional Officers within the Department work each day. These include a Morning Shift, Day Shift, and Evening Shift. Morning Shift starts at 10:00 PM and ends at 6:30 AM, Day Shift starts at 6:00 AM and ends at 2:30 PM, and Night Shift starts at 2:00 PM and ends at 10:30 PM. Shifts overlap 30 minutes so that Officers can attend a Roll Call meeting before their shift. The purpose of this Roll Call meeting is to inform Officers of the activities of the previous shift, inform Officers of important overall information such as training requirement reminders, and to inform Officers of their post assignment for the shift. Officers are assigned to one shift a day with weekends being assigned dependent on the seniority of the Officer. Every year, Officers rotate shift assignment.

Post assignment is organized by the Shift Sergeants and details the physical area for which each Officer is responsible for during their shift. Each Officer is assigned a different post within the facility based upon the decision of the Shift Sergeant. Unless otherwise directed, Officers stay in these positions for the entirety of their shift. Shift assignments are handwritten onto a Shift Assignment Sheet. Officers are assigned to a number of different posts such as the inmate housing areas (“dorms”), the Work Release station, or the isolation/segregation cells.

If Officers are late to their shift or have to call out, they are required to clear it with their Shift Sergeant through a text or phone call. Time off is taken by submitting a paper Leave Slip to the Shift Sergeant.

At the end of each week, Officers are required to input their total hourly time for the week into the Gwinnett County Online Employee Portal. Shift Sergeants are required to review these hours to make sure they are correct. If things need to be changed, the Shift Sergeant sends the officer a message through email that says that an edit needs to be made. There is no current process for clocking-in or clocking-out from shifts.

The Officers are currently required to work overtime when there are not enough officers on the shift due to callouts, time-off, or vacant positions. Officers are paid time and a half for their overtime. Currently, overtime is decided based on seniority and the last date an Officer had to work overtime. It is the responsibility of the Shift Sergeants to decide when overtime is needed and inform the Officer when he/she has to work overtime. Based on interviews, Officers, in many circumstances, are being informed of their overtime obligations on the day of their shift, sometimes even within the last hour of their shift. Building Security is allocated 86 positions and there are currently 19 vacancies. Current staff shortages have increased the need for overtime.

### Officer Training and Certification

Each Officer is required to complete 20 hours of training a year with an additional 20 hours of training required for ACA accreditation. Three days of in-service training is required, and two days of class training is required. Officer training is tracked by a Training Officer and hours are currently tracked in Excel.

Officers are required to input their training hours onto the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council ("POST") website that tracks their overall training for the year. The Training Officer is then able to review the hours of every Officer in the Department to make sure their hours are being kept up with and that they are on track to finish their training by the end of the year. Officers are granted many opportunities to complete their training throughout the year. There are currently nine online courses Officers are able to complete. If Officers are unable to attend the six scheduled training classes held at the facility throughout the year, they have the opportunity to train at another facility. Staff in leadership positions are sent to the Gwinnett LEAD Academy for leadership development training.

New Officers are required to be POST certified before they are allowed to work in the facility. Currently, Officers attend Basic Correctional Officer Training ("BCOT") at Tift College. If an Officer does not pass BCOT, he/she is eligible to take the course again once it is offered. If the individual fails a second time, the Officer is terminated. Officers who come to work at the Department with previous certification do not have to be recertified. Civilian employees who do not interact with inmates are not required to be POST certified.

### Facility Operations and Security

The primary responsibility of the Correctional Officers within the Department is to monitor inmate activities. Within each dorm in the facility, there are 64 bunk spaces for inmates: 32 on the top floor of the dorm and 32 on the bottom floor. Each dorm has one Officer that is monitoring activity for the entire shift.

Officers start their shift by taking a count of the inmates within their respective dorms and then reporting the count back to the Shift Sergeant. A count is mandatory at least twice per shift. Once a count is taken, Officers then inform each eligible inmate of their Work Detail assignment for the day. Throughout the shift, Supervisors walk through each dorm to check on the Officers and inmates within each dorm and check the Isolation/Segregation Units. Isolation/Segregation Units are used for inmates who have violated Department rules or for individuals who are on suicide watch. Inmates on suicide watch are constantly monitored by Officers and Supervisors on each shift.

Within the Correctional Officers, there is a group of Officers that comprise the Security Threat Groups Unit (“STG”). The leader of the Unit is a Correctional Officer. This Unit’s primary responsibility is to monitor gang-related activity and members within the prison.

Maintenance within the facility is the responsibility of the Building Services Coordinator (“Coordinator”). Work orders are submitted to the Coordinator on paper and logged into a maintenance binder. Once the Coordinator receives the work order and reviews the maintenance binder, County Maintenance from the Department of Support Services is requested. The County handles most maintenance within the facility that is within their scope. This is currently a long process which can cause repairs to be completed in a non-timely manner. Third-party maintenance is called in to work on specialty repairs/installation such as the camera system.

Within each dorm there are virtual kiosks that allow the inmates to perform various tasks such as coordination with the caseworkers and counselors and requesting information regarding prison activities and educational opportunities. These tasks are completed by email sent through the kiosk. Inmates are also able to purchase commissary snacks through the kiosk with money that is loaded into an inmate account.

## Communications

Correctional Officers and the Shift Sergeants assigned over their specific shifts meet 30 minutes before each shift to have a roll call meeting. Roll call is performed to help ensure all officers are informed prior to their shift on events that have happened during the previous shift and things to be aware of. This is also the time Officers are reminded of required training deadlines.

On shift communication is conducted constantly through radios. Present situations around the facility are communicated and responded to via the radio communications. Supervising Officers also conduct check-ins periodically to ensure that things in the dorms are running smoothly.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Building Security Division is currently implementing video visits within the dorms. This new system will allow the inmates the ability to have virtual face-to-face visits while they are in the facility and not requiring travel for the inmates’ visitors. The visits will be held within the dorms on the same kiosks used to for inmate medical requests and commissary purchases.

Giving Officers the ability to train with online programs has been a goal of the Division. Currently, Officers have the opportunity to train using nine different online courses that can be taken from any internet-connected device.

## Systems and Applications

### Correctional Officer Time Logging

Correctional Officers log their time at the end of each week in the Gwinnett Online Employee Portal. The Shift Sergeants review time logged at the end of each week to make sure that the time inputted matches the time he/she has reported within the system.



### Dorm Kiosks

Each dorm has virtual kiosks which allow the inmates to perform a number of tasks. Among other things, inmates can request clinic visits, coordinate with the Counselors and Caseworkers, participate in phone calls and video visitation, and purchase commissary.

### Ocularis Camera System

Cameras are placed throughout the facility in key viewpoints to track activities inside and outside of the facility. A central control room inside the facility provides Officers the ability to monitor all cameras as well as lock and unlock all doors. Supervisors are also provided with access to all cameras from their offices in order to monitor activities.

### Axon Body Cameras

All Officers within the facility wear Axon body cameras on their chest in order to have a record of events in case of any rules violation or any situation involving use of force.

### SmartCOP

SmartCOP is a jail-management system utilized by the Department to manage inmate information. SmartCOP gives officers the ability to access inmate information such as property tracking, sentence length, disciplinary reports, work release information, and inmate program participation.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Building Security Division tracks data involving Officer hours and overtime hours for Officers in the Division. Data is tracked every two weeks along with the bi-weekly pay cycle. The individual, the amount of overtime hours worked, and the amount in extra overtime payment is inputted into an excel spreadsheet.

The Division tracks a number of outcome data including the number of Officer-involved incidents, disciplinary reports, found illegal items, and Officer-involved assaults. The Division is also tracking PREA related instances within the Department.

Currently, this data is being used to keep senior leadership informed on what is happening within the facility each month. To improve on this, the Department could begin to track more detailed information regarding incidents around the facility such as the time of day an incident is occurring, the specific dorm which the incident occurred, and what actions were taken after the incident.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The process for facility maintenance within the Department involves placing maintenance requests with the Building Services Coordinator who, in turn, coordinates with the County to bring maintenance staff out.

County Maintenance is currently behind schedule on repairs which has caused repairs needing to be done within the facility to take longer than expected.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if in-house maintenance staff positions or contracting with third-party maintenance vendors would alleviate potential delays in work order response at an appropriate cost. Alternatively, the Department should work with the Department of Support Services to determine if the volume of requests from the facility would support the creation of dedicated maintenance staff to support the facility.

**Observation 2:** Currently, employees are inputting their time into the Gwinnett County Online Employee Portal. The Shift Sergeant then reviews the time for completeness and accuracy. If edits need to be made before the period, then they are made by the employee. This process requires the staff to keep track of their time for the entire week and may cause unnecessary errors and editing. Time input and the editing of incorrect time can be done on the computers provided within the facility, or outside of the facility on a mobile device, which takes time from the staff outside of work.

Staff reported previously utilizing personally assigned cards to clock into and out of each shift, but these are no longer in use.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with HR to determine if a daily timecard/timeclock system could be reintroduced to allow for timely and accurate capture of time worked. Timecards/timeclocks are commonly used in the Corrections industry and are used by the Georgia Department of Corrections.

## 3.A.3 Department of Corrections – Business Office Team

The Business Office Team (“Team”) is responsible for all financial functions within the Department such as budgeting, purchasing, contract and Memorandums of Understanding (“MOUs”) management, and accounts payable and accounts receivable.

### Key Functions

Key Team functions include the following:

- Budget and Account Payables/Receivables
- Contract Management
- Work Alternative Program Coordination

### Budget and Account Payables/Receivables

The Business Office Team consists of a Business Office Manager and five Business Office employees.

The Business Office Team is responsible for preparing the draft annual budget and presents the budget to the Warden each year. The budget presentation consists of projected revenue for the Department and the total expected expenditures for the year. The Budget Presentation also includes a business plan for the Department. The business plan includes Operational Decisions, Internal Strategic Decisions, and County Initiatives. This plan is presented every year with changes in each category in order to adapt to the current needs of the Department.

Most of the Department’s funding comes from the County General Fund. The Department also receives a \$22 per day stipend from the State Department of Corrections for every State inmate housed with the Department. Additional revenue is recorded through the Work Detail and Work Release fees, the inmate telephone service, and commissary sales.

Expenditures within the Department include, among other things, commissary, food for feeding the inmates, supplies for Work Detail, Employee and inmate uniforms, sanitation supplies, and maintenance fees to third-party vendors.

The Team is currently using the County SAP system for all financial reporting and tracking.

### Contract Management

Currently, the Department has contracts and MOUs for services such as Equifax, ACA and PREA regarding internal audit services for accreditation, Keefe Commissary for all commissary items inmates can purchase within the facility, and the Atlanta Regional Commission and Gwinnett Technical College for the Department.

Contracts and MOUs are managed by the Business Office Team. Contracts and MOUs are required to be reviewed once a year by the Team in order to make sure no updates are needed.

## Work Alternative Program Coordination

The Team is responsible for the Work Alternative Program housed at the facility. The Work Alternative Program is a community service program for individuals who have been given required community service within the County. Individuals use the facility as a meeting spot to then go out into the community and perform various tasks such as cleaning up trash.

Individuals are required to pay a daily fee to participate in the community service which is then added to the Department's revenue. The community service is overseen by Officers, and the location and task that is performed is coordinated by the Team. Participants in the Work Alternative Program are required to report to the Department daily as long as their sentence runs.

## Communications

Yearly business plan and budget meetings are held with the Warden and upper-level management to discuss strategic priorities for the Department. These meetings are important to set expectations and initiatives for the year. There are no regular updates or reviews of budget-to-actual, or progress on strategic priorities.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Business Office Team has expressed the necessity for cross-training within the Team. In case an individual is out of the office for a period of time, cross-training will allow for the individual's function to be carried on by someone else.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

The Team utilizes the County SAP program to record all financials within the Department. Financial data is pulled from the SAP system as well.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Team tracks various financial data throughout the year. All financial data is pulled from SAP to be used by the team.

Quarterly revenue is tracked including all Work Detail revenue, Work Release program revenue, Work Alternative Program revenue, telephone revenue, and commissary revenue. The Team is currently not comparing Work Detail revenue with the number of inmates allowed to go on Work Detail.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Team meets with upper-level management once a year to discuss the strategic initiatives of the Department.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should introduce quarterly budget-to-actual and strategic initiative progress meetings. More frequent meetings will help to ensure relevant stakeholders are aware of current progress and allow for discussion of potential changes in approach or adjustment to budgets based on actual revenues received or projected additional expenditures.

## 3.A.4 Department of Corrections – Professional Standards Unit

The Professional Standards Unit (“Unit”) is responsible for recruiting and hiring for the Department of Corrections.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Hiring

### Hiring

The hiring process is a detailed process managed by the Lieutenant that oversees the Unit.

Phase one involves the processing, interviewing, and assessing of each applicant. Once an individual applies, the Lieutenant leading the Unit receives the application by checking the County NeoGov website. If the Lieutenant accepts the application, applicants then go through an orientation which takes place after the applicant has been contacted by the Lieutenant. In this phase, applicants go through background checks, fingerprinting, credit checks, a behavioral assessment, and an in-person interview. Applicants are also given a preliminary orientation booklet to fill out which includes documents regarding criminal history, education, and personal information. The preliminary orientation booklet is a 47-page booklet that must be physically returned to the Lieutenant. The Lieutenant then reviews the paper booklet of each applicant as well as the results from the preliminary checks and interview and makes the decision to contact County HR to send out a Conditional Job Offer or not. Not all applicants turn in the booklet, which stops the hiring process.

Once applicants finish and pass the first phase of the hiring process, they are informed through email of their acceptance into phase two. In phase two of the hiring process, applicants receive a polygraph exam as well as a psychological evaluation. If the candidate passes both the polygraph and the psychological evaluation, they are then scheduled for a physical and a drug screening. If the applicant does not have a college degree, they must take a “Post Entry Exam.” Once the applicant has met all requirements of the Conditional Job Offer, a Final Job Offer is sent to HR for approval. Applicants’ progress through the hiring process is manually tracked by the Lieutenant on a paper document which contains a check list of each task to be completed within phase one and two.

As of our fieldwork, starting salary for a Correctional Officer is \$41,515. Currently, there is a \$2,000 hiring incentive for new employees that is paid out over a six-month period once the individual has started.

### Communications

The Lieutenant attends the monthly staff meetings with the Warden and all senior leadership.

The Unit communicates with County HR on a consistent basis to coordinate Conditional Job Offers and Final Job Offers.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Unit has expressed the desire to do more active recruiting for open positions within the Department. One goal of the Unit in the future is to be involved and participate in Gwinnett County Career fairs where the Police Department and Fire Department currently recruit.

## Systems and Applications

### NeoGov

NeoGov is a Human Relations software used by the County to post job openings. The software also serves as a portal for applicants to submit their information and apply. The Unit uses this system to check for new applicants and send out pre-orientation booklets to applicants who qualify.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Staffing numbers month to month are tracked and submitted with the monthly CompStat report that is sent out to senior leadership.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Currently, the Professional Standards Unit does not do much active recruiting and does not participate in career fairs around the County. Applicants are able to access job descriptions and apply for positions on the Gwinnett County website, but there are not other methods being used by the Department to increase hiring and open position awareness.

**Recommendation 1:** The Unit should put more emphasis on active recruiting by reaching out to County Human Resources in order to become involved with County career fairs and strategically advertising open positions as other County departments do (billboard advertisements, social media, etc.).

**Observation 2:** Before applicants are invited to the facility to participate in orientation, they are required to fill out and return a manual preliminary orientation booklet. This booklet must be filled out by hand and then turned into the Professional Standards Unit. Many potential applicants have not been turning in the manual booklet which stops the overall hiring process for that individual.

**Recommendation 2:** The Unit should work with County ITS and HR to transition the orientation booklet to an electronic format that can be easily completed and submitted electronically. This may improve the completion rate and increase the number of applicants that the Department can consider for employment. This could also speed up the process for getting applicants through the hiring process with the elimination of required paper documents.

## 3.A.5 Department of Corrections – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Department of Corrections to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Summary Recommendations

#### Lack of Comprehensive Awareness and Utilization of Correctional Facility Management System

**Observation 1:** The Department utilizes an instance of SmartCOP which is primarily administered by the County Sheriff's Office who maintain their own instance of SmartCOP. SmartCOP is a public safety management system used by the Department to manage operations within the Corrections facility. Based on interviews and field observations, there is a lack of understanding, training, and utilization for fully utilizing the capabilities of SmartCOP.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should request the Sheriff's Office to provide periodic detailed training to select "power users" or "champions" within the Department to gain a comprehensive understanding of all the offerings and usability within SmartCOP. The Department power users/champions (coordinating with Department leadership) should define the system usage and corresponding business processes, policies, and procedures for maximizing the utilization and consistency of SmartCOP within the Department. The power users/champions should conduct trainings for all current employees, and SmartCOP training should be a formal part of new hire orientation. The Department should also provide periodic "refresher" training of the use of SmartCOP and conduct periodic checks to ensure that SmartCOP is being leveraged within the Department as intended.

### 3.A.6 Department of Corrections– Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** Current staffing shortages have increased the need for overtime within the Department. Current staff note exhaustion and decreased morale due to the expectation of overtime, as well as the perceived lack of proactive communications around overtime shifts.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should ensure that staffing and assignment of overtime occurs regularly enough to provide more than 24 hours' notice of scheduled overtime, barring emergency or unplanned circumstances.

Currently, staff do not have a specific say in what days they work overtime or not. This could cause issues if an event scheduled by an Officer in their personal life conflicts with the required overtime. Allowing staff to coordinate which days they cannot work overtime further in advance could allow for better work-life balance and raise morale among the Officers.

**Observation 2:** Many Department staff believe there is not enough empathy training done for Officers within the facility. This training allows for Officers to be able to handle inmate and coworker interactions with more empathy and understanding.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to potentially create a healthier environment for both inmates and Officers, a stronger emphasis on empathy and soft-skills training should be introduced into the current training process of new and current Officers.



# 3.B Department of Fire and Emergency Services

## Fire and Emergency Services at a Glance

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- 1 | Provide emergency medical services and fire protection to the residents of Gwinnett County, including fire suppression and hospital transports
  - 2 | Meet the needs of any County emergency through special response teams including technical rescue, hazardous materials, swift water, and mass casualty
  - 3 | Educate County residents on fire and personal safety through demonstrations, seminars, and training programs
  - 4 | Reduce community risks through prevention and enforcement inspections, public education, and investigations of incidents and trends throughout the County
  - 5 | Provide services for Department personnel and maintain the equipment, apparatus, and stations dedicated to emergency incident response

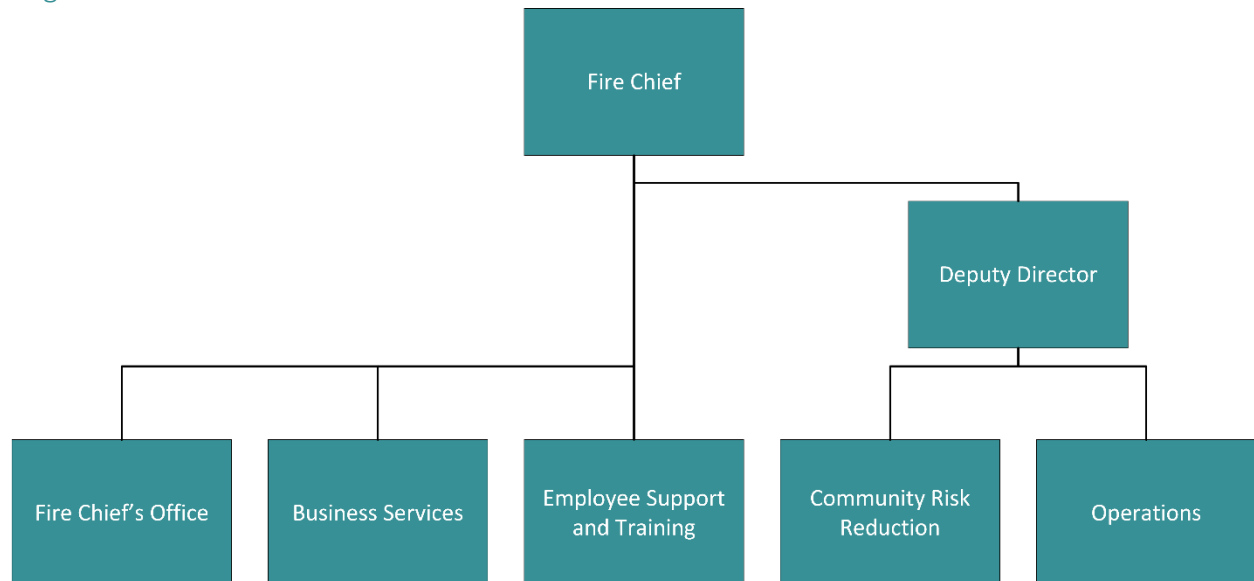
**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

<b>\$137,315,973</b>	<b>\$9,132,981</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

	through August 2022	Fire and Emergency Services
FTE	Filled	985
	Allocated	1,018

### Organization Structure



### Triple Accreditation



The Department maintains accreditation from three organizations: the Paramedic College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”), the Fire Investigations Section is accredited by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”), and the Department overall is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”).

### Management Framework as a Tool



The Department utilizes Management Framework as a comprehensive project management tool – identifying strategic priorities and initiatives. The Department uses Management Framework to track project progress and collect performance data in order to make data-driven decisions.

### Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”) Team



More than 40 personnel spread throughout the Department comprise the CISM Team, which helps first responders mitigate the emotional and physical impact of responding to emergencies. The Team helps peers identify mental health and other resources available to employees.

### Citizens Fire Academy



A seven-week course provides members of the public first-hand knowledge of the Department’s organization and services. Participants take classes at the Training Academy, run through firefighter drills, and witness life at the stations. The Department has established a Hispanic Citizens Academy specifically for Spanish-speaking residents and has offered classes in Korean when possible.

### Saving Time and Money on Training



The Department maintains a comprehensive Training Academy which provides both recruit training and continuing education in Gwinnett County. The capabilities of the Training Academy allow the Department to save time and money by training in-house, rather than sending recruits or incumbent personnel to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth.

## Introduction

The Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services (“GCFES” or “Department”) provides fire protection and emergency medical services (“EMS”) to Gwinnett County residents, visitors, and passers-through. The Department responds to fire, EMS, and other incidents in the Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Medical Services District, which encompasses unincorporated Gwinnett, as well as 15 of the County’s 16 municipalities: Auburn, Berkeley Lake, Braselton, Buford, Dacula, Duluth, Grayson, Lawrenceville, Lilburn, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, Rest Haven, Snellville, Sugar Hill, and Suwanee. Additionally, the Department responds to emergency medical incidents in the Loganville EMS District – the portion of the city in Gwinnett County; the Loganville Fire Department provides fire rescue services in the city.

In addition to fire protection and emergency medical services, the Department also provides fire prevention and personal safety education, specialized services (such as swift water rescue and hazardous materials), medical transports, fire incident investigations, and fire safety building inspections for the County.

As a State-licensed fire department, ambulance service, and medical first responder agency, GCFES adheres in total or in part to standards set by the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (“OCGA”), Georgia Office of Commissioner of Insurance Safety Fire and State Fire Marshal’s Office, Georgia Department of Public Health and the Region III EMS Council, the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (“GFSTC”), and National Fire Protection Agency (“NFPA”). Additionally, the Department, or a component of the Department, is accredited by the following three agencies:

- Commission on Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”)
- Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (“GACP”)
- Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (“CoAEMSP”) in cooperation with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”)

Since 2017, GCFES has maintained a rating of 2/2X from the Insurance Services Office (“ISO”) – the second-highest rating offered by the organization. ISO is used by insurance companies to help set annual premiums for residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

## Organization

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is led by the Fire Chief, who serves as Department Director, and a Deputy Director at the Assistant Chief level. Department staff are organized into five divisions:

- Fire Chief’s Office
- Business Services
- Community Risk Reduction
- Employee Support and Training
- Operations

### Fire Chief’s Office

The Fire Chief’s Office is led by the Fire Chief and is responsible for the overall administration of the Department, strategic planning, Departmental accreditation, and public information.

An Office Manager reports directly to the Fire Chief, providing oversight of the Fire Headquarters and the two part-time Staff Assistants II who serve in the Headquarters’ reception area.

In addition to the administrative staff, the Fire Chief’s Office contains two sections:

- Public Information Section
- Strategic Planning Section

The Public Information Section comprises of an active-duty Captain and Lieutenant who serve as Public Information Officers (“PIOs”). The Section is responsible for distributing information to the public and facilitating internal communications within the Department. Because the PIOs are also active-duty firefighters, they can be called into the field for incident response, occasionally leaving Headquarters without a consistent Public Information staff presence.

The Strategic Planning Section is led by a Chief of Staff with the rank of Battalion Chief, and includes a Program Analyst II, a Business Analyst, and an Office Services Coordinator. The Section is responsible for Departmental accreditation and performance measurement. The Chief of Staff role is approved at the District Commander level, but is currently underfilled at the Battalion Chief level.

Finally, the Fire Chief manages the contracts with the Department's two Medical Directors who provide oversight of emergency medical services and reporting, and produce the Department's Standing Medical Orders ("SMOs"). One Medical Director primarily provides medical oversight of the Operations Division while the other works primarily with the Training Academy.

### Business Services

The Business Services Division is led by a Division Director at the Assistant Chief level. The Division provides administrative support for the other divisions through oversight of the Departmental budget process; information technology ("IT") support; and maintenance of equipment, apparatus, and supplies. The Division encompasses three sections:

- Fire Facilities Management Section
- Finance Section
- Logistics Section

The Fire Facilities Management Section is led by a Section Manager and comprises five Trades Technician positions and one part-time Staff Assistant II. The Section manages all Departmental facility maintenance, whether performed in-house or through a contracted vendor.

The Finance Section is led by a Business Manager, who is supported by two Staff Assistants II and three Administrative Services Coordinators III. The Section manages payroll, EMS billing, and budgeting for the Department, as well as the purchasing of and contracts for services.

Two sections – Apparatus Management and Resource Management – comprise the Logistics Section. The Apparatus Management Section Manager and Resource Management Section Manager both report to the Battalion Chief over the Logistics Section.

The Apparatus Management Section consists of two units: Fire Apparatus and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus ("SCBA"). The Fire Apparatus Unit is led by a Fire Apparatus Lieutenant, who is supported by two Firefighter Driver/Engineers and one Firefighter III. The Fire Apparatus Unit manages the maintenance schedule for fire apparatus and other vehicles, as well as apparatus testing and development of specifications for new apparatus purchases. The SCBA Unit is led by a Warehouse Manager, who is supported by a Firefighter Driver/Engineer and two Apparatus Maintenance Coordinators. The SCBA Unit maintains and tests the primary equipment firefighters use for breathing while suppressing fires. Both Unit leads, as well as a Business Services Associate II, report to the Section Manager.

The Resource Management Section consists of two units: the Office and the Warehouse. The Office Unit is led by a Business Services Associate III, who is supported by three Business Services Associates II. The Office Unit manages the purchasing of and contracts for goods. The Warehouse Unit is led by a Warehouse Manager, who is supported by two Firefighter Driver/Engineers (one position is currently underfilled by a Firefighter III) and a Warehouse Coordinator. The Warehouse Coordinator in turn is supported by one Warehouse Technician III and two Warehouse Technicians II. The Warehouse Unit manages common commodities for GCFES, the Department of Corrections, and the Police Department.

In addition to the personnel who staff each section, the Division includes an Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) IV and a Program Analyst II who provide support to the Division Director.

### Community Risk Reduction

The Community Risk Reduction (“CRR”) Division is led by the Deputy Director and consists of two sections:

- Prevention and Enforcement Section
- Education and Investigations Section

An ASA III reports directly to the Deputy Director and provides overall administrative support for the Division.

The Prevention and Enforcement Section conducts fire safety inspections of buildings throughout the County. The Section is led by an Assistant Fire Marshal, whose position is classified at the Section Manager paygrade. The Assistant Fire Marshal directly oversees the four Senior Fire Inspectors responsible for permit inspections of those developments requiring a Certificate of Occupancy. The Section’s ASA II also reports directly to the Assistant Fire Marshal. Compliance inspections are conducted by three units within the section:

- Apartments and Mercantile Establishments Unit (“Apartments Unit”)
- Hotels and Places of Public Assembly Unit (“Assembly Unit”)
- Special Occupancy Unit

Each unit is led by a Fire Inspections Captain and is responsible for compliance inspections of specific types of structures as mandated by OCGA Title 25. The Apartments Unit is staffed by four Senior Fire Inspectors and one Fire Inspector; the Assembly Unit is staffed by five Senior Fire Inspectors; and the Special Occupancy Unit is staffed by two Senior Fire Inspectors and three Fire Inspectors.

Two sections – Community Education and Fire Investigations – comprise the Education and Investigations Section. The Community Education Section Manager and Fire Investigations Section Manager both report to the Assistant Fire Marshal over the Education and Investigations Section, whose position is classified at the Section Manager level.

The Community Education Section provides fire and medical safety education to members of the public. Six Fire Educators report to the Section Manager, as does a Firefighter Driver/Engineer position which is currently underfilled at the Firefighter II level. The six Fire Educator positions are all approved up to the Senior Fire Educator level.

The Fire Investigations Section is accredited as a law enforcement agency by GACP. Five Senior Fire Investigators positions report to the Section Manager – currently each position is underfilled at the Fire Investigator level, allowing for promotional opportunities within each position. A Fire Investigations Captain paygrade does exist, but the role had been supplanted by the Section Manager role in 2018. The Fire Investigations Section determines the origin of all fires in a residential or commercial setting and conducts investigations of any incendiary incidents caused as a result of criminal activity. The Section additionally conducts background checks and some internal investigations for the Department. Currently, all members of the Section are certified as peace officers through the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (“POST”) and arson investigators through the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (“GPSTC”).

An ASA II reports directly to the Education and Investigations Assistant Fire Marshal, providing administrative support to both the Community Education Section and Fire Investigations Section.

### Employee Support and Training

The Employee Support and Training (“ES&T”) Division is led by a Division Director at the rank of Assistant Chief. The Division provides wrap-around services for employee safety, well-being, HR support, and education. ES&T encompasses three sections:

- Employment-HR Section
- Risk Management-Marketing Section
- Training Academy

An ASA IV reports directly to the Division Director and provides overall administrative support for the Division. The position is authorized as a Resources and Marketing Specialist but is current filled as an ASA IV – the two job classifications are of equal paygrade.

The Employment-HR Section oversees the recruiting, hiring, and retention of staff for the Department. The Section is led by an ASA IV, who is supported by two Public Safety Staffing Specialists and an ASA II.

The Risk Management-Marketing Section provides guidance, programs, and data on Departmental and personnel safety, infection control, risk, and wellness. The Section is comprised of a Safety Officer at the rank of Captain, a Safety Officer at the rank of Lieutenant, and two ASAs III.

The staff at the Training Academy provides basic training for all new recruits and continuing education for incumbent sworn personnel. The Training Academy additionally manages promotional exams. The Training Academy is led by a Chief of Training and a Battalion Chief of Training – each position is classified as a Section Manager, with the Chief of Training classified at a higher paygrade. While the Chief of Training handles overall strategic decision making and coordination with Departmental command staff, the Battalion Chief of Training oversees the day-to-day operations of the Training Academy.

An ASA IV reports to the Chief of Training, providing administrative support to the Training Academy, as well as overseeing recruits assigned to transitional duty at the Training Academy.

The Training Academy is divided into three units:

- Fire/Rescue Recruit Training Unit
- Medical Training Unit
- Career Development/Special Training Unit

The Fire/Rescue Training Unit provides education to new recruits to prepare those recruits to meet the requirements of the National Professional Qualifications (“NPQ”) Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazardous Materials (“HazMat”) Awareness, and HazMat Operations certifications. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain who oversees two Firefighter Lieutenants, each of whom oversees three Instructors at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer and Firefighter III levels. An ASA III also reports to the Captain, providing administrative support for the Unit.

The Medical Training Unit provides education to both new recruits and incumbent staff to meet the Emergency Medical Technician (“EMT”) and Paramedic licensure qualifications as set by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (“NREMT”). Currently, recruits are trained to the EMT level and any sworn firefighter may return to the Training Academy to train to the Paramedic level. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain who oversees three Firefighter Lieutenants. One Lieutenant serves as the Clinical Coordinator, overseeing hands-on training for Recruit Classes and Paramedic Classes. One Lieutenant serves as the Lead Instructor for EMT training, and oversees four Course Coordinators and one American Heart Association (“AHA”) Training Manager – these Course Coordinators and AHA Training Manager include personnel at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer, Firefighter III, and Firemedic levels. The third Lieutenant serves as the Lead Instructor for Paramedic training, and oversees three Instructors at the Firefighter Lieutenant, Firefighter III, and Firemedic levels. Both the EMT and Paramedic training programs hire adjunct instructors as necessary. Two ASAs II provide administrative support to the Unit.

The Paramedic training program is formally known as the Paramedic College and is accredited by CAAHEP upon the recommendation of CoAEMSP. The Chief of Training serves as the Dean of the Paramedic College.

The Career Development/Special Training Unit provides continuing education opportunities to incumbent staff. The Unit also coordinates promotional courses and examinations. The Unit is led by a Firefighter Captain, who oversees two Firefighter Lieutenants. One Lieutenant serves as the lead for the Driving Program/Career Development Program and oversees three instructors at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer level. The second Lieutenant serves as the lead for the Incumbent Training Group and oversees two Special Project personnel at the Firefighter Driver/Engineer and Firefighter III levels. A part-time ASA II provides administrative support to the Unit.

Ranks for Instructors, Course Coordinators, the AHA Training Manager, and Special Project personnel are current as of our fieldwork. However, Departmental personnel may transition between the Training Academy and active duty in the Operations Division, so the actual paygrades for each of these positions is dependent on the current staff member in the position.

The members of each Recruit Class are classified as non-active Firefighters I until they have passed their NPQ Firefighter I exam. They then retain the rank of Firefighter I until passing their NPQ Firefighter II exam. All recruits at the Training Academy report through their Instructors, Lieutenants, Captains, Battalion Chief of Training, and Chief of Training as their command structure.

## Operations

The Operations Division responds to incidents in Gwinnett County, providing fire suppression, emergency medical, HazMat, rescue, and other emergency and non-emergency mitigation services. The Division is led by a Division Director at the Assistant Chief rank. The Division Director reports to the Deputy Director. The Division is divided into three shifts and one section:

- A Shift
- B Shift
- C Shift
- Continuous Improvement Section

Each shift is responsible for incident response during a 24-hour timeframe. All active-duty personnel are assigned to a shift and work for the 24 hours assigned to that shift, with the next 48 hours dedicated to rest. Each shift is led by a District Commander, who oversees all incident response and scheduling during their respective shift. Three District Commanders lead the active-duty personnel.

The County is divided into five battalions based on geographic regions. Each battalion contains six to seven stations for a total of 31 stations spread throughout the County (including Station 13, which is currently operating incident response from nearby stations as a new facility is constructed). A Battalion Chief heads each battalion during each shift, with responsibility over the operations of the stations within that battalion for their respective shift. Fifteen Battalion Chiefs oversee the County's five battalions.

The officers of each station report to their respective Battalion Chief. Operations Division officers at the station level are either a Firefighter Captain or a Firefighter Lieutenant. Fourteen stations are currently managed by a Firefighter Captain on each shift. All stations include at least one Firefighter Lieutenant in the command structure for each shift. Those stations without a Captain are managed by the Lieutenant. Three stations have two Lieutenants per shift. One station has one Lieutenant for two shifts and two Lieutenants for the third shift. As of our fieldwork, 42 active-duty Firefighter Captains and 103 Firefighter Lieutenants serve in the stations.

Below the officer levels, field personnel receive the following ranks based upon their respective qualifications. The following ranks are listed from highest paygrade to lowest.

- Firefighter Driver/Engineer
- Firefighter III
- Firemedic
- Firefighter II
- Firefighter I



While it is uncommon for active-duty firefighters to hold the rank of Firefighter I, the position may be held when staff are recruited from other fire departments or are unable to complete their recruit training (such as those who take leave for military duty). Firefighters I, Firefighters II, Firefighters III, and Firefighter Driver/Engineers have met those respective NPQ levels, while Firemedics have met the requirements for any of those positions in addition to achieving licensure as a Paramedic. The Department announced implementation of a new Senior Firemedic level during the timeframe of our fieldwork as an additional promotional opportunity for Department personnel.

Advancement through the Firefighter III level is possible through automatic promotion upon meeting the necessary requirements. Promotion to Firefighter Driver/Engineer, Firefighter Lieutenant, Firefighter Captain, and above is only considered for those meeting the qualifications when a position at each level is open.

As of our fieldwork, there were 597 active-duty firefighters assigned to the stations. Each station requires a minimum number of firefighters per shift in order to meet minimum staffing requirements for the fire apparatus located at that station. The following chart indicates how many firefighters are required for each type of fire apparatus. The County considers ambulances as fire apparatus due to the Department’s qualifications for operation; ambulances are listed in the table as Advanced Life Support (“ALS”) Medical Units.

Apparatus	Minimum Personnel
Squad Truck	4
Engine	3
Ladder Truck	3
ALS Medical Unit	2
HazMat Unit	2
Air and Light Truck	1
Special Response Unit	1

The table above does not include the vehicles solely or primarily operated by Battalion Chiefs, District Commanders, or Medical Supervisors. The table also does not include Specialty Team vehicles which are staffed on an as-needed basis.

Each shift also has a Medical Supervisor (or “MS Officer”), at the rank of Firefighter Lieutenant, who reports to the District Commander. The MS Officer liaises between the Department and hospitals to which the Department provides transport, reviews medical reports, oversees field training for EMTs and Paramedics, handles medical complaints, tries to mitigate the overutilization of ALS Medical Units, and responds to incidents as necessary. Historically, the Department staffed two MS Officers each shift, however staffing challenges midway through the last decade resulted in a dissolution of the second position. As a result, the remaining MS Officer position has become primarily reactive.

A Deputy Chief of Operations at the District Commander rank serves as the backup for the Division Director and oversees the Specialty Teams, Support Teams, and Continuous Improvement Section. The Department has four Specialty Teams, each of which is based at a different station and staffed with that station’s on-duty personnel.

The Department's Specialty Teams are:

- Hazardous Materials Team
- Swiftwater Rescue Team
- Technical Rescue/Georgia Search and Rescue Team
- Mass Casualty Incident Team

Three Support Teams provide wrap-around support services for both Department staff and members of the public, ranging from quick response medical support to identification of medical health resources after an incident. The Department's Support Teams are:

- Bike Medic Team
- Critical Incident Stress Management Team
- Honor Guard

The Deputy Chief of Operations provides administrative support for the Specialty and Support Teams, approving budgets, specialty training, and events – however, the Battalion Chiefs manage the day-to-day operations and staffing of the Specialty and Support Teams that fall within their respective stations.

The Continuous Improvement Section provides quality improvement (“QI”) and quality assurance (“QA”) services for the Department through report review, program appraisals, and policy updates. The Section is led by a Battalion Chief who reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations. Three QA/QI Lieutenants report to the Battalion Chief.

### Sworn Personnel

The majority of the Department's staff are sworn personnel. The following positions unique to the County's public safety departments or specifically to GCFES are considered sworn positions:

- Firefighter I
- Firefighter II
- Firemedic
- Firefighter III
- Firefighter Driver/Engineer
- Community Risk Reduction Lieutenant
- Fire Apparatus Lieutenant
- Firefighter Lieutenant
- Firefighter Captain
- Fire Inspector
- Senior Fire Inspector
- Fire Inspections Captain
- Fire Investigator
- Senior Fire Investigator
- Fire Investigations Captain
- Fire Educator
- Senior Fire Educator
- Firefighter Battalion Chief
- Firefighter District Commander
- Division Director, Sworn
- Deputy Director, Sworn
- Department Director, Sworn

Of the positions, the Department does not currently have any approved positions (sworn or non-sworn) at the Community Risk Reduction Lieutenant or Fire Investigations Captain ranks. Additionally, the newly announced Senior Firemedic position will be a sworn position.

While the list of sworn positions includes the majority of sworn personnel in the Department, the County lacks a sworn equivalency for the Section Manager level. As a result, personnel in these roles manage and are managed by sworn positions, and perform the duties of sworn personnel without the designation.

## Strategic Priorities

The Department operates as a strategic organization, regularly utilizing data to assess operations and drive decisions. While many Departmental actions are reactive by nature, Departmental leadership stresses the need to set strategic priorities and function in a proactive manner whenever possible. As such, the Department develops a strategic plan every five years to set out priority initiatives, ranging from additional staff positions and capital improvement requests to system changes and EMS focus areas. Each division sets strategic initiatives and identifies goals for levels of service, tracking each priority initiative through monthly data. Strategic initiatives are aligned with the County's priorities:

- Smart and Sustainable Government
- Safe and Healthy Community
- Mobility and Access
- Communication and Engagement
- Strong and Vibrant Local Economy
- Livability and Comfort

During interviews, staff indicated that decision makers utilize data whenever possible as justification. Anecdotal evidence often requires hard data as backup before a decision is made.

Maintaining the Department's accreditation has become a major priority for leadership. Some staff perceived leadership as being singularly focused on accreditation, with initiatives and suggestions not aligned with recommendations from the accreditation reports ignored in favor of those included within the reports. Some staff suggested the emphasis on data and accreditation removes some of the human element from Departmental decision-making and focus.

## Leadership and Management

Leadership, as previously discussed, focuses on data-driven decisions, strategic planning, and continuous improvement in an effort to manage the Department in a proactive manner. This push for proactivity trickles down through the command structure, encouraging forward-thinking and planning throughout the Department. Leadership is focused on succession planning to ensure quality of service continues as staff take leave, separate from the Department, or retire.

During our interviews, staff indicated leadership takes a very active role in operations and decision-making throughout the Department. Executive leadership participates in meetings at the Division and Section level and encourages all employees to approach executive leadership with ideas and suggestions. This involvement, however, results in perceptions of micromanagement and excessive levels of approval, with nearly all decisions ultimately made by the Fire Chief. Excessive levels of approval slow down processes and projects, with some projects taking months longer than necessary, according to staff, due to executive leadership requiring their involvement. The Department requires paper forms for most internal actions, and those forms require numerous signatures within the chain of command, delaying action on necessary decisions. Staff suggested a lack of trust stemming from Departmental and County leadership results in personnel not feeling empowered to make the decisions within their functional area. A perceived lack of trust in addition to the perception leadership only visit facilities other than Headquarters for required events or admonition results in lowered morale and risks increased turnover.

There exists a group of personnel within the Department who have rotated between many of the upper middle management roles in the Department. Leadership seemingly identifies those staff who prove themselves competent at learning new roles and increasingly assign these individuals additional responsibilities that don't always match their current position. A majority of individuals in management roles wear multiple hats, sometimes due to a lack of administrative support, a lack of additional middle management positions, and/or due to responsibilities staying with an employee rather than with a role.

## Technology

The following describe the Department's current technology:

### Project Tracking

Management Framework is the County's management platform for planning, performance, compliance, governance, and reporting on data, project progress, and business functions and processes. The Department uses Management Framework to track performance metrics and strategic initiatives.

### Financial Oversight

The Department utilizes SAP for most financial functions, including procurement, inventory management, budget monitoring and reporting, travel expenses reimbursement, accounts receivable (including EMS billing), and EMS refunds.

### Records Management

The Department uses a series of records management tools depending on the need. The County's system, FileNet, is used for various financial processes; FireRecords (247) is used for fire incident reporting; and ESO is used for reporting EMS responses.

### Employee Database

The Department previously used a Microsoft Access database to store employee data. The database "crashed" earlier this year and GCFES has been working with the ITS Department to transition the employee database into SAP, which is already used for tracking new hires, promotions, separations, and other HR actions.

### Staffing Solution

The Department utilizes a workforce management system, TeleStaff, to ensure all stations and apparatus are staffed appropriately through the system's automatic scheduling capability. The Business Services Division utilizes the staffing data in TeleStaff to conduct payroll processing and audits.

### Interaction Tracking

The Department utilizes Accela for tracking all fire safety inspections and community education records.

### Learning Management System ("LMS")

The Training Academy utilizes multiple LMS solutions for instruction and tracking training data. For example, the Fire/Rescue Recruit Training Unit uses Moodle as its training module while the Medical Training Unit uses Jones & Bartlett for instruction and Fisdap for data tracking.

### Dispatch

The Operations Division utilizes the County's computer-aided dispatch ("CAD") system, Tiburon MobileCOM, along with the County's other public safety agencies. The County has an ongoing project to replace the CAD, which might necessitate updates or changes to GCFES' other systems and equipment.

### Customer Service

Customer service for the Department is twofold: the Department provides necessary services for the residents of Gwinnett County and functional areas of the Department provide services for other areas of the Department.

Internal customer service is tracked through various opinion surveys and program appraisals. For example, as recruits and incumbent personnel complete courses at the Training Academy, they complete course surveys which can indicate how effective the instructor, facilities, course curriculum, and equipment were. The CFAI accreditation process requires annual reviews of each Departmental program during which time staff can participate in a discussion of the effectiveness of programs, including customer service provided by these programs.

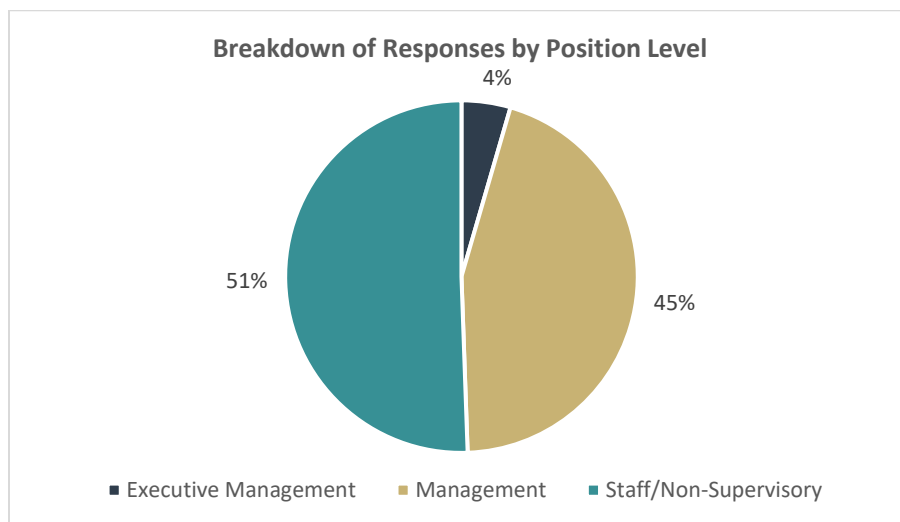
External customer service is set through an annual Standards of Cover report. The Department conducts a risk assessment and determines the needs of various portions of the community. Customer satisfaction is measured through a survey provided to members of the public. The survey is evaluated on an annual basis and asks a series of open-ended and Likert scale questions. For the four years' worth of data provided to Mauldin & Jenkins (2018-2021), the overall performance of the Department was rated "Very Satisfied" by 86% or more of survey respondents, as shown in the following graph.



### Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Eighty-nine responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of nine percent. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, just over half of the respondents were non-supervisory staff, with the other half primarily comprised of management below the executive level.

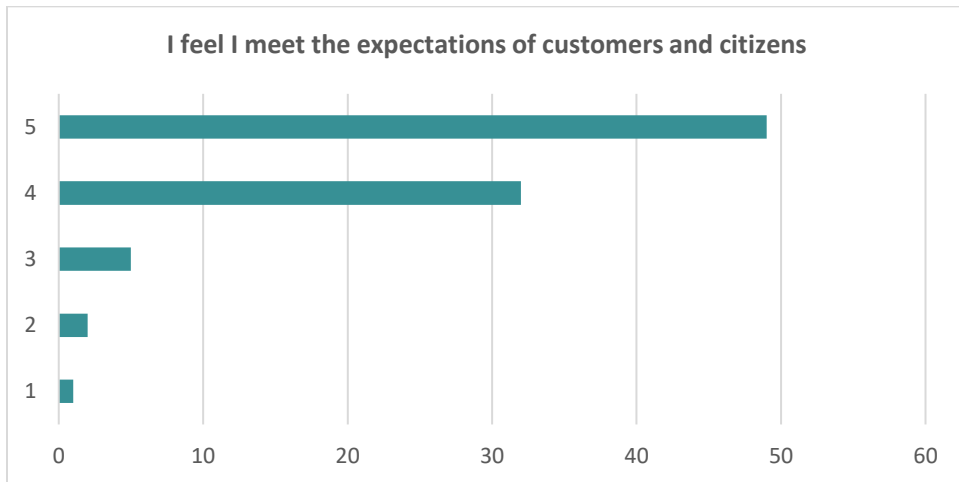
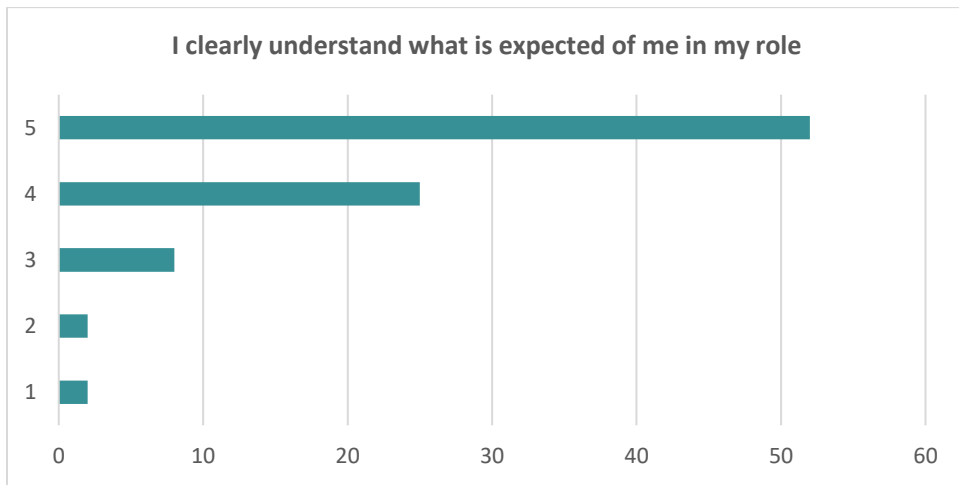
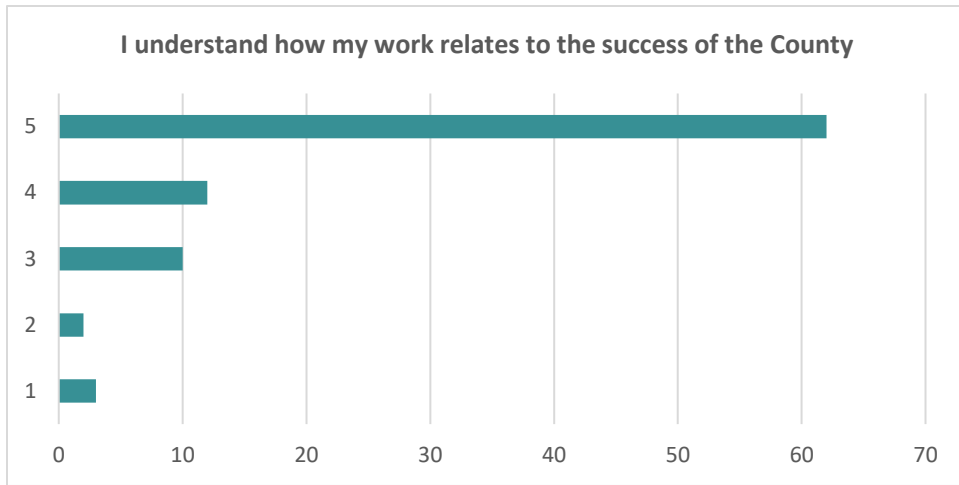
The following table shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.4
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.4
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.6
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.5
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.4
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	1.8
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.6
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.5
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.5
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.4
My direct supervisor encourages my professional development	4.1
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.6
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	2.9
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	2.8
I am proud to work for the County	3.9
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	3.6
I receive the necessary training to successfully respond to public safety situations and interact with residents	4.0
My department maintains a culture of cohesion and collaboration among members of each unit and among different units	3.3

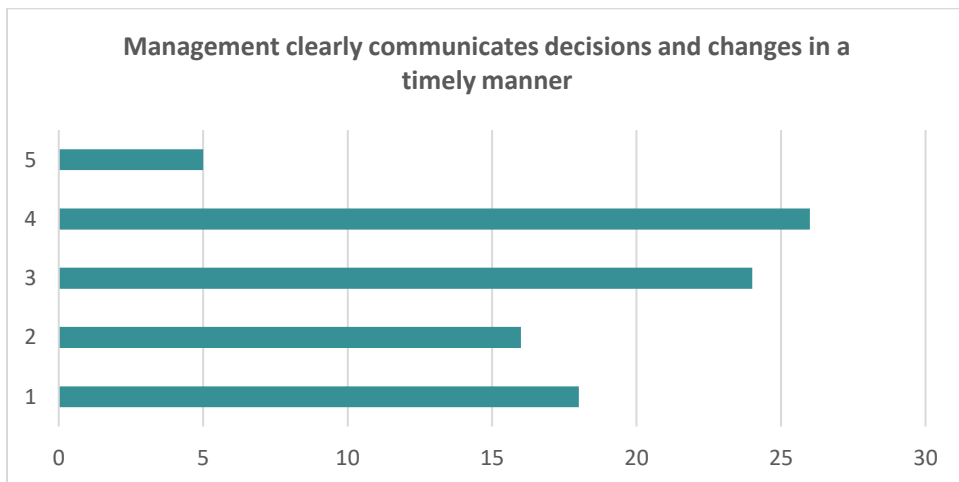
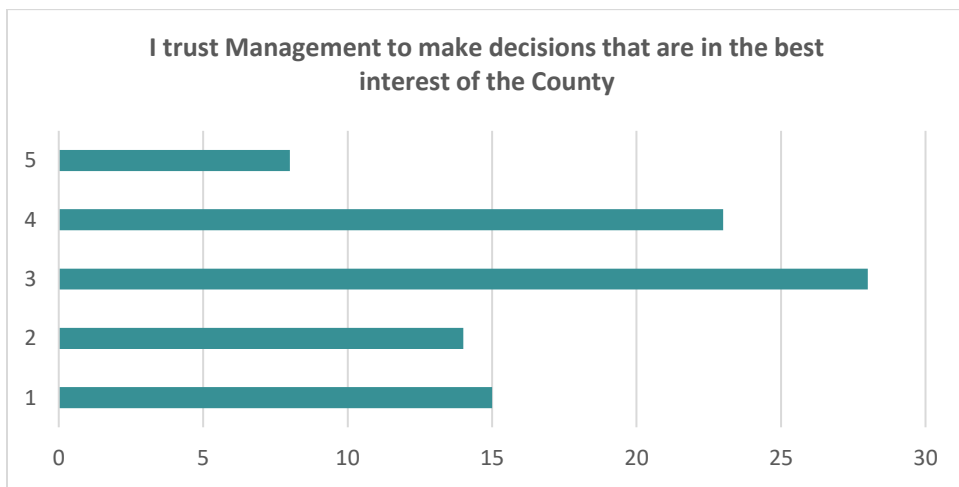
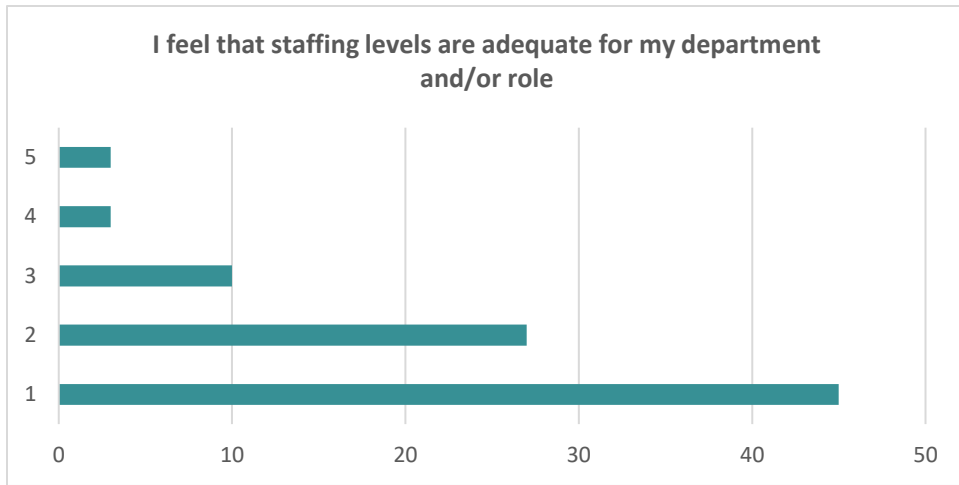
The average score for all the survey statements is 3.6. The lowest score is 1.8 and the highest score is 4.4.

The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified the Department's first responders as its greatest asset – staff on the frontlines provide high quality serve to the public.

- Respondents expressed appreciation for the amount of funding allocated to the Department, the Department's ability to budget those funds, and the Department's competitive payrates.
- Respondents suggested the Department maintains industry-leading equipment and resources which, along with the staff, are an incentive to stay with the Department.
- Respondents expressed concerns with lack of trust and effective communication from executive management. Micromanagement and hesitancy to delegate led to questions of transparency in decision making and perceptions of limited change in the Department. Respondents suggested executive management rarely interacts with frontline staff, limiting the ability for frontline staff to provide input and creating a perception that executive management is disconnected from operations in the field.
- Respondents identified the shift to focus field operations on EMS as a concern, especially to those frontline staff who joined the Department to be firefighters, rather than EMTs or Paramedics. Staff fear a loss of firefighting culture and history as the Department begins to be run more like a business.
- Respondents' greatest concern was the Department's overtime scheduled ("OTS") policy. Respondents emphasized the stress and loss of morale caused by OTS and suggested executive management don't fully understand the strain caused by the policy.

## 3.B.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Fire Chief’s Office

The Fire Chief’s Office (“Division”) is responsible for overall administration of the Department, strategic planning, Departmental accreditation, and public information.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Strategic Planning
- Accreditation
- Public Information

### Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Section, led by the Chief of Staff, leverages data provided by the divisions to recommend strategic goals and initiatives for the Department to the Fire Chief. The Section provides oversight of the resultant strategic projects, ranging from accreditation to the automation/digitization of the Department’s processes and paperwork. The Section helps ensure project teams throughout the Department have the right resources to achieve strategic goals and meet expectations.

The Section provides oversight on the utilization of Management Framework, the County’s project and analytics tracking tool. Each division inputs performance metrics into the tool, which the Section uses to build dashboards and provide leadership and outside agencies with updates on strategic goals and initiatives.

The Department develops a new Strategic Plan every five years. The Strategic Plan lays out major initiatives and needs for the Department over that five-year period, ranging from system changes and staffing level growth to capital improvements. Timelines for these initiatives are detailed in the Strategic Plan, with the Section monitoring project status in Management Framework and in Departmental meetings.

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the Section also helps develop the Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover report. The annual Standards of Cover report assesses the level of risk for various types of emergencies throughout the County and identifies the means by which the Department will proactively and reactively address risks, as well as the benchmarks the Department will use to measure performance against for deployment, incident response, and risk reduction operations.

### Accreditation

The Strategic Planning Section leads the efforts on maintaining the Department’s accreditation with the Center for Fire Accreditation International (“CFAI”), as well as supports the Paramedic College and Fire Investigations Section with their respective accreditations.

The accreditation process occurs on a five-year cycle, starting with a site visit and peer assessment by a CFAI team of industry experts. During the next four years, the Section submits an Annual Compliance Report measuring performance against key performance indicators (“KPIs”) and self-assessing each of the Department’s programs. KPIs and other data analytics are used by the Section as a means to determine whether the Department is meeting the expectations of the community and Departmental personnel. Performance gaps identified in the data are used to guide the Strategic Plan and the Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover report.

Self-assessment of programs occurs annually with staff across the Department invited to participate in a forum to answer key questions, identify successes and gaps in performance, and recommend strategic goals and initiatives for each program over the next year(s).

### Public Information

The Public Information Section oversees key components of external and internal communications for the Department. During an emergency or incident response, a Public Information Officer (“PIO”) serves as the spokesperson for the Department, providing the public with general or specific real-time updates as appropriate. The PIO responds to media inquiries, looping in other divisions or County departments as necessary, and produces formal news releases in conjunction with the Communications Department. The Section also generates social media content for the Department, providing that content to the Communications Department for review and publication. Non-incident-related external communications, such as recruiting drives or event announcements, are coordinated by the Employee Services and Training Division.

Internal communications for the Department consist of a series of newsletters circulated either by the Fire Chief’s Office or a specific division. The PIO assists teams with the development of their internal messaging. The PIO also acts as gatekeeper for internal images, storing digital images of Department activities and providing access for both internal and external communications as appropriate.

### Communications

The current Departmental administration emphasized in interviews the importance of regular and transparent communication with staff. The Fire Chief’s Office provides frequent opportunities for Department staff to receive information and participate in providing feedback. The Division sends numerous email newsletters and informal email updates to staff, while also hosting virtual meetings.

Meetings hosted by the Fire Chief’s Office range from self-assessment forums to the monthly Fire Stat Meetings during which each division presents their performance measures and project updates from the last month. The Fire Chief’s Office also participates in virtual meetings hosted by other divisions, such as employee forums and the weekly Operations Division meetings. Administrative support staff record and distribute notes from most formal Departmental meetings, especially executive-level meetings, to all Departmental staff as a means of transparency and information sharing.

Due to the rotating schedule for incident response personnel, virtual meetings are often conducted three times for each topic in order to reach all three active-duty shifts. The risk with hosting three virtual meetings or forums on the same topic, though, is that the information might be presented slightly differently each time, resulting in different groupings of staff interpreting the messaging differently. The Fire Chief recorded several videos and virtual meetings explaining decisions for better transparency and equivalency in messaging to staff, however, the County's Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department requested GCFES not produce further videos or continue to record virtual meetings. As indicated in Department interviews, the ITS Department raised concerns the recordings might violate County security policies.

Interviews with staff in other divisions indicated general appreciation for the communication efforts made by the Fire Chief's Office, however staff suggested the amount of communication is overwhelming. Staff throughout the Department noted that much of the information they receive is not relevant to their job and can distract from more relevant information.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Fire Chief's Office is currently spearheading a Department-wide effort to institutionalize more succession planning. The Division is actively identifying positions and internal candidates that can learn from more senior positions and personnel in order to avoid breaks in command structures or decision-making. Division staff utilize Management Framework as a platform for building and documenting processes and procedures to help new staff better understand necessary actions and get more staff involved in processes.

The Division is also looking toward future growth in the County in order to determine how best to meet changing demands. Leadership recognizes building new stations might not always be the best solution, so utilizes data to determine how best to redistrict stations and propose new methods of meeting the County's needs. For example, as the Department struggles to retain personnel with Paramedic licensure even as emergency medical calls increase at a faster rate than other call types, leadership is exploring creating peak time schedules for medical units as an alternative to 24-hour shifts. Other changes in service delivery have included the introduction of the Bike Medic Team and the substitution of smaller rescue vehicles for fire engines on medical emergency calls.

## Systems and Applications

### Project Tracking

Management Framework is the County's management platform for planning, performance, compliance, governance, and reporting on data, project progress, and business functions and processes. The Fire Chief's Office uses Management Framework to track Departmental performance metrics and strategic projects.

### Data Visualization

While the Department tracks numerous sets of performance data, the Department has limited data visualization capabilities.

Staff indicated in interviews the upcoming new computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) would contain data visualization capability. However, with the CAD implementation project (which is being led by other County departments) taking multiple years with an uncertain timeline for completion, GCFES is not certain of when this system might be available, nor are they knowledgeable on the specifics of the data visualization capability.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Fire Chief’s Office primarily utilizes and analyzes performance data from the other divisions. The Division uses performance data for continuous improvement and determinations of program effectiveness, especially in regard to Departmental accreditation. The Division uses the Center for Public Safety Excellence (“CPSE”) as a guide to identifying appropriate Departmental measures and making data-driven decisions. While the Division collects output data for each program, the Division is not consistently collecting outcome data for each program. For example, the number of hotels inspected by the Community Risk Reduction Division becomes more impactful when compared to the total number of hotels required for inspection – the percentage inspected represents outcome data and can be better utilized for decision-making (e.g., a decrease in percentage inspected might indicate a need for additional Fire Inspectors).

One important highlight of the Division’s utilization of data is the annual Community Risk Assessment conducted in each fire station’s district. The Division utilizes GIS data, population and business data, demographic data, health insurance data, and historical data to determine the appropriate level of service at that station.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The County’s ITS Department requested GCFES stop recording meetings and internal explanatory videos from Departmental leadership. The ITS Department raised concerns these recordings may violate County security policies.

**Recommendation 1:** Departmental leadership should work with the ITS Department to develop means of effective communication, including videos, that comply with County security policies.

**Observation 2:** During interviews, staff throughout the Department suggested the amount of communication is overwhelming, noting that much of the information they receive is not relevant to their job and can distract from more relevant information, which can result in important messaging being overlooked.

**Recommendation 2:** The Fire Chief’s Office should consider means of more strategic communication to ensure staff receive information relevant to their specific job functions and needs. Solutions might include fewer emails with more targeted information delivered to teams rather than Department-wide emails, or regular communiques down the chain of command with suggestions of what supervisors recommend their staff prioritize reading.

**Observation 3:** As the Department struggles to retain personnel with Paramedic licensure even as emergency medical calls increase at a faster rate than other call types, leadership is exploring creating peak time schedules for medical units as an alternative to 24-hour shifts.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should continue investigating changes to service delivery in order to meet changing demands and improve employee retention. If data collected over the next few years indicates improvements to service delivery and retention through peak time schedules for medical units, the Department should continue to implement alternative shift models to meet the County's needs.

## 3.B.2 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Business Services Division

The Business Services Division (“Division”) provides administrative support for the other divisions through oversight of the Departmental budget process; information technology (“IT”) support; and maintenance of equipment, apparatus, and supplies.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Financial Oversight
- EMS Billing
- Facility Maintenance
- Apparatus Management
- Resource Management
- Surplus

### Financial Oversight

The Finance Section provides financial oversight for the entire Department. During each budget planning cycle, the Section, along with the Division Director, reviews prior-year expenditures and justifications from each division for upcoming needs and requests. The Section determines what projects can be handled internally versus which ones requiring outsourcing, and separate budget requests into operating and capital decision packages. The Section provides the recommended decision package to the Fire Chief, along with background information for the business case presentation, and the Fire Chief makes the ultimate determination of what is included in the final Departmental request.

Internal requests for purchases, whether budgeted or not, are made via FD-29 forms, which are submitted by the requesting party to either the Finance Section for purchases of services or the Logistics Section for purchases of goods. Throughout the year, the Finance Section tracks all FD-29 forms against the budget line items and runs regular balance reports on each fund to ensure the Department stays on-budget, can appropriately forecast future budgetary needs, and appropriate budget adjustments are made.

Financial oversight also includes reviewing Departmental timesheets in order to accurately process payroll. Section staff run an overtime report every two weeks in order to regularly convey to leadership scheduled and unscheduled overtime expenses. Staff also run monthly training and travel reports in order to regularly convey those expenditures to leadership. Finally, the Section conducts regular payroll audits which are reported to leadership in the Operations Division to ensure on-duty staff are accurately reporting their regular shifts, overtime shifts, and leave.

Beyond budget and payroll, the Finance Section also manages the Department’s purchasing cards, accounts payable, procurement, and reimbursements.



## EMS Billing

The Department does not process EMS billing in-house, instead relying on Digitech Computer LLC (“Digitech”) to process all medical transport bills. Digitech receives a daily upload of pre-hospital transports from the Department’s EMS record management system, ESO. Digitech identifies patients’ insurance and bills insurance companies for the transports.

The Financial Section provides oversight of the EMS billing process and serves as the call center for all billing-related questions or payments. With the exception of certain write-offs, such as transport of the deceased or certain jail transports, the Department uses Digitech to bill for all emergency medical transports. Payments are collected either by Digitech or by the Department – if the latter occurs, Section staff will notify Digitech to avoid double payments or requests for collection.

When insurance providers or lawyers require incident reports, the Finance Section works to provide the required documentation while maintaining compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”). The Section does not release any medical records until appropriate HIPAA documentation has been filed. If patients indicate issues with the incident reports, the Division will work with patients and the Operations Division to make corrections where necessary and possible. (An example change to a report would be an adjustment in the description of a car involved in an accident – the first responder may have indicated a light grey sedan, while the insurance company requires a more specific description of the vehicle’s make and model.)

In the event a refund is necessary for EMS transport, the Finance Section validates all information with Digitech and processes the refund with the assistance of the County’s Financial Services Department.

## Facility Maintenance

The Fire Facilities Management Section oversees the maintenance needs of stations and other Departmental structures. In total, the Section is responsible for the maintenance of 31 stations and five other locations ranging from the Fire Headquarters and Training Academy to the Resource Management, Apparatus Management, and Facilities Management buildings. Maintenance projects overseen by the Section include both operational projects (such as minor fixes to equipment or furniture) and capital projects (including station renovations and replacements).

The Section manages all trades areas of maintenance for the stations (electrical, plumbing, flooring, roofing, landscaping, etc.), with the exception of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (“HVAC”) systems. The Department of Support Services (“DoSS”) handles maintenance for the stations’ HVAC systems.

Requests for maintenance come from the stations through either an online form or a phone call to the Section Manager. The Section tracks requests through a spreadsheet, which is made available to the entire Department so stations can track their requests’ live status.

Currently, the Section relies on contractors to perform much of the larger and more routine work due to limits in staffing numbers. Vendors are selected through a competitive bid process, with the award going to the lowest qualified bidder. While the Department does file vendor complaints to the Financial Services Department for underperforming vendors, the process of complaint review by committee and the rebid of contracts results in extended delays to project timelines. As such, the Department has few recourses when vendors underdeliver on their contractual obligations. For example, staff at various Departmental facilities were quick to point out the inaction by landscaping vendors, resulting in unkept government landscapes across the County. Staff additionally identified conditions at various stations which resulted in difficult living conditions – such as unstable structures, mold infestations, and incomplete kitchens – which were not addressed expeditiously by maintenance vendors. When active-duty staff are required to live at the stations during their respective 24-hour shifts, staff morale and retention is likely to decrease if stations are uninhabitable.

### Apparatus Management

The Apparatus Management Section oversees the maintenance and inventory of fire apparatus (fire engines, ladder trucks, medical units, special response units, etc.) and self-contained breathing apparatus (“SCBA”) used by the Department. The Apparatus Management Section also ensures all fire apparatus are fully stocked with necessary equipment and supplies. While DoSS conducts the actual maintenance of fire apparatus, GCFES is responsible for maintaining the maintenance schedule and alerting DoSS of issues. Members of the Operations Division conduct daily equipment and functionality checks of their assigned fire apparatus when starting their shift. During this checkoff process, the active-duty personnel are supposed to alert the Apparatus Management Section of any missing equipment or issues with the fire apparatus. However, the checkoffs are conducted through an entirely manual process, and incoming calls or other activities often result in personnel not remembering to report issues.

In addition to fire apparatus maintenance, the Section conducts annual testing on both fire apparatus and SCBA to ensure all Departmental resources meet industry standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (“NFPA”). The Section employs multiple sworn personnel to meet the NFPA testing requirements.

The Section also assists Divisional and Departmental leadership in identifying the specifications for new vehicles and equipment. The Section consults with the Operations Division to determine needs and makes recommendations to Departmental leadership on capital planning for new and replacement apparatus. Due to the high cost of fire apparatus, the Section has to plan how to budget for and initiate the procurement process for new apparatus several years in advance.

The Department currently struggles to maintain an adequate number of backup apparatus and apparatus available for training purposes. The Operations Division reevaluates daily where to staff personnel and available fire apparatus to accommodate for the current shortage of available backup apparatus. The Department has considered changes to the composition of the Department's fleet of vehicles in order to meet changing demands around the County and ensure all calls can be appropriately met. For example, Alternative Response Vehicles ("ARVs") have become a leading practice in the emergency services industry as a solution to cut down on wear and tear to larger apparatus, such as fire engines and ladder trucks. The Department responds to all EMS calls both with Advanced Life Support ("ALS") Medical Units and a fire engine or ladder truck. The additional personnel are necessary to ensure the best possible care, but the call may result in unnecessary wear and tear on the extra fire apparatus. ARVs replace the need for a fire engine or ladder truck during an EMS call, resulting in less wear and tear on those fire apparatus and potentially decreasing the frequency of maintenance. Departmental leadership indicated during interviews a desire to supplement the current fire apparatus with ARVs in the near future.

### Resource Management

The Resource Management Section manages the warehouse which stores goods, equipment, and uniforms for GCFES, the Department of Corrections, and the Police Department (the Police Department has a secondary warehouse as well). All FD-29 forms submitted by GCFES for goods are processed by the Resource Management Section, which then procures the requested good and manages any contracts.

In addition to managing common commodities in the warehouse, Warehouse Technicians also deliver inventory to the public safety departments' various locations across the County. As a result, Warehouse Technicians spend large portions of their workday on the road or conducting inventory checks on their vehicles.

### Surplus

The Logistics Section manages the surplus process for the Department. Any apparatus, piece of equipment, piece of furniture, or other item no longer in service for the Department is brought to the Apparatus Management or Resource Management facilities and submitted to the Section for surplus. The Section catalogs everything intended for the surplus list and submits to the Fire Chief for approval. Once approved, the Section coordinates with DoSS for the actual disposal of the surplussed items.

Currently, the surplus process is considered lower priority, with items and equipment on the surplus list often remaining in the Section's facilities for months or years taking up space due to staff's limited time available for processing surplus.

### Communications

Most communication in the Division comes from the Fire Chief's Office through emails and virtual meetings. Sections within the Division hold regular staff meetings to communicate the most relevant information through the ranks.

Other divisions submit maintenance requests for facilities and fire apparatus primarily through email or phone calls, though facility maintenance requests can now come in through online form submissions, as well.

## Strategic Initiatives

Following the example of the Fire Chief's Office, the Business Services Division is looking to improve succession planning to mitigate interruptions in service and encourage growth opportunities for staff. Part of that goal includes additional training opportunities, such as training Trades Technicians in additional trades for more robust knowledgebase.

The Division also wants to increase the Fire Facilities Management Section's involvement in the initial design of stations in the same manner the Apparatus Management Section participates in the identification of fire apparatus specifications. The Division wants to ensure architectural consultants understand the specific needs of the Department, utilizing the Division and active-duty personnel as subject matter experts.

## Systems and Applications

### Financial Oversight

The Division utilizes SAP for most financial functions, including procurement, inventory management, budget monitoring and reporting, travel expenses reimbursement, accounts receivable (including EMS billing), and EMS refunds.

### Records Management

The Division uses the County's records management system, FileNet, for various financial processes including EMS refunds, accounts payable, and travel expenses reimbursement.

### Staffing Solution

The Division uses the Department's staffing system, TeleStaff, for payroll processing and payroll audits.

### Work Order Tracking

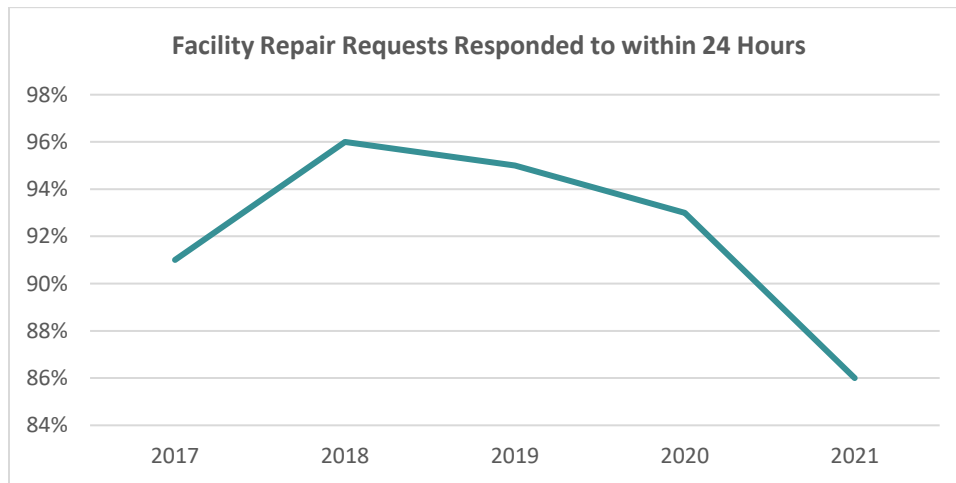
The Division does not currently use a system for work order submission and tracking. The Fire Facilities Management Section has introduced a request submission form and the Apparatus Management Section utilizes DoSS's fleet management system for external communication, but the Division should consider a work order tracking submission and tracking system for internal staff review.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks data related to two County priorities: (1) Smart and Sustainable Community and (2) Safe and Healthy Community. The data measures tracked cover each of the three Sections – Fire Facilities Management, Finance, and Logistics. Data recorded and reported on a monthly basis includes:

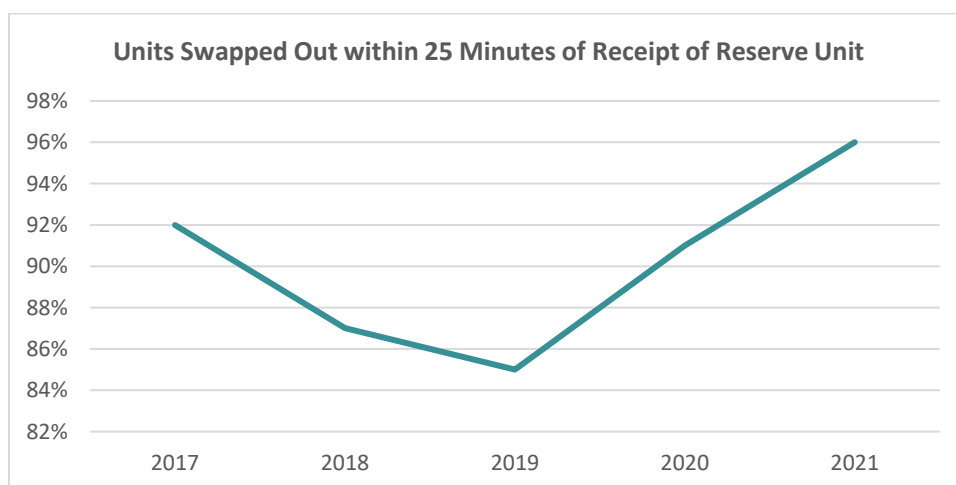
- Percentage of facility repair requests responded to within 24 hours
- Unscheduled overtime costs for each Division
- Percentage of EMS billing refunds issued within 30 days of notification
- Reliability of SCBA
- Percentage of apparatus swapped out within 25 minutes of receipt of a reserve unit

Each metric tracked relates to a priority initiative for the Division and the Division has adjusted the metrics tracked in response to changing priorities. The specific metrics include a mixture of output data (e.g., number of critical apparatus breakdowns) and true performance metrics (e.g., SCBA reliability), but many metrics lack necessary context. For example, the following graph indicates the Division’s average response time to facility repair requests has increased over the last five years, but without additional context, the Division cannot make a fully informed decision on how to address the trend.



The Division should identify leading indicators – input data that can help explain the causes behind the trend – to determine why the percentage of requests responded to within 24 hours has decreased. Using the above graph alone, the Division can’t determine if the cause is an increase in requests without an equivalent increase in personnel, a change in the type and magnitude of requests, or another cause. Having important outcome data, such as the metric tracked in the graph above, is an important first step to using data for decision-making and continuous improvement.

Benchmarks are another tool the Division can use with more consistency to help provide context. Of the 19 priority initiatives reported by the Division in 2021, only two were set against benchmarks, neither of which were true performance data. As an example, the following graph shows the percentage of units replaced within 25 minutes of receipt of a reserve unit.



While the increase between 2019 and 2021 suggests an improvement of performance, the 2019 dip might have still represented acceptable levels.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Contracts managed by the Division contain limited enforcement power to address underperforming vendors beyond outright cancelling the contract and working with the Financial Services Department to place the vendor on an ineligible bidders list. The process required to cancel contracts and place vendors on an ineligible bidders list often has a long timeline which results in extended periods of inaction by vendors charged with maintaining the livability and appearance of the Department's facilities.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should work with the Financial Services and Law Departments to develop contracts with stronger enforcement powers and should review the process by which vendors are selected to ensure the Department contracts with the best possible vendors.

**Observation 2:** Active-duty personnel conduct fire apparatus and equipment checks each morning, but with no electronic checkoff system, sometimes forget to inform the Business Services Division of issues between incident responses.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to identify an electronic checkoff system to automatically notify the Business Services Division of issues with fire apparatus and equipment when identified by active-duty personnel.

**Observation 3:** The Division has investigated industry leading practices to limit wear and tear on larger fire apparatus, including the use of ARVs during EMS calls. The Department included the recommendation to purchase and implement use of ARVs in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should continue to investigate innovative solutions to avoid unnecessary wear and tear on larger fire apparatus, such as ARVs. The County should consider approving ARVs in the Department's decision package and expanding the ARV program in the coming years.

**Observation 4:** The Division does not currently use a system for work order submission and tracking. The Fire Facilities Management Section has introduced a request submission form and the Apparatus Management Section utilizes DoSS's fleet management system for external communication, but internal work order tracking is limited.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should consider a work order tracking system, especially one that can also help track the Department's capital and non-capital assets. The Division should work with the County's Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to identify a solution. Several County departments already use potential solutions, such as Lucity, that could be repurposed for GCFES.

**Observation 5:** The Division tracks numerous metrics, including outcome data, which can be used to indicate the performance of priority initiatives. However, the data reported by the Division includes limited context as not all data points include beneficial leading and lagging indicators and/or benchmarks.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should track and report leading and lagging indicators for each priority initiative to help determine the causes and results of trends in performance metrics. Additionally, the Division should utilize benchmarks to help indicate whether priority initiatives are achieving set goals.

## 3.B.3 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Community Risk Reduction Division

The Community Risk Reduction (“CRR”) Division (“Division”) is responsible for fire inspections, investigations, and public education about fire safety and personal health in order to mitigate risk in the community. While the two sections of the CRR Division are most directly charged with risk reduction, the entire Department participates in the Division’s activities and responsibilities. For example, if active-duty personnel visit a home for a call, they might check or install smoke detectors for the homeowner.

The Division serves as the Fire Marshal function for Gwinnett County, fulfilling the requirements of OCGA Title 25.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Fire Safety Inspections
- Prevention Education
- Fire Investigations

### Fire Safety Inspections

The Prevention and Enforcement Section conducts two types of fire safety inspections in buildings within Gwinnett County. The three inspection teams conduct State-mandated compliance inspections of buildings identified in OCGA Title 25, such as apartment buildings with at least three stories, hotels, buildings of assembly (such as churches), public and private schools, mercantile establishments, and special occupancy facilities (such as nursing homes). These inspections must be completed on an annual basis and ensure the structures comply with State, County, and local fire safety statutes. Each compliance inspection results in a report, and property owners not in compliance may receive a notice of non-compliance. For minor issues, property owners are generally given 30 days to address the issue. For major issues or repeated violation, the Section will follow up within 48 hours and may issue a citation if the property owner does not take necessary steps to address the violation. Compliance inspections are scheduled on an annual basis, maintained in a master spreadsheet of occupancies and businesses; each Fire Inspector conducts about 20 thousand compliance inspections each year.

The Fire Inspectors who report directly to the Section Manager conduct permit inspections of those structures applying for a Certificate of Occupancy (“CO”). Developers or property owners request all required permit inspections, including fire safety inspections, through the Planning and Development (“P&D”) Department. P&D Department staff enter the inspections into the County’s community development software, Accela, which notifies designated GCFES personnel of pending inspections. The Section tries to conduct all requested permit inspections within one business day in order to best serve the community. Passed inspections allow developers or property owners to continue the application process for their CO. Failed inspections, however, often result in a stop work order until the violation can be addressed. Applicants must resubmit their request for fire safety permit inspections – the Section does not automatically reschedule permit inspections as it does with compliance inspections.

## Prevention Education

The Community Education Section functions as the speakers' bureau for the Department, providing safety education to members of the public on how to prevent fires and identify potential injuries. The Section shares safety messages based upon first responders' accounts of their experiences. Education topics are determined by reviews of incident reports submitted by the Operations Division and the Fire Investigations Section – the Community Education Section seeks to address trends in the community and mitigate common risks.

While the Section has developed programs for every age group, the Section currently focuses primarily on school-aged children and senior citizens. By addressing residents in schools, through civic groups, at homeowner association meetings, through public displays at malls, and in senior citizen facilities, the Section is able to target messaging to specific sectors of the community. Many of the Section's programs collaborate with the Department of Community Services to ensure residents receive a full menu of wrap-around services.

One key program the Section encourages resident participation in is the Home Safety Survey Program. When residents sign up to participate, the Section arranges to visit that resident's home and conduct a review of their home for safety concerns. The survey may identify trip hazards, fire safety hazards, and always includes tests of the home's smoke alarms. While residents have been able to pick up smoke alarms at fire stations for more than a decade, Department staff now ensure the installation of smoke detectors is always a service offered by personnel.

Businesses in Gwinnett County have the opportunity to request fire warden training, during which the Section's Fire Educators help the business develop an evacuation plan and train employees how to best exit a burning building safely. Fire warden training also includes general fire safety instruction to ensure County businesses mitigate their fire risks. Additional training available to businesses – and residents – include basic first aid, non-certification cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR"), and fire extinguisher training.

The Department's Citizen Fire Academy program allows residents to experience first responder training, increasing awareness of the Department's services and operations within the community. Participants take classes at the Training Academy and conduct the same drills recruits conduct. The new Hispanic Citizen Academy focuses on the County's Spanish-speaking population, and courses have been offered in various languages, such as Korean, when multilingual instructors have been available.

In addition to Gwinnett-specific programs, the Section also partners with the State on various educational programs. Through a special agreement with the State Fire Marshal's Office, the State's Mobile Safety House resides permanently in Gwinnett County. The Section drives this educational tool to various events and programs in order to show residents specific safety and hazard displays.

## Fire Investigations

The Fire Investigations Section functions as a law enforcement agency within the Fire and Emergency Services Department. The Section is accredited by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police ("GACP") – the only fire investigations unit in the state accredited by GACP.



The Section investigates every fire event in a Gwinnett County residential or commercial structure to determine cause and origin of the fire. When the origin of a fire is determined to be incendiary (*i.e.*, arson), the Section opens a criminal investigation and conducts investigations through any arrests and prosecution by the District Attorney's Office.

In addition to fires, the Section also investigates potential explosive devices, performs background checks for Department applicants, and conducts internal affairs investigations for those personnel who have had disciplinary or legal actions taken. The investigations undertaken by the Section – ranging from fires to internal affairs – are used to help the rest of the Division conduct risk analysis and identify areas of concern and focus for both fire safety inspections and public education.

Currently all Fire Investigators in the Department are certified as peace officers through the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council ("P.O.S.T.") and arson investigators through the Georgia Public Safety Training Center ("GPSTC"). Senior Fire Investigators often receive further certifications through the International Association of Arson Investigators ("IAAI"), a leading professional association in the arson investigation industry. These certifications allow all members of the Section to conduct full investigations whether criminal or non-criminal as mandated law enforcement officers. Staff identified in interviews that Departmental leadership is assessing the potential for changing the structure of the Section to remove the law enforcement mandate for the Fire Investigator paygrade and instituting peace officer certification as a requirement for achieving the Senior Fire Investigator paygrade. While this would result in Senior Fire Investigators having more time to focus solely on criminal investigations, the Section would need to have two staff on-call at all times. In this scenario, non-mandated staff would be the initial on-call personnel for the conduct of an investigation into a fire scene's origin; however, as non-mandated staff are not allowed to investigate fires determined to be criminal in origin, they would have to cease work on any scene they determine to be criminal and request the mandated staff member on call to take over the scene.

## Communications

The Community Risk Reduction Division participates in Department-wide virtual meetings, such as the monthly Fire Stats or Operations Division meeting, as well as conducts regular meetings within each section.

Requests from the public for services and participation in programs are primarily submitted via email. Permit inspections are scheduled through the P&D Department's online portal, but a review of the GCFES website indicates all other requests are directed either to an email address, a phone number, or a physical mailing address. The Division does not use online forms to gather information about program participation.

## Strategic Initiatives

As a whole, the Division focuses on the "Prevention 365" initiative in Management Framework, the County's project tracking tool. Prevention 365 develops an annual plan for addressing trends in fire and personal health safety so the Division and the rest of the Department can work to mitigate risks as necessary on either an ongoing or seasonal basis.

The Prevention and Enforcement Section encourages Fire Inspectors to conduct compliance inspections in more buildings than just those required by OCGA Title 25. For example, the Section is only required to inspect apartment complexes with three or more stories, however, the Section wants to more consistently inspect older two-story complexes throughout the County that were constructed prior to current fire safety standards.

The Prevention and Enforcement Section, while performing fire safety inspections, also strives for compliance instead of citation. The Section meets with property owners to review the inspection packets and provide recommendations for achieving compliance. The Section recognizes national supply chain and staffing trends, and is willing to be flexible with scheduling follow-up inspections as long as the property owner makes progress toward addressing violations.

The Community Education Section seeks to act more proactively in order to address trends. As the Section fully staffs up, each Fire Educator will become an expert in a single battalion's needs and expand beyond primarily fire safety to include medical and general emergency training. The Section is also looking at programs that expand the education opportunities for college and career-age residents, shifting the Section's focus from primarily addressing school-age children and senior citizens.

## Systems and Applications

### Interaction Tracking

The Division utilizes Accela, the P&D Department's community development system, for tracking of all fire safety inspections and community education records. The P&D Department creates all permit inspection requests in the system as part of their permit workflow, however, the Fire Inspectors manually create the compliance inspections within the system. Because compliance inspections are conducted annually, more automation within the system would help the Prevention and Enforcement Section reduce time spent performing manual data entry and enable more time for conducting inspections.

### Form Creation

The Division utilizes ESRI's ArcGIS Survey123 tool to track certain CRR efforts, such as smoke alarm installation and testing. The tool has also been used to develop risk management forms for the Division. ArcGIS Survey123 replaced the Division's use of Microsoft InfoPath.

### Fire Investigations Tools

The Fire Investigations Section utilizes a series of technologies and systems to conduct fire origin determinations and criminal investigations, including:

- **Matterport** – The Division uses Matterport to create virtual incident scenes through 3D imaging
- **Body Worn Cameras** – The Division will use body cameras during performance of law enforcement duties
- **Case Management** – The Division uses various case management tools, such as the Bomb Arson Tracking System (“BATS”)
- **License Plate Readers (“LPRs”)** – The Division uses LPR cameras during the conduct of criminal investigations

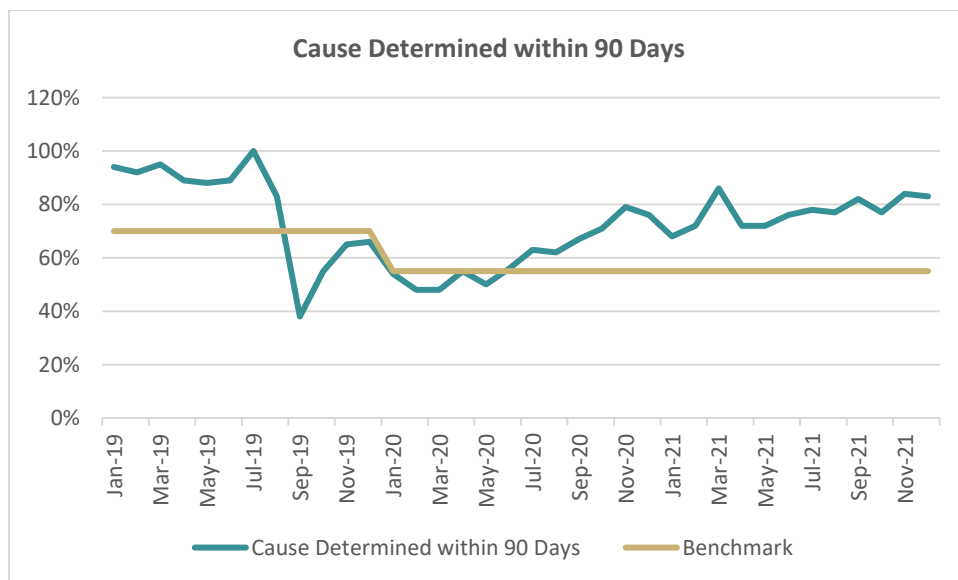
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks data related to four County priorities: (1) Safe and Healthy Community, (2) Smart and Sustainable Government, (3) Communication and Engagement, and (4) Livability and Comfort. Data recorded and reported on a monthly basis includes:

- Percentage of fire investigations where the fire cause was determined to be accident, incendiary, or natural within 90 days
- Number of initial inspections of each mandated type of structure
- Number of Quality Assurance Reviews (“QARs”) or peer reviews for each section
- Percentage of background books reviewed and returned within 24 business hours
- Number of volunteers and volunteer hours
- Number of home surveys conducted
- Number of citizens taught CPR

The majority of metrics reported by the Division are output data – not fully utilizable for measuring performance of priority initiatives without additional context. For example, the Prevention and Enforcement Section tracks the number of initial inspections conducted for each type of structure requiring a fire safety inspection. Without benchmarks or some type of indicator as to the total number of structures requiring a fire safety inspection, the Division is unable to use the data as a true performance indicator.

The following graph shows the percentage of fire investigations where the fire cause was determined within 90 days. This is an example of output data collected by the Division which sets both a goal (determining the cause within 90 days) and a benchmark. Furthermore, the benchmark has been adjusted based upon trends, and the metric overall was adjusted for changes in the priority initiative.



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Department is considering removing the law enforcement mandate for all Fire Investigators, instead requiring the mandate only at the Senior Fire Investigator paygrade. The change in certification would allow mandated personnel to focus solely on criminal investigations, but would require two on-call staff at all times instead of the one currently required.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the current law enforcement mandate requirement versus a requirement solely at the Senior Fire Investigator paygrade to determine whether the change would appropriately address the County's needs without significantly raising expenses.

**Observation 2:** The Division primarily solicits interest in community programs through email, phone, or physical mail, rather than using online forms, potentially resulting in extended back-and-forth with interested parties and increased registration time due to information gathering.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider developing online forms for use by residents to register for participation in community programs. The Division should work with the Information Technology Services ("ITS") Department to determine the best solution for the forms, such as the Division's ArcGIS Survey123 tool.

**Observation 3:** The Division uses Accela to track fire safety inspections conducted throughout the County. While permit inspections are automatically generated through the P&D Department's workflow, the Prevention and Enforcement Section manually creates each recurring compliance inspection on an annual basis.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should work with the ITS and P&D Departments to determine if the Prevention and Enforcement Section can leverage Accela to autogenerate annually recurring compliance inspections.

**Observation 4:** While the Division collects numerous metrics related to its priority initiatives, the majority of those metrics are not true performance indicators with enough context to indicate progress toward achieving the Division's goals.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should review its priority initiatives and ensure each one is measured through outcome data with adequate context to indicate whether progress is being made toward achieving goals.

## 3.B.4 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Employee Support and Training Division

The Employee Support and Training (“ES&T”) Division (“Division”) is responsible for providing wrap-around services for employee safety, well-being, HR support, and education. The Division additionally works with the Communications Department to develop all marketing and non-emergency communications materials for GCFES.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Departmental Health and Safety
- Recruitment and Retention
- Employee Training
- Certification and Promotional Exams
- Management of the Training Academy

### Departmental Health and Safety

The Department’s Risk Management-Marketing Section oversees health and safety for the Department, regularly interacting with field personnel to ensure leading practices are followed. The Safety Officers focus on four primary pillars:

- **Safety** – The safety pillar works to ensure that the Department has industry-leading equipment and training to help ensure workplace safety. The Section works to build a culture of safety conscientiousness.
- **Infection Control** – The infection control pillar trains Medical Supervisor (“MS”) Officers and other active-duty personnel to follow specific procedures to help ensure first responders minimize exposure to contagions.
- **Risk** – The risk pillar focuses on mitigating on-the-job injuries (“OJIs”), auto accidents, and equipment loss.
- **Wellness** – The wellness pillar helps personnel stay healthy through physical fitness, regular health screenings, and equipment and facility maintenance.

The Safety Officers provide regular training on the four pillars and oversee programs which encourage personnel to take ownership of their personal wellbeing. The Section observes trends in OJIs, auto accidents, and loss in order to target training and programs to the Department’s needs.

The Health and Safety Committee is one such program organized by the Section. The Committee, which is comprised of a diverse selection of staff spanning all divisions and ranks, meets once a month to review OJIs, auto accidents, and loss, encouraging feedback from across the Department as to suggestions for additional training and awareness. The Committee does not have punitive authority, which assists in encouraging honest feedback from personnel.

A second program, the Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”) Team, utilizes several dozen personnel spread throughout the Department to help staff identify when incident response has led to increased stress and mental health concerns. The CISM Team does not conduct evaluations but instead makes collegial recommendations to seek professional consultations when necessary.

The Section is also responsible for managing transitional duty, Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) time off, emergency medical leave, and workers’ compensation.

### Recruitment and Retention

The Employment-HR Support Section serves as the Department’s primary liaison with the County’s HR Department. The Section is involved in all HR-related functions including recruiting, hiring, promotions, demotions, separations and retirements, and military leave, with a special focus on recruitment and retention.

Recruitment is currently conducted as a joint effort with the Gwinnett County Police Department through public safety hiring events, though GCFES intends to host emergency services-specific events in the future. The Section works with the Department’s Public Information Officers and the Communications Department to develop social media posts and reach the local community with recruitment information.

The Section has organized a team of approximately 30 personnel throughout the Department to serve as the Interview and Recruitment Team. The Section continues to grow and diversify the team, encouraging first responders to participate in recruitment events when possible.

The Department acknowledges its struggle with retention and has tasked the Section with reviewing trends in separations and promotions to help develop strategies to improve retention. The Section emphasizes the County’s benefits (such as paid holidays, market adjustments to salary, and education incentives) and recommends new opportunities, such as the Senior Firemedic position.

### Employee Training

The Training Academy provides fire suppression, rescue, and EMS education to new recruits and incumbent personnel. The Training Academy includes the following structures and resources:

- Classrooms equipped for virtual lectures
- EMS training labs for hands-on learning
- A standalone apparatus training facility
- A covered pavilion designed to provide shade and cooling during events and training
- A training tower
- A burn building to simulate live fires
- A concrete pad and driving course equipped for fire apparatus

Each recruit class (or the set of new recruits being trained as a unit) enters the Training Academy for approximately six months of training, during which time they participate in classroom instruction, drills, and hands-on learning. Recruits receive necessary training to meet the National Professional Qualifications (“NPQ”) Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazardous Materials (“HazMat”) Awareness, and HazMat Operations certifications set by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (“GFSTC”). GFSTC certifications are based on national industry standards determined by the ProBoard and National Fire Protection Association (“NFPA”). Courses use curriculum set by the International Fire Service Training Association (“IFSTA”), a leading developer of emergency responder training material.

In addition to fire suppression and rescue training, all recruits receive EMS training to either the Basic Life Support (“BLS”) or Advanced Life Support (“ALS”) level. BLS training results in certification of staff as Emergency Medical Technicians (“EMTs”) by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (“NREMT”). ALS training results in licensure of staff as Paramedics by NREMT. The Department has switched between training recruits to the EMT and the Paramedic level several times depending on the Department’s needs.

All recruit training is conducted in Gwinnett County by full-time or part-time adjunct employees. Prior to the establishment of the Training Academy, recruits were sent to another jurisdiction (such as DeKalb County) or to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (“GPSTC”) in Forsyth for training.

Recruits making a lateral move from another emergency rescue department with either firefighter or Paramedic certification participate in an abridged training program to prepare them for active duty in Gwinnett County.

Incumbent training focuses on meeting State and national requirements for annual training. The State of Georgia requires a minimum of 24 hours of individual fire rescue training each year and 40 hours of EMS training every two years. The Insurance Services Office (“ISO”) additionally requires up to 240 hours of training each year depending on the firefighter certification level in order for the Department to maintain its community protection rating. Most incumbent training is conducted at the stations, though crews can utilize the resources at the Training Academy when available.

Career training focuses on training personnel in specialized or advanced fields, such as NPQ Driver/Engineer certification or Paramedic licensure. Many of the courses provided as continuing education help prepare incumbent personnel for promotional exams, allowing staff to reach the Firefighter III or above paygrades.

The Paramedic College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (“CAAHEP”) upon the recommendation of the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (“CoAEMSP”). The Department attempts to train as many active-duty personnel to the Paramedic level as possible, oftentimes bringing interested incumbent personnel back into the Training Academy. Currently, the Paramedic Class splits their time between the Training Academy and the field in order to maintain as much Paramedic coverage in the field as possible.

## Certification and Promotional Exams

Training Academy staff help track employee qualifications and certifications, both for initial recruit certification purposes and for promotional purposes. As enough personnel become eligible for certification or promotional exams, the Training Academy schedules NPQ exams to meet GFSTC standards. The Training Academy determines the dates, confirms candidates meet minimum requirements, and identifies subject matter experts to conduct various portions of the exams.

## Management of the Training Academy

Training Academy leadership are responsible for management and maintenance of the Training Academy as an institution and as a facility. Leadership submits facility maintenance requests and oversee the periodic inspection, certification, and repair of structures, such as the burn building. The Captains in charge of each of the units (Fire/Rescue Recruit Training, Medical Training, and Career Development/Special Training) select and schedule classes, determine curricula, identify instructors, and ensure all educational resources are available or procured.

Accreditation of the Paramedic College requires an Education Advisory Committee, structured per CoAEMSP guidance. The Committee sets standards for the College, reviews graduation trends, approves short- and long-term planning initiatives, and provides general direction for the College. The Committee includes:

- The Dean of the Paramedic College (the Chief of Training)
- The Fire Chief
- The Department's Medical Director
- A key government official
- A local hospital/clinic representative
- A representative of a current Paramedic Class
- A recent graduate
- At least one member of the public

In addition to substantive management of the Training Academy, leadership also helps oversee the use of the space for special events and as the backup Emergency Operations Center ("EOC") should the primary EOC at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center cease to function. In order to ensure the backup EOC is consistently prepared, leadership conducts testing of the EOC's equipment on a monthly basis.

## Communications

Communications in the Training Academy are structured based upon chain of command. Recruits are expected to follow proper chain of command structures when communicating issues, concerns, or other matters, and leadership likewise conveys messages and conducts disciplinary actions down the chain. Manuals and policy documents provided to all recruits explicitly lay out communication channels and reporting structures to mitigate confusion.



The Division as a whole participates in Departmental virtual meetings and hosts occasional virtual Employee Forums for all members of the Department. In preparation for the Employee Forums, the Division identifies topics for which staff need to hear directly from senior staff and use the meetings as an opportunity to share that messaging, as well as provide staff through the Department with an opportunity to provide direct feedback. The Division recorded the first few Employee Forums to ensure everyone across the Department received the same messaging and information, however the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department identified these recordings as violating County security policies. As a result, the Division is considering holding Employee Forums in triplicate to ensure each active-duty shift has the opportunity to participate.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Training Academy regularly reviews curriculum, course offerings, instruction methods, and resources at the culmination of each Recruit Class and Paramedic Class to ensure training meets the Department’s needs. As part of ongoing infrastructure improvements, a Burn Module was approved as part of the 2021 capital budget. The Burn Module will serve as an additional resource for conducting live fire trainings, as well as contain a Liquid Propane (“LP”) Care Fire Simulator for additional training opportunities. The Division has recommended adding an LP Flammable Liquids Pit as part of the Burn Module for further opportunities, as the Department currently has to pick up State-owned equipment for LP Flammable Liquids Pit training from GFSTC in Forsyth. As of our fieldwork, staff were not aware of progress on construction of the Burn Module beyond identifying the location.

Over the last few years, the Division has made changes to further relations with the community and improve employee retention. Previously the Division targeted recruits across the country by training all new recruits as Paramedics as part of the Training Academy’s informally termed “Zero to Hero Program.” The Division, however, saw many recruits from outside Gwinnett County’s immediate vicinity resign immediately upon graduation from the Training Academy to return home. In response to this trend, the Division began focusing recruitment efforts on local high schools and technical colleges to draw in recruits with a connection to the community.

Though the Training Academy has discontinued the Zero to Hero Program, the Department still stresses training as many active-duty personnel to the Paramedic level as possible to ensure every fire apparatus can be certified at the ALS level.<sup>1</sup> While some GCFES staff meet ALS requirements through the legacy EMT-I certification, the majority of staff meeting the ALS requirement are at the Paramedic level. With no level between EMT and Paramedic offered by the Training Academy, personnel feel as though they are expected to make an “all-or-nothing” decision with their EMS training. Staff indicated in interviews a perception that Paramedic licensure is required for promotion beyond the Firefighter Driver/Engineer level, resulting in some active-duty personnel feeling they’ve hit a growth ceiling at the Department.

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<sup>1</sup> According to GA R&R 511-9-2, for a first responder vehicle to be certified at the ALS level, it must be staffed by at least one medic above the EMT level. Medical units (or ambulances) must be staffed by at least two medics, one of whom must be licensed above the EMT level. The three levels recognized above the EMT level are the discontinued Intermediate EMT (“EMT-I”) certification, the Advanced EMT (“AEMT”) certification, and the Paramedic certification.

## Systems and Applications

### Learning Management System (“LMS”)

The Training Academy utilizes multiple LMS solutions for instruction and tracking training data. For example, the Fire/Rescue Recruit Training Unit uses Moodle as its training module while the Medical Training Unit uses Jones & Bartlett for instruction and Fisdap for data tracking.

### Certification Tracking

The Training Academy tracks certifications and classes in Excel spreadsheets, with supporting data tracked in the LMS solutions.

### Employee Database

The Division previously used a Microsoft Access database to store employee data. The database “crashed” earlier this year and the Division has been working with the ITS Department to transition the employee database into SAP, which is already used for tracking new hires, promotions, separations, and other HR actions.

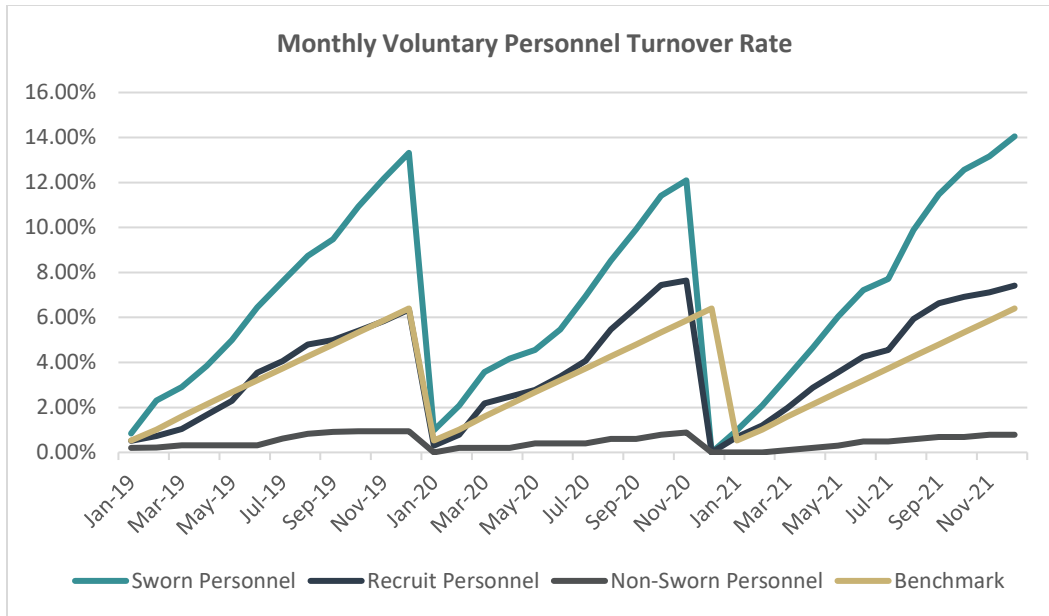
## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks data related to two County priorities: (1) Smart and Sustainable Community and (2) Safe and Healthy Community. Data recorded and reported on a monthly basis includes:

- Number of auto accidents, losses, and OJIs reported
- Voluntary turnover of sworn, recruit, and non-sworn personnel
- Total number of classes, class hours, and class certifications delivered by each unit

Reporting on the Paramedic College includes specific attrition, graduation, national registry pass rate, and other data specifically for the Paramedic training program.

The data reported by the Division is almost uniformly output data, rather than outcome data. The number of auto accidents, losses, and OJIs and the voluntary turnover of sworn personnel, non-sworn personnel, and new recruits undergoing training represent lagging indicators which can speak to the success of overall programs but require leading indicators to provide necessary context. For example, monthly data for voluntary personnel turnover indicates spikes near the end of each year, as seen in the following graph, but doesn’t indicate how retention initiatives are affecting the rate on a year-over-year basis.



The Division should review strategic initiatives and priorities to ensure data collected appropriately indicates whether the Division is successfully meeting those priorities and making progress toward goals.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** A staff perception is that the Department’s focus is to place staff into the field as fast as possible, forcing the Training Academy to expedite training, hire and retain candidates without top qualifications, and rely on active-duty leadership to finish recruits’ training in the field.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should ensure recruits are trained to an appropriate level to limit the amount of on-the-job training necessary (understand there will always be some). Departmental leadership should seek ways to address and mitigate concerns of rushed training. Departmental leadership should also expeditiously and transparently address concerns regarding decisions contrary to Training Academy staff recommendations to hire and retain recruits.

**Observation 2:** As of our fieldwork, staff were not aware of progress on construction of the new Burn Module at the Training Academy beyond identifying the location.

**Recommendation 2:** Departmental leadership, along with project managers either in GCFES or the Department of Support Services, should regularly communicate status of the Burn Module construction project to staff at the Training Academy. If progress has not been made on the project, the Department should encourage action be taken.

**Observation 3:** The Department prioritizes certifying all fire apparatus at the ALS level, requiring at least one medic per apparatus above the EMT level. The Training Academy currently only trains personnel to EMT certification at the BLS level or Paramedic licensure at the ALS level, with no intermediary steps. With the Department facing retention issues for Paramedics, AEMT certification could potentially reduce costs, provide additional growth steps, meet ALS requirements, and reduce turnover of staff at the Paramedic level leaving for other opportunities.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of developing an AEMT training program to work in conjunction with the Paramedic College to help ensure ALS certification.

**Observation 4:** While the Division records and reports a number of data points regarding its activities, the metrics tracked by the Division are almost entirely input or output data rather than outcome data speaking to the Division's performance.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should review strategic initiatives and priorities to ensure data collected appropriately indicates whether the Division is successfully meeting those priorities and making progress toward goals.

**Observation 5:** The Division collects several metrics on the number of auto accidents, equipment/losses, and OJIs reported each month. As currently written, the metrics indicate only those events reported occur, not necessarily all events. With benchmarks set for each category, the wording could suggest personnel are discouraged from reporting events so that the Division can achieve reporting goals.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should revisit how metrics on the number of auto accidents, equipment/losses, and OJIs reported each month are phrased to ensure personnel don't feel pressured to not report events in order for the Division to achieve reporting goals.

## 3.B.5 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Operations Division

The Operations Division (“Division”) responds to incidents in Gwinnett County, providing fire suppression, emergency medical, HazMat, rescue, and other emergency and non-emergency mitigation services. The Operations Division also focuses on continuous improvement to appropriate standard operating guidelines for ensuring quality responses.

### Key Functions

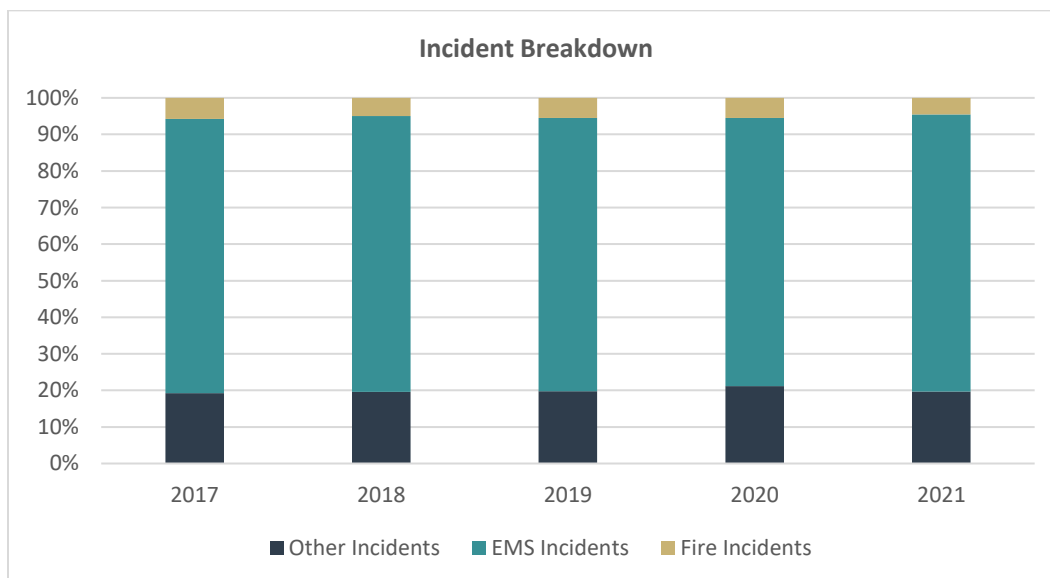
Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Incident Response
- Care for Equipment, Apparatus, and Facilities
- Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

### Incident Response

The active-duty personnel comprising the three Operations Division shifts respond daily to emergency and non-emergency calls placed through the Police Department’s E-911 dispatch. The Division responds to fire and EMS incidents, as well as natural disasters; auto accidents; and technical rescue, HazMat, mass casualty, and swift water incidents. Because non-law enforcement calls are assigned to GCFES, first responders often respond to non-emergency situations, such as assisting residents with basic in-home needs (fixing thermostats, replacing lightbulbs, etc.). The Department’s 31 stations are strategically located around the County so first responders can arrive on-scene anywhere in the County within set benchmark response times.

The Division has consistently updated service delivery methods to meet changes in the County’s needs. As the following graph demonstrates, EMS incidents comprise the vast majority of incidents responded to by the Division. (In the following graph, “other incidents” include alarms, assisting citizens, gas leaks, water in buildings, HazMat, cave-in/collapse, etc.)



In response to call volume data indicating a predominance of EMS incidents, the Division has investigated ways to improve service delivery for EMS calls while not decreasing the quality of fire incident response. The Division strives to keep all fire apparatus certified at the Advanced Life Support (“ALS”) level, requiring at least one Paramedic assigned to each vehicle. However, as the Department struggles with recruitment and retention, especially for Paramedics, the Division has needed to make changes to match staffing levels, such as decreasing the number of personnel required to operate apparatus to match industry minimums and instituting a policy of overtime scheduled (“OTS”).

Introduced approximately seven to eight years ago, OTS is a means of bolstering staffing levels by requiring all active-duty staff to cover a specific number of overtime shifts within a set period of time. Every six months, active-duty personnel select a number of days they would be willing to work overtime for the next six-month period, starting with the most senior members of the Division. As active-duty personnel take leave, call-out sick, or resign (leaving vacancies at stations), Battalion Chiefs and District Commanders activate personnel who signed up for the relevant day.

While some active-duty personnel appreciate overtime shifts due to the extra pay, many personnel across the Department expressed concerns during interviews. Active-duty personnel work 24-hour shifts, followed by 48 hours of rest. Overtime shifts require personnel to work 48 hours in a row (one 24-hour regular shift followed or preceded by an immediate 24-hour overtime shift) – and while some shifts may be quiet with few calls, other shifts may leave personnel with limited time between calls to rest physically and emotionally, which could result in increased on-the-job injuries and auto accidents. Overtime shifts can disrupt personal lives, potentially resulting in an unhealthy work-life balance, which could result in heightened turnover rates. In interviews, staff indicated the Department’s pay cycle discourages taking leave, as one day of leave negates pay for a day of overtime. Overtime pay is based on number of hours worked that cycle rather than whether a shift worked required a 48-hour (or more) shift rather than a scheduled 24-hour shift.

The Department’s goal is to maintain the level of service expected by the County’s leadership and residents. To meet that goal, the Division needs to achieve certain staffing levels during every shift. OTS helps the Division achieve required staffing levels and provide necessary services to the County. However, OTS also may lead to lower morale, higher turnover rates, and higher risk of injuries, accidents, and equipment loss.

### Care for Equipment, Apparatus, and Facilities

During a first responder’s 24-hour shift, they “live” at their assigned station. In addition to incident response, active-duty personnel are responsible for the upkeep of their equipment, apparatus, and facilities, with the support of the Business Services Division.

One of the first responsibilities upon starting a new shift is the checkoff of equipment and apparatus. Each first responder has a manual checklist they use to review their equipment and apparatus – any issues are noted and communicated to the relevant section within the Business Services Division.

Active-duty personnel are expected to maintain the cleanliness and appearance of their station. They are also responsible for keeping the station stocked with food (using funds budgeted by the Department) – as such, personnel will visit the grocery store between incidents, in addition to cooking, cleaning, performing yardwork as necessary, and relaxing. Historically, station personnel were responsible for mowing the lawn at their respective stations. Lawn care was supposed to be transitioned to contracted vendors, however the vendors have underperformed, leaving stations to mow their own lawns. Not all stations still have lawn care equipment, however, resulting in a lack of uniformity in station appearance across the County.

### Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

The Continuous Improvement Section helps hold the Division accountable, assuring quality responses to incidents and appropriate reporting on said responses. The Section reviews all fire and EMS incident reports, first to ensure personnel followed standing medical orders (“SMOs”) and Departmental procedures, and second to identify trends in incidents. The Section looks at demographic data as well as types of calls to identify parts of the community that require certain equipment, training, or special response units, and to help prepare first responders to connect residents with other County services (especially those offered by the Department of Community Services). Data is utilized by the Section for future planning and training recommendations in order to improve response quality.

In addition to reviewing reports for internal quality assurance purposes, the Section also reviews all reports before submission to State and national governing bodies to ensure reports are complete and accurate, and include all required elements.

The Section additionally reviews updates from State offices, such as the Department of Health or Fire Marshal’s Office, and pushes those updates out to the field. When incident trends necessitate changes in service delivery, the Section works with the Medical Directors, Medical Supervisor Officers, the Fire Chief, and other Departmental leadership to develop new guidelines and policies governing incident response.

### Communications

Shift change occurs at 7 a.m. every morning, with many personnel arriving early for additional time with their prior-shift counterpart. Each first responder is assigned to a specific apparatus for the shift, with regular rotation through each of the assignments. Each member of the outgoing shift shares status updates on apparatus, trends in calls, updates on open projects or calls, and any other information their incoming counterpart needs. Commanding officers conduct formal shift-change meetings and then hold shift meetings at 9 a.m. which last 30 to 60 minutes. During shift meetings, commanding officers confirm assignments, explain company training for the day, and provide other necessary updates.

District Commanders and Battalion Chiefs likewise communicate with their counterparts on other shifts through shift-change meetings. Because all three shifts occupy the same space and use the same equipment, communiques can be left in the District Commander office or a Battalion Chief office to share information across shifts.

The Division Director hosts a weekly Operations Meeting every Wednesday that other divisions are invited to attend. The same information is presented three weeks in a row to reach all three shifts. While attendance is not required, Divisional leadership encourages as many in the Operations Division attend as are available, and recently entire companies have begun logging into the virtual meeting, increasing attendance and participation.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Operations Division works closely with other divisions to identify changes to service delivery in order to meet the needs of the County. For example, the Division works with the Business Services Division to identify apparatus that could more efficiently address needs and avoid unnecessary wear and tear on larger apparatus. Additionally, trends in incident response and reporting are communicated to the Training Academy in order to ensure training appropriately addresses what first responders are experiencing in the field.

The Operations Division strives to meet a series of performance benchmarks in service delivery. Incident response times, for example, are expected to meet or exceed industry standards. In order to celebrate the first responders who save the lives of individuals experiencing a cardiac emergency and further the study of cardiac arrests, the Division provides data for each cardiac emergency to the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (“CARES”) program. Each year, the personnel involved in saving those lives are recognized by CARES – in 2020, 362 Department personnel were recognized for their efforts responding to cardiac emergencies.

## Systems and Applications

### Records Management

The Division uses two primary records management systems. FireRecords (247) is utilized for fire incidents, while ESO is utilized for EMS incidents. Both systems are able to directly submit reports to State and federal governing agencies, including the National Fire Incident Reporting System (“NFIRS”) and Georgia Emergency Medical Services Information System (“GEMSIS”).

### Dispatch

The Division utilizes the County’s computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) system, Tiburon MobileCOM, along with the County’s other public safety agencies. The County has an ongoing project to replace the CAD, which might necessitate updates or changes to GCFES’ other systems and equipment. For example, the new mobile data terminals (“MDTs”) installed on the Department’s medical units have had issues running the current CAD.

### Staffing Solution

The Division utilizes TeleStaff to ensure all stations and apparatus are staffed appropriately. The system allows Divisional leadership to schedule staff on both regular and OTS shifts, and ensure the right certifications are met for each position.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Operations Division utilizes numerous data points to indicate performance and make adjustments to service delivery. The Division tracks data related to two County priorities: (1) Safe and Healthy Community and (2) Smart and Sustainable Government.

Data recorded and reported on a monthly basis includes:

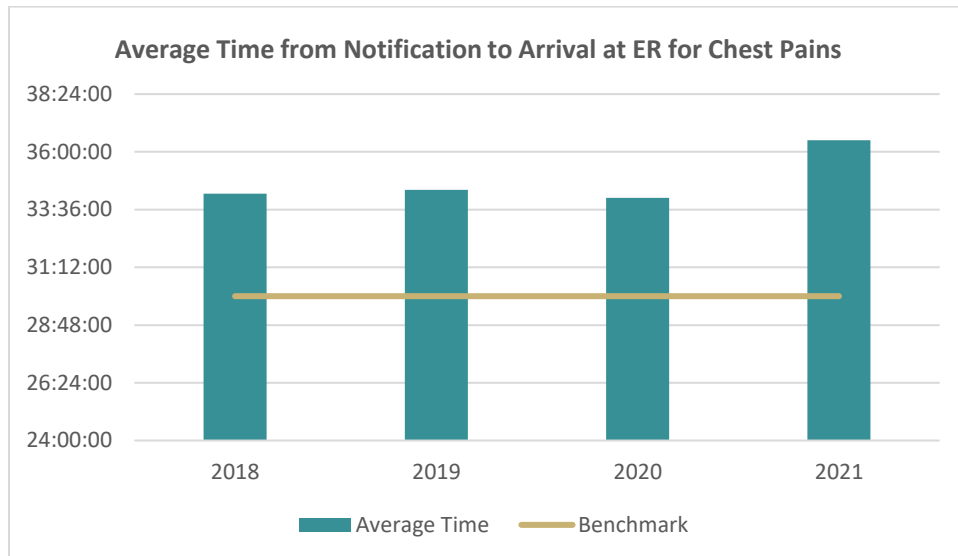
- Call volume, broken down by category
- Moderate fire and EMS alarm handling time, turnout time, travel time, and response time (all reported to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Percentage of ALS responses to the scene within eight minutes



- Number of over utilized medical units
- Average on-scene time for ST-elevation myocardial infarction (“STEMI”) patients with electrocardiogram (“EKG”)
- Percentage of major trauma off the scene in less than 10 minutes
- Accident incident rate per 10k miles

Many of the metrics reported follow guidance from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (“CPSE”), especially those used to build the Department’s accreditation performance statements. CPSE encourages the Department to develop a baseline statement representing actual performance for the last five years and a benchmark statement representing an improvement opportunity for the Department.

Other metrics reported focus on strategic initiatives specific to the Department and Division, such as those measuring ALS responses to cardiac events. For example, the following graph demonstrates the average time from notification to arrival at an emergency room for patients reporting chest pains.



As shown in the graph, the average time was fairly consistent between 2018 and 2020, with a spike occurring in 2021. The Division set a benchmark of 30 minutes as the goal for all chest pain transports, however, has not met that goal. As defined by CPSE, a benchmark is a goal for the agency and an opportunity for improvement.

Overall, the Division reports numerous performance metrics internally and to accreditation agencies. The Division also reports monthly and quarterly call volume by category (fire, EMS, other) on its website.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** For the last seven to eight years, the Division has utilized overtime scheduled (“OTS”) to ensure adequate coverage of all stations and apparatus throughout the County. OTS requires staff to work 48-hour shifts, potentially risking on-the-job injuries, auto accidents, lowered morale and heightened turnover, and equipment loss.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should continue to investigate alternative shift models, such as peak-demand shifts for Paramedics, as a means to mitigate the number of overtime shifts required. The Department should also consider conducting cost-benefit analyses of other staffing models, such as part-time staffing, additional peak-demand shifts, public service internships, continuous staffing, etc.

**Observation 2:** Staff perceive the Department's pay cycle as discouraging taking leave, as one day of leave negates pay for a day of overtime. Overtime pay is based on number of hours worked that cycle rather than whether a shift worked required a 48-hour (or more) shift rather than a scheduled 24-hour shift.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should work with the Human Resources Department to understand staff concerns regarding the perceived discouragement of taking leave as it relates to overtime pay. The Departments should consider means to mitigate and address concerns regarding the leave and overtime pay relationship, such as stipends or other pay incentives for staff who work more than 24 continuous hours.

**Observation 3:** The Division tracks large amounts of performance metrics which are used to guide service delivery and ensure strategic priorities are being met. Most strategic initiatives tracked have a benchmark against which success is measured, however not all benchmarks are achievable or are adjusted to meet current Divisional capabilities.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should consider incremental benchmarks for tracked performance metrics which help the Division set achievable goals that change over time as each successive benchmark is met.

## 3.B.6 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Summary Recommendations

#### Lack of Data Visualization Capabilities

**Observation 1:** The Department reviews and analyzes vast amounts of data, including all fire and emergency medical services (“EMS”) reports submitted by field staff. Teams responsible for analyzing and reporting on data, such as the Strategic Planning Section and Continuous Improvement Section, could benefit from implementing a data visualization tool like Microsoft PowerBI or Tableau. Implementation of data visualization software allows users to recognize relationships and patterns between the data across the organization to determine trends or identify opportunities for improvement. Teams responsible for data analysis could develop individualized dashboards for various Departmental or divisional leaders to review the most-relevant information.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider implementing a data visualization tool, such as Microsoft PowerBI or Tableau, to create data visualizations of existing reporting data. As user proficiency increases, GCFES should work with the ITS Department support staff to identify additional data sets for analysis.

#### Lack of Mobile Technology for Field Personnel

**Observation 2:** All ambulances have a basic cell phone for communication during radio failure. However, field personnel do not have smartphones. Without smartphones or similar mobile technologies, field personnel lack access to job-related mobile applications. Job-related mobile applications include applications that calculate medical dosage by weight according to County protocols and send heart attack data to a hospital while the patient is en route. The County already owns many of the mobile applications for field personnel. However, field personnel cannot access the applications without smartphones or tablets. In addition, smartphones would provide an additional mobile hotspot to the extracorporeal cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“ECPR”) computer on each medical unit. The ECPR computer takes time to transmit data and is not always brought on the scene.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should replace medical unit flip phones with smartphones to provide field personnel with potentially life-saving mobile applications. The Department should consider expanding the number of smart devices in emergency vehicles for field personnel, and implement the related policies, guidelines, and controls to ensure smartphones are part of the standard issued equipment, remain up to date and charged, and are reserved for field use.

### Delayed CAD System Implementation

**Observation 3:** Several of the Department’s systems are outdated and must be upgraded. While the current computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) system used by the County is being upgraded, the system implementation has been delayed. Because a new CAD system is being implemented, important updates and maintenance to the Department’s current systems have been put on hold resulting in outdated map information and other frustrations.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should work with the Police Department to determine the reality of the adjusted implementation date for the new CAD system. If continued delays are imminent, the Department should perform mission-critical updates on the legacy systems as necessary.

### Outdated Records Management System

**Observation 4:** The current Fire Records system is approaching the end of life and needs to be replaced. The software for the current system resides on individual computers and is not easily updated. Accessing reports from the current system is difficult, and end users need to contact either the ITS or the vendor’s IT support for information and reporting needs. The County has formed a team to evaluate the new system and is currently viewing vendor demos.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should conduct a needs assessment to define the requirements for the new records management system. The Department should develop the business case and conduct a procurement for a new records management system.

### Manual Processes

**Observation 5:** The Department relies heavily on physical paperwork for processing and documenting everything from new hires, promotions, and disciplinary actions to third-party contracts, on-scene information for public release, and purchase requests. During interviews, staff suggested some documents are printed out solely for the purpose of collecting wet signatures from leadership and then those documents are scanned into the system and shredded. Other documents are commonly stored onsite either in accordance with Departmental policy or because the Records Management Warehouse doesn’t have space available.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should investigate solutions to digitize more processes and necessary paperwork, potentially adopting secured digital signatures for all documents requiring approval and developing workflows for electronic routing and transfer of documents. Workflows would allow for transparency about assigned tasks and owners, approval status, and remaining steps.

## 3.B.7 Department of Fire and Emergency Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1A:** While Section Manager positions are often filled by sworn personnel and both report to and manage sworn positions, the Department does not have a sworn equivalency to the County’s Section Manager paygrade as it does for Division Directors, Deputy Directors, and Department Directors.

**Observation 1B:** During our fieldwork we identified several areas in which sworn staff were performing duties that non-sworn personnel could potentially take over, freeing up sworn staff to focus on more strategic and managerial responsibilities.

**Observation 1C:** During our fieldwork, we noted a select group of personnel have rotated between many of the upper middle management roles in the Department, often wearing multiple hats and accepting responsibilities not appropriate for their current position.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider an in-depth functional assessment to determine if staffing levels across the Department are appropriate for the job functions required, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level with the appropriate sworn or non-sworn designation.

**Observation 2:** Maintaining the Department’s accreditation is a major priority for Departmental leadership. Some staff perceived leadership as being singularly focused on accreditation, with initiatives and suggestions not aligned with recommendations from the accreditation reports ignored in favor of those included within the reports. Some staff suggested the emphasis on data and accreditation removes some of the human element from Departmental decision-making and focus.

**Recommendation 2:** While Departmental accreditation may be a key initiative for the Department, leadership should ensure all necessary needs of the Department – and its personnel – are being met. Leadership should consider proposed strategic priorities and initiatives even if not included in the accreditation report, and should ensure staff understand why certain initiatives are or are not approved.

**Observation 3A:** During fieldwork, staff indicated perceptions of micromanagement from executive leadership, with executive leadership heavily involved in day-to-day operations and decision making at all levels. Staff suggested a lack of trust stemming from Departmental and County leadership results in personnel not feeling empowered to make the decisions their functional area should be responsible for.

**Observation 3B:** The Department requires paper forms for most internal actions and those forms require numerous signatures within the chain of command, with many reaching the Fire Chief for final sign-off and approval. Excessive levels of approval slow down processes and projects, with some projects taking months longer than necessary.

**Recommendation 3:** Departmental leadership should identify routine processes, procedures, and decisions which can be made by lower-lever management and allow downline managers to oversee and execute those processes, procedures, and decisions. Departmental leadership should work to eliminate unnecessary steps in approval workflows in order to make processes more efficient and effective, and instill a feeling of trust and empowerment in staff at all levels in the Department.

# 3.C Police Department

## Police at a Glance

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 | Serve the community through the delivery of professional law enforcement services in an unbiased and compassionate manner
- 2 | Recruit and train high-quality Officers in order to provide exceptional police services within Gwinnett County
- 3 | Provide fast and attentive 911 operator services to Gwinnett County
- 4 | Investigate a variety of misdemeanor and felony criminal offenses with the goal of ensuring justice in all cases
- 5 | Provide proactive emergency management services in the event of a natural disaster or emergency scenario

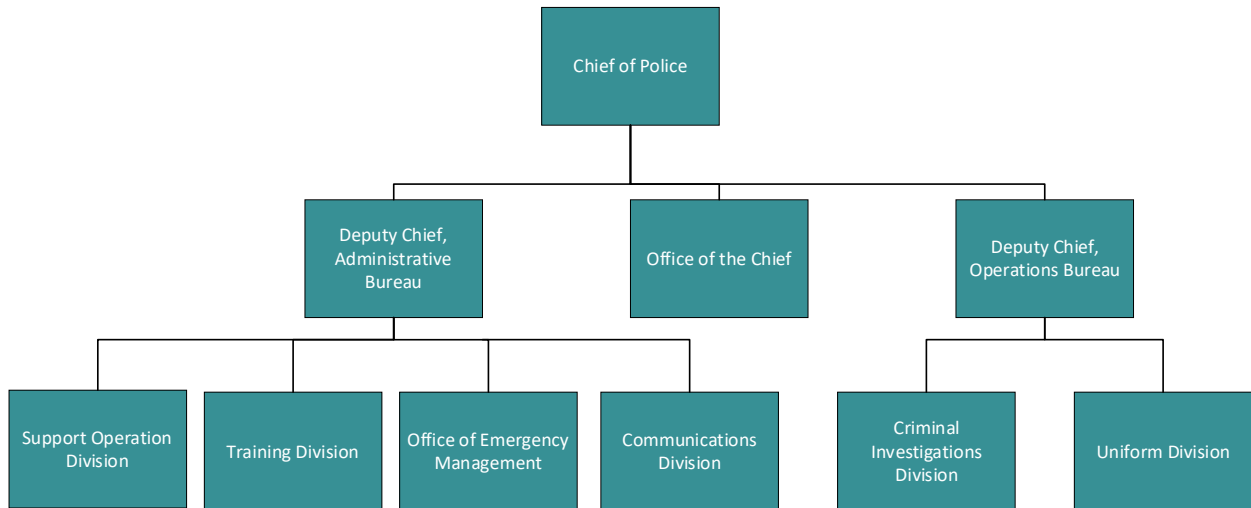
### RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):

<b>\$160,110,413</b>	<b>\$3,474,944</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

FTE	through August 2022	Police
	Filled	929
Allocated	1,256	

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### CALEA Accreditation



The Gwinnett County Police Department has achieved the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (“CALEA”) accreditation as a law enforcement agency since 1993. Recently, the Department has additionally received accreditation for the Communications Division as well as the Training Division. This makes the Gwinnett County Police Department the first department in the State of Georgia to obtain CALEA Tri-Arc status.

### Exceeding State-Mandated Training Standards



The State of Georgia requires 400 hours of training for new Officers. The Gwinnett County Police Department exceeds that requirement, providing an additional 400 hours of training to new Officers.

### Emphasis on Community Outreach



There is a strong emphasis from leadership throughout the Department on the importance of community outreach. In addition to regular Officer-community interactions, the Department organizes and participates in numerous events in the community in order to foster relationships and perceptions.

### Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center (“SACRC”)



The Department is in the final stages of implementing a real time crime center that has the ability to leverage cameras throughout the County to provide real-time viewing and recording. The SACRC will provide the ability to observe crimes as they are committed and provide a greater sense of oversight and security to Officers responding to situations.

### Technology Investment



The County and the Police Department have made significant strategic investment to maintain leading system technologies and data analysis tools to proactively prevent and reactively solve crimes. The SACRC is an example of this strategic investment in action.

## Introduction

The Gwinnett County Police Department serves the citizens of Gwinnett County by providing professional law enforcement services that prioritize compassion and improving the quality of life for citizens within the community.

## Organization

The Police Department (“Department”) is led by the Chief of Police. The Department has seven primary functions. One function is led by the Office of the Chief and six functions are organized under two bureaus – the Administrative Bureau and the Operations Bureau. Each Bureau is led by a Deputy Chief, with the remaining function led by the Chief of Staff. The seven primary functions are as follows:

- Office of the Chief
- Administrative Bureau
  - Support Operations Division
  - Training Division
  - Office of Emergency Management
  - Communications Division



- Operations Bureau
  - Criminal Investigations Division
  - Uniform Division

### Office of the Chief

The Office of the Chief is led by the Chief of Police (“Chief”) and consists of a Chief of Staff, who supervises one Administrative Support Associate (“ASA”) III and one Public Information Supervisor. The Public Information Supervisor directly oversees two Public Information Officers.

The Chief of Police is responsible for overseeing all police operations in all unincorporated Gwinnett County as well as within cities within the County that do not have police departments of their own. Strategic decisions involving all aspects of the Department fall under the purview of the Chief.

The Chief of Staff, under the direction of the Chief, supervises the Office of the Chief. Key responsibilities of the Chief of Staff include overseeing public communications, the coordination of the promotional process, serving as a liaison to the Law Department, preparing budgets for the Chief’s office, managing the Public Information Office, serving as a liaison for the Gwinnett County Police Citizen’s Advisory Board, creating Department goals and objectives, setting the agenda for all biweekly executive staff meetings, coordinating all volunteer boards, and managing award ceremonies.

### Administrative Bureau

The Administrative Bureau is led by a Deputy Chief and is supported by two Assistant Chiefs and two Directors. The Administrative Bureau is responsible for providing internal administrative and support services for the Department. The Administrative Bureau consists of the following divisions:

- Support Operations Division
- Training Division
- Office of Emergency Management
- Communications Division

### Support Operation Division

The Support Operations Division (“Division”) consists of six sections, and is supervised by a Division Commander. Each section is supervised by a Section Manager. The following are the six sections within Support Operations:

- Fiscal Management Section
- Support Section
- Office of Professional Standards
- Accreditation Section
- Human Resources
- Records/GCIC/Permits

The responsibilities of the Division Commander are to coordinate and control the operations within the Support Operations Division. The Division Commander also directly supervises an Aide to the Division Commander position.

A Section Manager supervises operations within the Fiscal Management Section. The Section Manager oversees 12 positions and is responsible for planning and managing the budget, grants and capital funding, and the Alarm Reduction Unit. The Alarm Reduction Unit is responsible for billing individuals with alarm systems when alarms are triggered and there is no emergency.

The Support Section is supervised by a Section Manager whose responsibilities consist of supervising the Fleet Operations Unit, and the Facilities Management and Building Security Unit. The Fleet Operations Unit is responsible for coordinating purchasing, replacing, and maintaining all vehicles used by the Department with the Fleet Management Division within the Gwinnett County Department of Support Services. The Facilities Management and Building Security Unit is responsible for maintaining and managing all Department facilities. This includes maintenance for all buildings, coordination of any Department construction projects, and overseeing outsourced services such as the custodial and landscaping services the Department requires.

The Office of Professional Standards is supervised by a Section Commander. The Section Commander manages one Assistant Commander. There are three Sergeants reporting to the Assistant Commander – two Background Investigations and Recruiting Unit Sergeants, and one Internal Affairs Unit Sergeant.

The Background Investigations and Recruiting Unit is responsible for recruitment for the whole Department as well as screening and reviewing the backgrounds for applicants to the Department. The Internal Affairs Unit is responsible for managing and investigating Department policy compliance and internal and external Department complaints.

There is a Section Manager that supervises the Accreditation Section within the Division. The Accreditation Section currently includes only the Section Manager. The Accreditation Section is responsible for ensuring the Department maintains its accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (“CALEA”) as well as State Police Department Accreditation.

The Human Resources Section is supervised by a Section Manager. The Section is allocated two Administrative Support Associates, but currently both positions are vacant. The Section Manager serves as a liaison to the Gwinnett County Human Resources Department, handles FMLA and Military Leave, manages personnel file management, workers’ compensation claims, payroll and timesheets, and separations.

A Section Commander oversees the Records/GCIC/Permits Section. Within the Section, there are two units; the Records and Permits Unit and the Georgia Crime Information Center (“GCIC”) Unit. The Records and Permits Unit is responsible for completing open records requests, reviewing Officer reports, reviewing individual or business requests for permits such as alcohol and solicitor permits. The GCIC Unit is responsible for updating the GCIC files for property that has been stolen or recovered.

### *Training Division*

The Training Division (“Division”) consists of three sections and is led by a Division Commander. The Division Commander oversees and coordinates operations within the Division and serves as the Training Academy Director.

The Division consists of the following are the three sections:

- Community Affairs Section
- Training Section
- Research and Planning Section

The Community Affairs Section is led by a Section Manager. There are five positions which report directly to the Section Manager. The responsibilities of the Community Affairs Section are to engage in community outreach by coordinating different events that allow officers to positively interact with the community. The Section also includes Crime Prevention Officers that are responsible for promoting crime reduction within the County by providing educational and safety programs.

The Training Section is led by a Training Commander. Training is held at the Gwinnett County Police Department Training Center. The Training Commander oversees one Administrative Support Associate IV, one Program Analyst, and three Assistant Academy Directors. The Training Section is responsible for guiding new officers through the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training (“POST”) certification and conducting the Police Officer Academies. All sworn officers are required to complete firearms training at the Training Center at least once a year. The Training Section primarily operates out of the training facility within the County.

The Planning and Research Section is led by a Section Manager. There are two units with three positions that report directly to the Section Manager – the Inspections Unit and the Technical Support Unit. The Inspections Unit is responsible for collecting data regarding CALEA standards, completing employee and Section Commander interviews, reviewing employee evaluation files, reviewing Officer written citations, and compiling citation reports. The Technical Support Unit is responsible for researching, recommending, and implementing new technology that could be beneficial for the Department.

#### *Office of Emergency Management*

The Office of Emergency Management is led by an Office Director. The Office Director directly oversees one ASA II and five Emergency Management Specialists. The Office Director is responsible for coordinating County preparations for emergencies of any kind. The Division as a whole is responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness exercises and ensuring all County Departments are provided with emergency processes and procedures. The Division also works with School Safety Coordinators within the County to draft school emergency plans.

#### *Communications Division*

The Communications Division (“E-911”) is led by a Communications Director. The Communications Director is responsible for overseeing all operations within E-911. E-911 employees are responsible for taking all emergency calls 24/7 within the County, and then dispatching necessary units and Officers to the specific situation. E-911 serves as dispatch for the Police Department and Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Communications is staffed by employees who receive calls/texts, and dispatchers who work with units around the County to dispatch the necessary services to the situation.

## Operations Bureau

The Operations Bureau, led by a Deputy Chief, consists of two Divisions – the Criminal Investigations Division (“CID”) and the Uniform Division (“Uniform”). Each Division is overseen by an Assistant Chief. The purpose of the Operations Bureau is to oversee criminal investigations and the Uniform Officers that patrol the County every day.

### *Criminal Investigations Division*

Led by an Assistant Chief, the Criminal Investigations Division (“CID”) is responsible for criminal investigations as well as crime scene evidence recovery and analysis. It is the Assistant Chief’s responsibility to coordinate all operations within the CID. The CID consists of three separate sections: Crime Scene Investigations Section, Criminal Investigations Section, and Special Investigations Section.

The Crime Scene Investigations Section (“CSI”) is responsible for the collection, documentation, and scientific testing of evidence for all criminal investigations. The Section is led by a Section Manager. There are six positions that report directly to the Section Manager. These include one ASA II, four CSI Supervisors, and one Evidence Unit Sergeant.

The Criminal Investigations Section (“CIS”) is led by the CIS Commander and consists of an Electronic and Financial Crime Unit, a Computer Forensic Lab Unit, a Special Victims Unit, a Robbery Unit, a Homicide Unit, a Burglary Unit, a Motor Vehicle Theft Unit, and a General Investigations Unit. Each unit is responsible for investigating the specific type of crime assigned to the unit.

The Special Investigations Section (“SIS”) is led by a SIS Commander with four direct reports. The SIS Commander is responsible for the budget within SIS and for coordinating all units within the Section. The SIS consists of five units and one team:

- Alcohol and Vice Unit
- Crime Intelligence Unit
- Gang Task Force
- Narcotics Unit
- Technical Intelligence Support Unit
- Parcel Interdiction Team

The Alcohol and Vice Unit is led by a Unit Sergeant and is responsible for the enforcement of alcohol related County Ordinances. The Unit is also responsible for enforcing laws regarding prostitution, gambling, and counterfeit items. The Unit also works with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to investigate sex trafficking. The Alcohol and Vice Unit is led by a Unit Supervisor.

The Crime Intelligence Unit is responsible for collecting and tracking crime data throughout the County in order to make crime predictions and analyze crime trends. The Crime Intelligence Unit consists of one Supervisor and 10 Analysts. The Gang Task Force is led by two Sergeants who are responsible for tracking criminal gang activity within the County in order to prevent possible crimes and enforce the law in high-crime areas. The Narcotics Unit is led by an Assistant Section Commander. Four Unit Sergeants report directly to the Assistant Section Commander. The Narcotics Unit is responsible for the investigation and interception of illegal substances within the County. The Technical Intelligence Support Unit (“TIS”) is led by a Unit Supervisor and is responsible for collecting information about individuals or groups to anticipate, prevent, or monitor criminal activity. The TIS Unit consists of three sections: Asset Forfeiture, Joint Terrorism Task Force, and Technical Support. The Asset Forfeiture is responsible for all seized assets, including the recording and management of seized items. The Joint Terrorism Task Force partners with the US and State Department of Justice to monitor and track data around the County relating to crimes that are terroristic in nature. Technical Support is responsible for the maintenance and servicing of camera systems used within the SIS. The Parcel Interdiction Team is responsible for working with package and mail services around the County with the goal of intercepting packages containing illegal items and substances. The Parcel Interdiction Team is trained to identify certain characteristics about packages that deem them suspicious.

### *Uniform Division*

The Uniform Division within the Department is comprised of six Police Precincts around the County, a Special Operations Division, and a Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit. The Division is led by an Assistant Chief who oversees eight Majors, and is responsible for Special Operations, the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit, and the overall operations at each precinct including staffing, Division communication, and general operations.

There are six precincts within Gwinnett County. These include the North, South, East, West, and Central precincts. Additionally, the Bay Creek Precinct was added recently to cover the Southeast area of the County. Precincts are responsible for serving and protecting their specific geographic area of the County. This is primarily achieved through responding to E-911 dispatch calls, preventative patrol, incident reporting, and through community outreach and relationship building.

Within the Uniform Division there is a recently created Behavioral Health Unit (“BHU”). Under the supervision of a Lieutenant Aide to the Assistant Chief, the purpose of the BHU is to provide counselors for situations which might involve mental health issues.

Within the Uniform Division is the Special Operations Section (“Section”). The Section is led by a Section Commander and consists of six units who are each led by a Lieutenant. The six units are as follows: the Accident Investigation Unit (“AIU”), the Aviation Unit, the DUI Unit, the K-9 Unit, the Motor Unit, and the Special Weapons and Tactics Team/Hazardous Device Unit (“SWAT/HDU”).

The Uniform Division also has a Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit which is led by a Unit Sergeant. Teleserve consists of taking reports from individuals in the community by phone or in person and monitoring the online reporting system. RedSpeed is a system that checks speeding in school zones. The Unit Sergeant has one Sergeant that monitors the RedSpeed system. This system allows for the license plates to be pulled and checked for vehicles that are captured speeding by the cameras.

## Strategic Priorities

Each year, the Department works to create goals for the year. These goals extend the entire Department and are approved by the Chief. At the beginning of the following year, these goals are reviewed to measure progress throughout the year.

A primary goal of the Department is to reduce crime rates. Currently, the Department has taken many steps to do so. The addition of the Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center will proactively assist in preventing and reducing crimes. The Center is currently still under construction but is already utilizing trained analysts to monitor different camera systems around the County in order to provide law enforcement with real time crime information.

With the purpose of providing alternative services to situations that include mental health issues, the Department has created the Behavioral Health Unit. Created in July of 2021, the Unit consists of six teams, four of which are currently staffed. This Unit consists of certified social workers whose main responsibility is to ride with Officers to situations where mental health is a concern and offer expertise on how to correctly offer assistance to individuals with mental health problems.

Mental health is not just a priority externally, but internally the Communications Division has taken strides to reduce stress and allow call takers and dispatchers the opportunity to decompress after stressful E-911 calls. The Division utilizes a “quiet room” (a small room outfitted in a peaceful/therapeutic manner) and outdoor area to provide employees a chance to rejuvenate and reset themselves.

The Department has noticed the need for a building specifically for potential Officers within the Police Officer Training Academy. A building project is currently in progress at the training facility that will allow for more space at the facility for the Academy. The additional capacity will free up classroom spaces within the current facility to allow for more offered training courses.

## Leadership and Management

Staff perception of the new Chief of Police is generally very positive. Staff feel that the Chief genuinely cares about the success of the Department and is making positive steps to improve various aspects about Department operations and processes.

Communication was a focal point of commendation from staff. The Chief has made it a priority to visit a different precinct each week in order to stay connected with what the needs are of the precinct and provide invaluable face-to-face time with the Officers during weekly roll calls.

Leadership has recognized that staffing and retention are both issues within the Department (as is the case with other County departments and organizations throughout the Country at this point in time). One leadership objective is to create a mentorship program within the Department. The goal of this being to continue to find ways to invest in people and encourage retention by mentoring employees and Officers.

Leadership has shown that the needs of Officers are a priority. One example is leadership increasing the distance that Officers are allowed to take their vehicle home from 15 miles to from the 30 miles outside of the County. This new policy allows for Officers to take their vehicles home even if they live up to 30 miles away from the County which improves efficiency and morale.

## Technology

The following describe the Department's current technology:

### SAP

SAP is the financial management software used by the County to perform all financial data tracking. The Office of Fiscal Management uses SAP to input all budgeting information for the Department, as well as procurement expenditures for the Department.

### PowerDMS

PowerDMS is a data management service that makes coordinating files and data easier within the Department. For example, the Office of Emergency Management ("OEM") uses PowerDMS to create and store current emergency preparedness files accessible for all departments and municipalities that work with the OEM team. PowerDMS is also used to share training files throughout the Department to ensure that all employees have proper access to training materials.

### Tiburon Dispatch

Currently, the Communications Division is using the Tiburon Computer Aided Dispatch ("CAD") system to dispatch Officers to situations throughout the County and track/manage call information. This system is currently being replaced by a new CAD system, Central Square Computer Aided Dispatch.

The Central Square CAD system is currently being implemented throughout the Department. Central Square CAD will assist in the organization of calls for the Police Department and Fire and Emergency Services Department. Once dispatchers within E-911 answer a call and then submit it into the Central Square CAD system, the system informs the dispatcher of the closest available unit to send out to the situation. The Central Square CAD system will also allow Officers to access information regarding the call and look at the exact location of the event while in the field. Currently, the Central Square CAD implementation is behind schedule, but the full implementation is currently expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

### HigherGround

The Communications Division uses HigherGround to record phone calls made to E-911.

### Business Watch International system

The Business Watch International ("BWI") is a system that the Burglary Unit uses to monitor pawn shop activity for reported stolen items. Pawn shops are required to report sold and pawned items within BWI for law enforcement to be able to track items of interest.

### Flock Cameras

Flock Cameras are used throughout the County to monitor road activity and to provide suspect identification. The Flock Cameras are made and installed by a company named Flock Safety. The cameras are able to read license plate numbers/information and store information about vehicles including license plate numbers, vehicle make and model, and various cosmetic details about the vehicles. The Department is able to use these cameras to locate suspects and monitor situations around the County in real-time with the help of the Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center at the Police Annex.

## RedSpeed Cameras

The RedSpeed cameras are used by the RedSpeed Unit to monitor individuals speeding within school zones. This is a fairly new technology that the Department has begun using. The cameras are able to monitor speed and then take a picture of the license plate and vehicle that is caught speeding within the school zone. Officers then check the information reported by the cameras for inaccuracies and either accept or reject the evidence. RedSpeed retains 24% of the fine once paid by the individual.

## Ballistics IQ

Ballistics IQ is used by the Crime Scene Investigation Section to do ballistics testing on used shell casings. The system analyzes the shell casings and then compares it with other shell casings within the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (“NIBIN”). The NIBIN houses information about a large number of shell casings spent. CSI uses this system to compare shell casings to see if a bullet was fired out of a known gun within NIBIN.

## SAFE Evidence Management System

The SAFE Evidence Management System is used by the Department to track evidence and secure evidence. This system is able to track chain of custody, facilitate communication between the Officers and the individuals responsible for the evidence, and automate the disposal approval process.

## Customer Service (DR)

Maintaining strong positive relations within the community is a significant priority of the Department. Provided below are two examples of the Department’s commitment to assessing, measuring, and maintaining strong relationships and positive customer perceptions.

- The Chief of Police or designee serves as an ex-officio member of the Gwinnett County Police Citizens Advisory Board which is responsible for ensuring a relationship with the community and the Department, to provide input on policies and programs, and to hold public meetings to discuss relevant police issues.
- The Department coordinates with a third-party vendor to conduct a citizen survey. The survey provides the Department an opportunity to gauge community feelings about the overall performance of the Department and is conducted at least every two years. The survey encompasses a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, Attitudes Towards Police, Performance of the Gwinnett County Police Department, Perceived Safety in Gwinnett County, 911 and Phone Contact with the Department, and In-Person Contact with the Department.

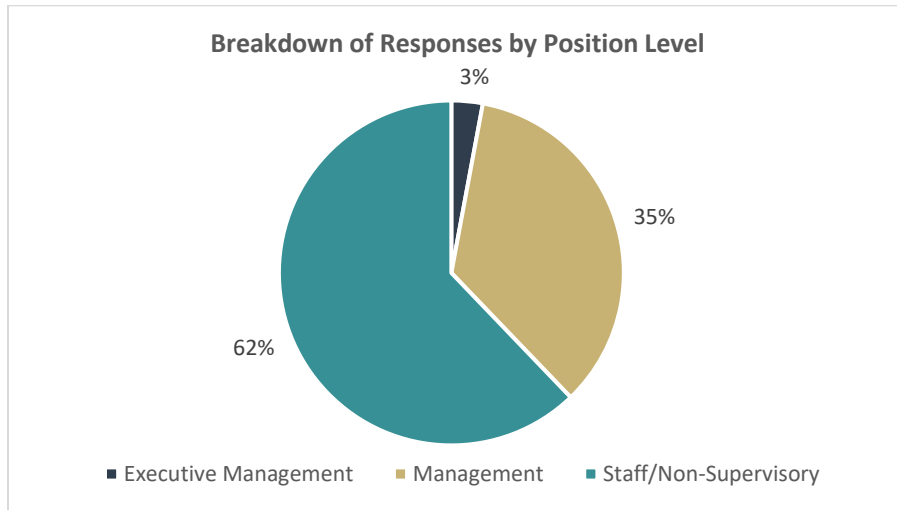
## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Three hundred and forty-one responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 36%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate.



The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:

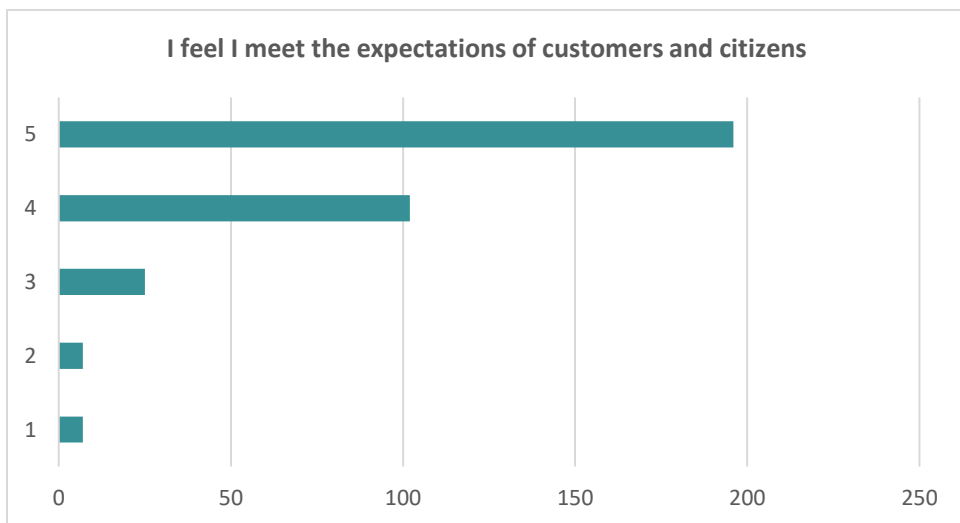
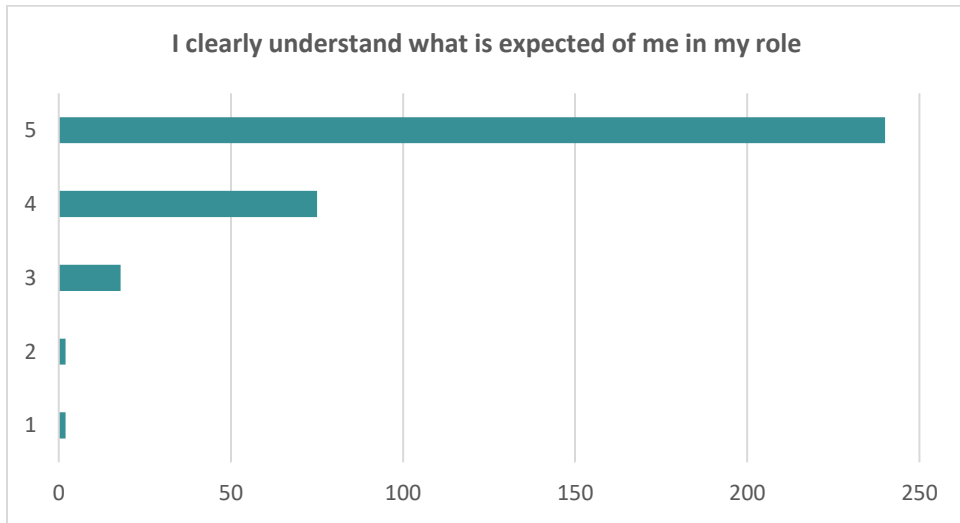
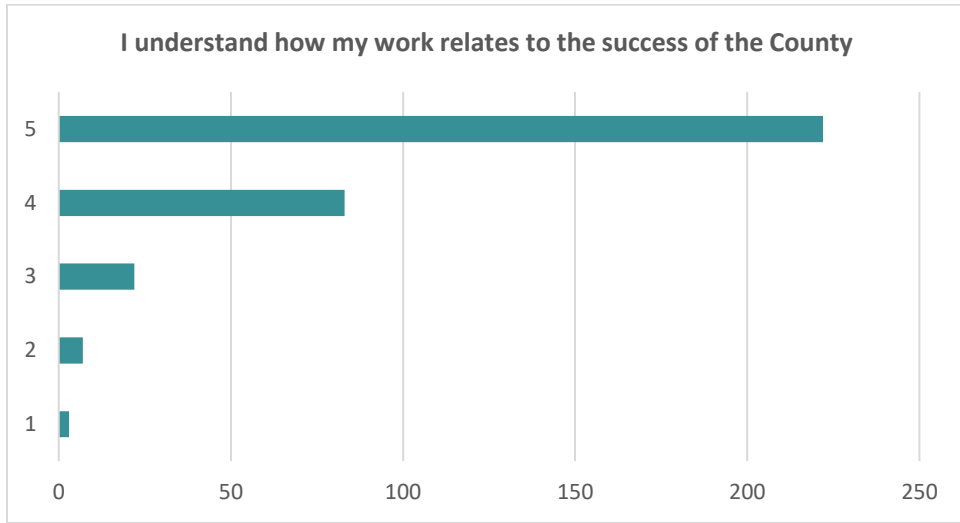


As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff. The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

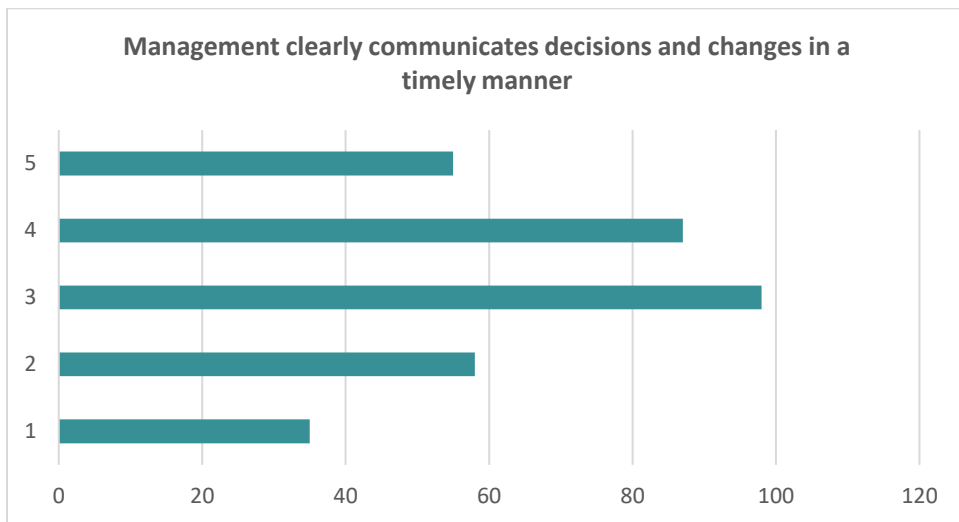
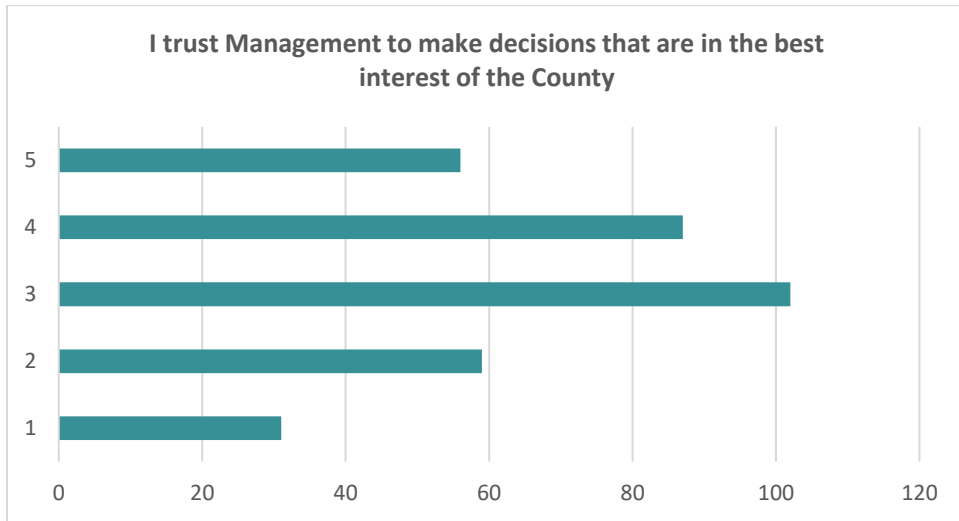
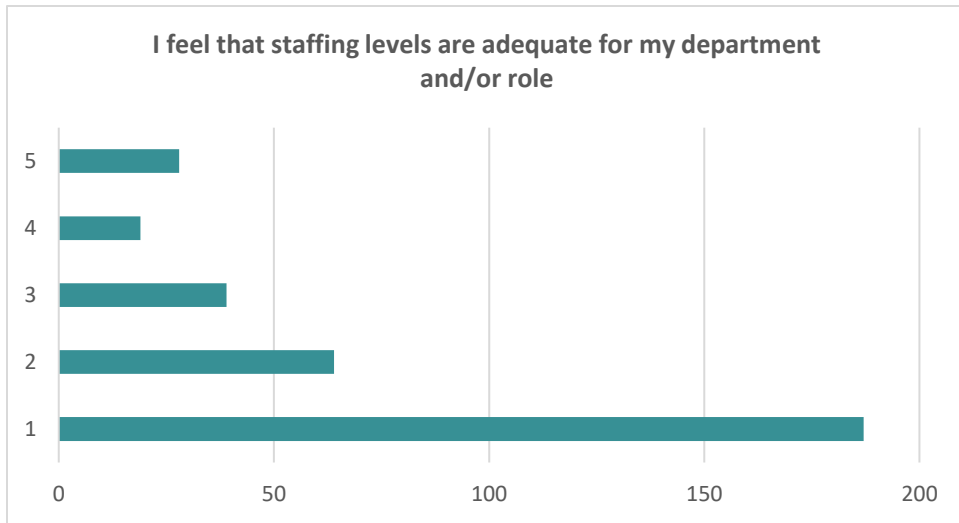
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.5
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.6
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.7
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.4
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.4
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	1.9
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	3.7
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.6
il receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.8
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.6
My direct supervisor encourages my professional development	4.2
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	3.7
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.2
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Chief) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.2
I am proud to work for the County	4.0
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	3.6
I receive the necessary training to successfully respond to public safety situations and interact with residents	4.1
My department maintains a culture of cohesion and collaboration among members of each unit and among different units	3.3

The average score for all the survey statements is 3.7. The lowest score is 1.9 and the highest score is 4.6. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:



In addition to the previous statements, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified teamwork between frontline staff and training opportunities offered by the Department as the Department's greatest strengths. Staff take pride in serving Gwinnett County as members of the Police Department.
- Some respondents felt the quality of leadership and the connection between the Chief's Office and frontline staff are generally good; however, other respondents suggested a disconnect exists between management and frontline staff, suggesting that communication can be improved and decisions (especially promotional decisions) could be more consistent and transparent.
- Respondents suggested updated the Department's technology and systems would improve operations – especially integration between the records management system and computer-aided dispatch. Respondents raised concerns that current systems and processes are outdated, including the reliance on hard copies for all documentation.
- Respondents suggested executive leadership focuses too heavily on the Department's image in the media, resulting in a hesitancy to embrace certain changes, such as Officers' uniforms and appearances. Respondents felt the current uniforms are not suitable for the job and policies against facial hair and, until recently, tattoos are antiquated. Respondents recommended command staff promote qualified individuals with new perspectives, instead of only promoting like-minded individuals similarly resistant to change.

## 3.C.1 Police Department – Office of the Chief

The Office of the Chief is responsible for supporting the Chief by assisting in day-to-day responsibilities and coordinating public information through the Public Information Unit.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Support for the Chief of Police
- Public Information Office

### Support for the Chief of Police

The primary responsibility of the Office of the Chief is to support the Chief. The Chief of Police takes significant responsibility as the coordinator of all Department operational and administrative oversight. The Chief is responsible for all aspects of the Department and needs the individuals within the Office of the Chief to help coordinate and assist with the mission of the Department.

The Chief of Staff reports directly to the Chief and is responsible for the Office of the Chief. The Chief of Staff is responsible for managing the promotional process, coordinating Department lawsuits with the Law Department, and overseeing the Public Information Unit; the Chief of Staff also serves a reactive role in assisting the Chief as needed.

The Chief of Staff assists the Chief in designing annual Department goals and objectives and reviewing the multi-year plan, conducting citizen surveys, and performing rank-tests every two years to ensure that the various ranks within the Department are being utilized correctly. The Chief of Staff also coordinates with the Chief to create the agenda for all bi-weekly executive staff meetings. The Chief of Staff also serves as the liaison to the Gwinnett County Police Citizen's Advisory Board. The Gwinnett County Police Citizen's Advisory Board is comprised of 11 County residents and is responsible for ensuring a relationship with the community and the Department, to provide input on policies and programs, and to hold public meetings to discuss relevant police issues.

The Office of the Chief is responsible for coordinating with a third-party vendor to conduct a citizen survey. This survey provides the Department an opportunity to gauge community feelings about the overall performance of the Department and is performed at least every two years. The current third-party company managing the survey and survey analysis is a company named Marketing Workshop.

Marketing Workshop provides the survey along with an executive summary and analysis of each category within the survey. The survey encompasses a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, Attitudes Towards Police, Performance of the Gwinnett County Police Department, Perceived Safety in Gwinnett County, 911 and Phone Contact with the Department, and In-Person Contact with the Department. Questions within the survey provide a variety of answer choices to the respondent such as the Likert Scale, and a six-point ranking from "High" to "Poor" and "Not-Sure."

The responsibility of the Chief of Staff involves rank-testing, as mentioned above, coordinating awards ceremonies for promoted Officers, and keeping the Chief informed on all aspects of promotion including communications with County Human Resources.

The Chief of Staff currently is allocated and employs one ASA III assisting in all functional tasks.

## Public Information Office

The Public Information Office (“PIO”) is led by a Sergeant. The purpose of the PIO is to coordinate all Departmental communications and press releases with the guidance of the Chief and the Chief of Staff. The PIO works with various media outlets during incidents and prepares press releases that accurately reports the message of the Department as a whole. The Sergeant oversees and assists in preparing these releases and coordinating with the media, but the Chief of Staff and the Chief oversee the message relayed to the community.

The PIO utilizes various social media platforms to issue Department releases and inform the community of criminal activity trends and events throughout the County, Officer commendations, and Department sponsored events being held for the County. Releases include meetings of the Gwinnett County Police Citizen’s Advisory Board, commendations for Officers who earned spotlights within the Department for brave actions, and information highlighting programs that could be beneficial to individuals or businesses within the County.

## Communications

The Office of the Chief communicates with leadership within the Department on a regular basis. Meetings are held monthly for all of senior leadership. These meetings are coordinated by the Office of the Chief and provide both top-down and bottom-up communications. The meetings serve to inform senior leadership of the Chief’s priorities and allow for senior leadership to relay events occurring in each of their Bureaus and Divisions to the Chief and the Office of the Chief.

With the assistance of the Planning and Research Division, the Chief distributes monthly reports to senior leadership which detail Bureau and Division specific output data.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Department has developed and maintained effective relationships with the County through consistent communication from the PIO. The use of social media platforms to relay communications with the citizens of the County serves as an example of the Department’s understanding that community relations are vital to the overall success of the Department.

Promotions are treated by the Office of the Chief as a significant and celebrated achievement when they occur. The continued coordination of awards ceremonies for Officers is important to show the Department’s appreciation of its employees. Posting Officer spotlights on the managed social media platforms also serves as a way to show officers the Department is noticing hard work and care for the community from the Officers.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Chief of Staff is responsible for coordinating with a third-party to conduct the citizen survey. The survey is open to all residents within the Department’s jurisdiction, which excludes residents living within Cities that employ a city police department.

The survey serves to show overall perception of the Department from the community. Questions are asked in order to gauge the community’s thoughts on various topics such as the following:

- Attitudes towards the Police
- Performance of the Police Department

- Police Department relationships with the citizens
- Overall effectiveness with the Department
- Perceived safety in the County
- Communication and 911 contact with the Department

The survey report also gives data on the respondents such as how many have had contact with the Department, how many have been a victim of a crime, or have been arrested by the Department.

The 2022 citizen survey only received 591 complete responses from citizens. This number is fairly low compared to the number of people living within the community that has access to the services of the Department.

Marketing Workshop provides analysis and an executive summary from the results of the survey. Below are excerpts from Executive Summary of the 2022 Gwinnett County Police Department (“GCPD”) Annual Citizen Survey Report:

- ***“The majority of Gwinnett County residents continue have positive impressions of both police in general and GCPD, with almost three-quarters rating GCPD positively (73% and 72%) (somewhat/mostly/extremely positive). One citizen in six rates GCPD as better than police in general.”***
  - *“Positive perceptions of police, both in general and of GCPD specifically, remain at levels seen in 2021. However, sentiment among African Americans toward police in general show some recovery compared to last year.”*
  - *“At least two citizens in five believe that GCPD outperforms other police in the U.S. on a number of measures, with one-half who feel that the police in Gwinnett are better than police elsewhere overall.”*
- ***“GCPD gets high marks across major performance metrics including overall performance, perceived safety, responsiveness, and police Officer competence.”***
  - *“74% for Overall Performance (good/very good/excellent); a slight increase from 2021.”*
  - *“97% for Perceived Safety in Neighborhood and (95%) throughout Gwinnett County during the day (somewhat/very/completely), on par with 2021.”*
  - *“80% for Responsiveness (good/very good/excellent), on par with 2021.”*
  - *“70% for Police Officer Competence (good/very good/excellent)”*
- ***“Concern about break-ins has been on a downward trend since 2019, while concerns about gun violence, assault/violent crime, and sexual assault/sex crimes are growing.”***
  - *“Neighborhood break-in concern: 49% in 2022, down from 52% in 2020.”*
  - *“A third of respondents (31%) rate break-ins as their #1 neighborhood concern, two times that of the next highest concerns, traffic or child safety.”*
  - *“Neighborhood break-in concern: Break-ins continue to be the largest concern (49% ranked top 3), followed closely by traffic safety (33%), robberies (28%), and gun violence (28%).”*

- *“At a county level, break-ins were surpassed as the largest concern for the first time since 2019, replaced by gun violence (36% ranked top 3). Break-ins come in second place (34%), followed by robberies (30%), and traffic safety (29%).”*
- ***“Six in seven citizens rate Overall Performance of the 911 Center (86%) and 911 Employee’s Attitudes and Behavior Towards Citizens (84%) good/very good/excellent.”***
- ***“Citizen ratings of the Overall Responsiveness (80% good/very good/excellent) and Overall Competence of the 911 Employee Answering Calls (85% good/very good/excellent) has remained unchanged since 2020. Males rate Overall Responsiveness higher (90% vs. 73%).”***
- ***“The rating of the 911 Employees Advising What to Do While Waiting for Emergency Responders has been stable compared to 2020 and 2021 (80% in 2022).”***
- ***“911 Calls Being Answered Promptly scores declined from 86% in 2020 to 77% in 2021 and increased slightly to 79% in 2022.”***

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The purpose of the citizen survey is to gauge feelings and thoughts of the community towards the Department. Currently, data is reported in the survey about the community thoughts on Officers, Officer interactions, and various individual specific points regarding the Department. The citizen survey has the potential to serve as an indicator of how effective/non-effective efforts by the Department to improve community relations have been.

In 2022, the citizen survey only saw 591 respondents to the survey. In order to move closer to having a more accurate representation of the thoughts/feelings of the County as a whole, the number of respondents needs to rise.

**Recommendation 1:** Survey respondent numbers could benefit from more Department-wide promotion and advertising of survey availability. This could include greater quantity of posts on social media platforms to improve awareness. Mailers from the Department outlining the survey details and how to access it may increase awareness for those individuals who may not use social media.

The Office of the Chief should consider also utilizing more County resources to achieve this goal. Survey postings on the County website and County social media pages could allow for a broader viewing of the survey in order to potentially receive more respondents.



## 3.C.2 Police Department – Administrative Bureau

Led by an Assistant Chief, the Administrative Bureau is responsible for all administrative and support duties within the Department such as financial management, accreditation, human resources, community affairs, record keeping, training, Emergency Management, and E-911.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Support Operations Division
- Training Division
- Office of Emergency Management
- Communications Division

### Support Operations Division

The purpose of the Support Operations Division (“Division”) is to provide administrative and operational support to the entire Department.

### Support Section

There are two units within the Support Section; the Fleet Management Unit and the Facilities Management/Building Security Unit.

The Fleet Management Unit is responsible for working with the County Fleet Management Division, a part of the Department of Support Services, to purchase and maintain all vehicles within the Department. Law Enforcement outfitting for each vehicle is performed by a third-party vendor. Outfitting involves installing all the necessary accessories on the exterior and interior of the vehicle such as: additional lights, radio system, and the separator for the back seat of the vehicle.

Officers are required to bring cars in for maintenance when it is due for their vehicle. This is required to occur every 7,500 miles. The Officers are also required to bring in vehicles when a check engine light comes on.

The Department has a Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Plan (“VERP”) to coordinate vehicle replacement within the Department. Vehicles are due for replacement after four years on the road and/or when the vehicle has accumulated 100,000 miles, whichever occurs first. Vehicle replacements are planned and scheduled years in advance in order to have adequate time for delivery of the vehicle.

The Facilities Management/Building Security Unit is responsible for all Department construction contracts that are over \$100,000 in value. As of our fieldwork, there are 12 capital project contracts being managed. The Section serves as a liaison for the Department to the contracted vendors. These projects are all approved by the Chief as well as the Board of Commissioners. The Facilities Management/Building Security Unit is also responsible for the maintenance of every building and facility within the Department. The Unit is responsible for all 11 facilities including the Headquarters, Police Annex, all six precincts, the Training Academy, the Aviation Hangar, and the K-9 facility. The Unit employs Trades Technicians, such as plumbers and electricians, to handle maintenance. All technology and data maintenance is handled by the County. Services such as custodial, retention pond management, and maintenance of the various gyms around the Department are outsourced to third-party services. Currently, there is no facility maintenance plan being used to track to systems within each facility.

### *Fiscal Management Section*

There are currently 12 individuals working in the Fiscal Management Section (“Section”). The Section is responsible for preparing and managing the budget, coordinating grants and special projects, processing all purchases for the Department, and managing false alarms.

Using the County SAP financial system, the Section is responsible for preparing and submitting a budget each year. Each Division Commander submits a budget request to the section to be reviewed by the Section Supervisor and the Office of the Chief for either approval or disapproval to then be submitted to the County. Once a budget is approved, a budget report is sent out to senior leadership.

Designated employees within the Department are provided procurement cards (“P-cards”) to use for Department related purchases. Purchasing within the Department requires a Purchasing Request Form, including the use of P-cards. Purchasing Request Forms detail the items, estimated cost, and justification for the potential purchase and are submitted to the Division Commander for approval or disapproval.

Purchases under \$2,000 require only a purchasing form to be submitted to the Section for review and submission to the vendor. By County policy, purchases over \$2,000 are required to have quotes from three separate vendors obtained. Once the quotes are received then the Purchase Request Form can be submitted to the Section along with the formal quotes.

Within the Section, there is a Grants Manager. The Manager is responsible for the managing the development and administration of all grants utilized by the Department. This includes the Homeland Security Grant. Grants within the Department are not large but provide consistent annual revenues.

Within the Fiscal Management Section, the Alarm Reduction Unit works to decrease the number of false alarms from private alarm system users. Each private alarm system present within the County is required to be registered with the Department. The Unit works with a service called Cry-Wolf to bill each account when a false alarm occurs. Cry-Wolf retains a percentage of the total billed to the individual and the Department receives the rest as revenue.

### *Accreditation*

The Accreditation Unit is responsible for ensuring the Department maintains Georgia Police Accreditation Commission and CALEA accreditation and is responsible for reporting and collecting all accreditation compliance documentation.

The Division Commanders are responsible for submitting necessary accreditation reports and documentation to the Accreditation Manager (“Manager”) by a specific date in order for the Manager to compile documentation for the accreditation assessment.

Currently, all accreditation documentation is stored in Power Document Management System (“Power DMS”), an electronic document management system. All Departmental policies and standards are easily accessible from this system.

Gwinnett County is the first Georgia county to have CALEA Tri-Arc Accreditation, which means that the Department has received CALEA accreditation for three out of the four accreditation offerings. The Department has general Law Enforcement Accreditation, Communications Accreditation, and Training Academy Accreditation.

### *Human Resources*

Human Resources (“HR”) within the Department handles all Family and Medical Leave Act claims, workers comp, military leave, payroll and time sheets, personnel file management, and staffing issues. Personnel file changes may include shift changes, promotions/demotions, etc. HR is the liaison to the County Human Resources Department and coordinates all position changes and separations with the County Human Resources Department.

HR is allocated two positions to assist the HR manager, but currently neither of these support positions are filled.

### *Office of Professional Standards*

The Office of Professional Standards (“OPS”) handles internal affairs and Officer-related complaints from the community. The Unit handles all use of force and deadly force investigations. Each use of force or deadly force incident is required to be investigated by the OPS. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (“GBI”) is utilized to investigate deadly force incidents. GBI investigates the incident and then sends a report to OPS. OPS does not make decisions on the specific incidents – OPS ultimately sends their findings to the appropriate Senior leadership to make the decision about disciplinary actions.

OPS also handles all hiring and recruiting for the Department. Individuals in the OPS Unit attend a variety of hiring events and job fairs to recruit for the Department. Currently, OPS is not able to use social media platforms as part of the recruiting strategy per County policy.

Applicants who are interested in the Department must go through the application process to be considered for employment. Applicants are given an interview and an initial background booklet which allows the investigators within OPS to review the applicant’s background. Once these steps are completed, and the OPS reviews the applicant’s information, the applicant is sent a conditional job offer. The applicant must pass all background checks and required standards to be sent a conditional job offer.

Once the conditional job offer has been accepted applicants are given a psychological assessment, the applicant’s credit is checked, and job history is reviewed. If applicants fail any of these requirements, they are sent a letter outlining their rejection. Once the conditional job offer has been accepted and the individual assessments are passed, the individual is then sent to the Police Training Academy. Civilian positions are not required to attend the Police Training Academy.

### *Records Management Section*

The Records Management Section is divided into two different units – the Records and Permits Unit and the GCIC Unit. Records and Permits is responsible for processing all Open Records Act requests transmitted to the Department. These requests are sent in through a County system called GovQA. Records and Permits also reviews all Officer reports submitted to the Central Square/Enterprise Records Management System (“Enterprise RMS”). The Analysts within the Section review Officer reports for completeness and accuracy. If there is an issue, the report is sent back to the Officer for correction. All data redactions are handled by the Section as well in the case of a lawsuit or case that may need information redaction. The Section handles specific types of permit applications and keeps files of certain permits for individuals within the County. Examples of permits include alcohol permits and solicitor permits.

### *Training Division*

The Training Division encompasses three separate sections – the Community Affairs Section, the Training Section, and the Research and Planning Section.

#### *Community Affairs Section*

The primary goal of the Community Affairs Section is strengthening the relationship the community has with the Department. The Section creates and offers programs that bring Officers and the community into close contact in order to foster relationships and build trust within the community.

Under the purview of the Section are Crime Prevention Officers. Each precinct within the Department has a Crime Prevention Officer whose primary responsibility is to be a liaison to the community by coordinating events with the community that serve as outreach opportunities.

The Community Affairs Division partners with various churches, non-profits, and schools in order to service the community. The Section Commander would like to add sports programs into the range of programs provided in order to help in bringing together kids and families within the community.

#### *Training Section*

Training within the Department is completed at the Training Academy. The Training Academy is a multibuilding facility that houses classroom space and field training areas to bring applicants through the correct training and certification in order to become a Gwinnett County Police Officer. Currently, the facility is under construction to add another building specifically for new applicant training. The applicants go through rigorous class-time, and situational and skill training. The State requires that Officers receive 400 hours of training before they are considered graduated, but the Department provides 400 additional hours of training to Officers.

Continuing education and training also occur at the facility. This includes courses for Officers looking to expand their knowledge, specific units and teams that train monthly such as the SWAT Unit, and annual recertification for firearms and taser use.

The Training Academy has access to two firing ranges within the facility. The 25-yard range and the 100-yard range are currently being used to train Officers. Before COVID, a 50-yard range was under construction at the facility. This range would provide an extra space to hold additional training and free up the schedules of the other two ranges which are consistently utilized. Additionally, the ranges need to be cleaned of lead every year. This process usually takes a month, therefore for one month out of every year, the facility does not have access to multiple ranges, but with the completion of the 50-yard range, additional space would be available. Unfortunately, construction of the 50-yard range was halted during the recent pandemic. The space is now being used as storage for Personal Protective Equipment Grant supplies (“PPE”) and Department inventory.

The training facility also offers citizen and youth police academies to teach about crime prevention and overall safety. These academies also serve as great ways to encourage building community relationships.

### *Planning and Research Section*

The Planning and Research Section is a new section within the Training Division that has the responsibility to track data and CALEA standards, to research areas where the Department can improve, and serve as the Technological Support Unit.

The Inspections Unit assists the Accreditation Manager in recording CALEA standards and collecting data for the Department. The goal of the Unit is to become the data repository for the Department. Yearly, the Unit assesses each aspect of the Department and completes interviews with all Section Commanders and various employees. The purpose of this assessment is to compose a report for each section to be given to the Section Commander for review.

The Section works closely with the Office of the Chief on Department-wide long-term goals and strategic objectives. These goals are updated monthly, and the Section provides action steps for these goals to the different sections in congruence with the Office of the Chief. Currently, the Section is under the Training Division.

The Technology Support Unit is responsible for the implementation and planning of all new technology projects within the Department. Currently, the Unit is overseeing the body worn camera program, the Flock Camera license plate reader program, the implementation of the new Central Square Computer Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) system, and the overall implementation of the Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center (“SACRC”).

The SACRC is a new project within the Department that is housed at the Police Annex. The SACRC uses cameras throughout the County, including Flock Cameras and RedSpeed Cameras, to observe crimes as they are occurring and will be able to give E-911 and Police Officers on the road live updates on suspect movement and crimes-in-progress. The SACRC is still under construction, but the analysts that work within the center have already begun assisting law enforcement. The current priority within the Center is finishing the construction and to continue to train analysts. Analysts are required to have a degree to be considered for the position. Businesses have the opportunity to connect their own private cameras to the Department network to be used by the SACRC. Currently, the SACRC is seeing success in small businesses being eager to set up their camera systems to be accessed by the SACRC.

## Office of Emergency Management

Each county in Georgia is allowed to have an Emergency Management Unit per Official Code of Georgia 38-3-27. The Department's Office of Emergency Management ("OEM") is tasked with implementing processes and procedures for emergency incidents. OEM works with each department within the County to create an overall emergency preparedness plan by coordinating emergency exercises that keep realistic possibilities of emergency at the focus. The OEM also works with each city within the County to coordinate emergency preparedness plans.

The OEM utilizes Power DMS to allow for all departments within the County to be able to access emergency preparedness documents such as plans for emergency response, responsibilities of each department, and the location of each emergency shelter within the County. OEM also creates plans for disaster consequence preparedness, such as post-cyberattack scenarios.

The OEM works with public and private schools throughout the County to implement emergency plans and procedures. Exercises are also held within the schools to practice these plans.

The OEM uses Wireless Emergency Alerts ("WEA") to alert individuals within the County to current and potential emergency situations. Citizens within the County are auto enrolled with each mobile device that is able to receive text messages. Alerts contain the time, place, type of alert, and who the specific individuals that could be affected are. Geofencing is used to notify specific people within an affected or potentially affected area.

## Communications Division

The Communications Division ("E-911") consists of the E-911 function. E-911 is responsible for receiving calls and texts from individuals throughout the County with emergency and non-emergency situations, and then dispatching the necessary emergency units to the situation. E-911 dispatches for the Police Department, the Fire and Emergency Services Department, Animal Welfare and Enforcement, and Code Enforcement.

Training for new E-911 operators and dispatchers begins at the Training Academy. There are four training academies a year for operators. Operators are required to be POST certified within six months of employment. New operators are then trained to take phone calls/texts and dispatch units correctly at the E-911 facility at the Police Annex.

The E-911 facility at the Police Annex consists of several different workstations for different purposes. There are workstations for individuals receiving calls/texts, workstations for the Dispatchers for the Police Department and the Fire and Emergency Services Department, and workstations for supervisory positions to monitor overall activities. Once a call/text is received at the E-911 center, the individual receiving the call/text decides whether the emergency requires Police or Fire and then transmits the information to the specific dispatcher. Once the dispatcher receives the information for the call/text, he/she coordinates with the specific emergency service the dispatcher is assigned to in order to dispatch the correct services to the situation.

The Communications Division, at the Police Annex, offers various ways for the dispatchers to decompress. A quiet room is provided to the dispatchers to be able to leave their post after a stressful call and sit and either read, sleep, or just relax to help rejuvenate and rest themselves. In addition, the Police Annex has a large outdoor field area where dispatchers can walk around or eat lunch.

## Communications

Communications within each Division of the Bureau primarily consists of email. Leadership within each Section of each Division is constantly communicating with their employees through email and daily meetings.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Fleet Management Unit has begun to look at the possibility of introducing vehicle tracking and vehicle maintenance tracking services with the fleet. Vehicle tracking would allow the Unit to receive alerts when vehicles within the fleet are due for maintenance or if there is a check engine light that has turned on. Doing so will allow for the Unit to become aware of the necessary repair and then be able to coordinate more effectively with the Officer to bring the vehicle in for service.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the financial management software used by the County to perform all financial data tracking. The Office of Fiscal Management uses SAP to input all budgeting information for the Department, as well as procurement expenditures for the Department.

### PowerDMS

PowerDMS is a data management service that makes coordinating files and data easier within the Department. For example, the Office of Emergency Management (“OEM”) uses PowerDMS to create and store current emergency preparedness files accessible for all departments and municipalities that work with the OEM team. PowerDMS is also used to share training files throughout the Department to ensure that all employees have proper access to training materials.

### Tiburon Dispatch

Currently, the Communications Division is using the Tiburon Computer Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) system to dispatch Officers to situations throughout the County and track/manage call information. This system is currently being replaced by a new CAD system, Central Square Computer Aided Dispatch.

The Central Square CAD system is currently being implemented throughout the Department. Central Square CAD will assist in the organization of calls for the Police Department and Fire and Emergency Services Department. Once dispatchers within E-911 answer a call and then submit it into the Central Square CAD system, the system informs the dispatcher of the closest available unit to send out to the situation. The Central Square CAD system will also allow Officers to access information regarding the call and look at the exact location of the event while in the field. Currently, the Central Square CAD implementation is behind schedule, but the full implementation is currently expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

### HigherGround

The Communications Division uses HigherGround to record phone calls made to E-911.

## Data and Performance Analysis

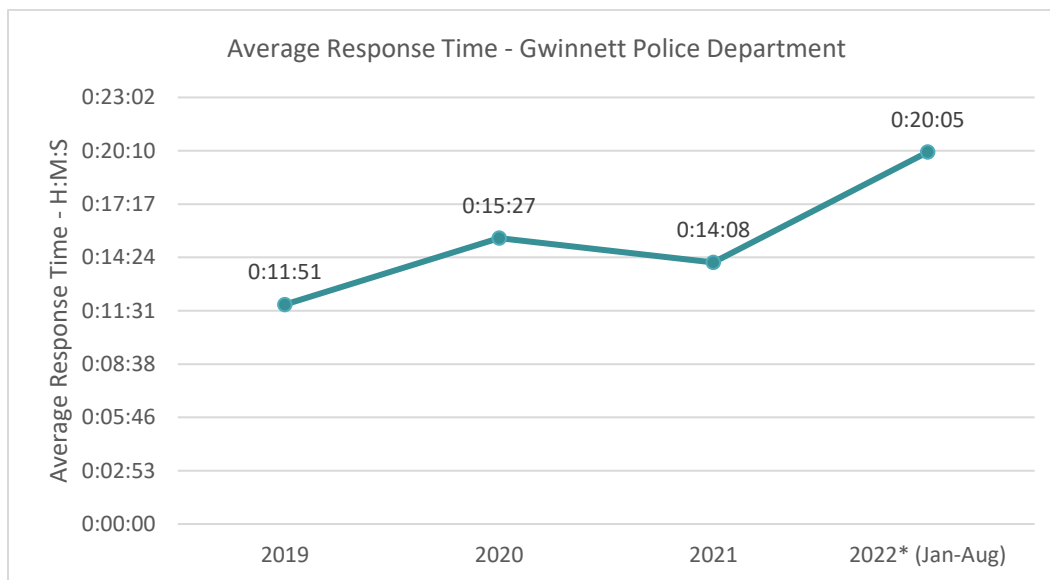
The divisions within the Administrative Bureau collect data for many aspects of the Bureau.

The Fleet Management Section tracks each police vehicle, vehicle mileage, and Officer assigned to the vehicle within the Department in order to maintain service records and keep track of necessary replacements.

Fiscal Management tracks the increase/decrease in total yearly budgeted revenue and expenditures that go into the monthly report that is sent out to all senior leadership. These numbers are compared to the last two years of data within each report. Annual budgets are also tracked with the prior year's budget-to-actual to show any changes as they relate to decision packages or general changes to the base. Year-to-date overtime expenditures are tracked and compared to the full year budget. In May of 2022, the Department reported using \$691,073 of the \$1,587,610 budgeted for 2022 overtime expenses which closely tracks to expected overtime-to-date.

The Training Section tracks the number of individuals trained at the facility each month. The number of sworn staff trained, civilian staff trained, non-department staff trained, courses conducted, and classes conducted is all tracked month to month.

E-911 keeps track of all call information including, the dispatched Department, the reason for the call, and the dispatched Department's response time to the call. Currently in 2022, the average Gwinnett Police Department response time is 20 minutes and five seconds. Although this is only from January to August of this year, it is higher compared to the average of 2021 which was 14 minutes and eight seconds. The following graph shows the average response time for the Gwinnett Police Department from 2019 through 2022 (Jan-Aug). Response time is the time from the when the original call is made to E-911 to when the Unit(s) arrive on scene to the situation.



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Currently, the Fleet Management Unit is using Excel to keep track of all of the vehicles within the Department. The Department is currently not using any form of electronic vehicle data tracking system.

**Recommendation 1:** In order to track the fleet more efficiently, the Fleet Management Unit should consider working with IT to adopt a fleet tracking system. A fleet tracking system could also help with making sure necessary maintenance is complete in a timely fashion in order to reduce continued damage to the vehicle if timely service is not performed.



**Observation 2:** Within the training facility there is currently a 25-yard and a 100-yard firearms range for Officers to use for training/routine practice. Prior to COVID, the Department was in the process of constructing a 50-yard firearms range. Once COVID occurred and the PPE grants were provided to the County, the unfinished 50-yard range was utilized to house County PPE equipment and supplies. The space continues to be leveraged as a County storage area.

The lack of a 50-yard facility has resulted in reduced availability for training classes. Also, each firearms range must be professionally cleaned every year which takes approximately one month to complete, leaving the Department with only one operable range for two months each year.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department and the County should evaluate if the inventory and PPE items currently in the 50-yard firearms range could be housed elsewhere in the County. Once the PPE is cleared out, the Department should continue its construction and build-out of the 50-yard range.

**Observation 3:** The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for all aspects of recruiting for the Department. Currently, the Department does not have the permission to utilize various social media platforms to advertise job postings based on current County policy. This is a County policy that is prohibiting open use by the Department.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department and the County should consider discussing the current social media allowances provided to the Department. Being able to use social media to advertise job openings could help the Department in better reaching new applicants for hire.

**Observation 4:** Currently, the Planning and Research Section is housed under the Training Division. The Planning and Research Section currently works on a very consistent basis with the Office of the Chief in preparing monthly goals and actions to accomplish these goals for each part of the Department.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider moving the Planning and Research Section from the Training Division to the Office of the Chief. The Planning and Research Section completes a large portion of their responsibilities in close coordination with the Office of the Chief. This could allow the Section and the Office of the Chief to work more congruently.

### 3.C.3 Police Department – Operations Bureau

The Operations Bureau is responsible for all aspects of law enforcement involving Uniform Operations and Criminal Investigations.

#### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Criminal Investigations Division
- Uniform Division

#### Criminal Investigations Division

The Criminal Investigations Division is responsible for the investigation aspect of law enforcement. The responsibilities of this Division are to conduct investigations following a crime, store and document crime scene evidence, and analyze crime scenes and evidence. The Criminal Investigations Division consists of three sections: the Criminal Investigations Section, the Special Investigations Section, and the Crime Scene Investigations Section.

The Criminal Investigations Section investigates a list of criminal activities and is comprised of the following eight units:

- Electronic and Financial Crimes Unit
- Burglary Unit
- Computer Forensic Lab
- Special Victims Unit
- Robbery Unit
- Homicide Unit
- General Crime Unit
- Motor Vehicle Theft Unit

#### Criminal Investigations Section

The Criminal Investigations Section is comprised of seven different Units – Electronic and Financial Crimes, Computer Forensic Lab, Special Victims Unit, Robbery, Homicide, General Crime Unit, and Motor Vehicle Theft. Each unit handles investigations for specific type of crime.

The Electronic and Financial Crimes Unit deals with mostly “White Collar” and specialized crimes within the County. The Burglary Unit is responsible for investigating thefts of a high value. The Burglary Unit uses technology to track potential sales of stolen property. The Burglary Unit utilizes the Business Watch International System (“BWI”) to track pawn shop transactions around the County. Individuals who have specific items stolen can report the stolen items to the Department, and if the item is sold to a pawn shop, the Burglary Unit is able to look at the specific item and access the seller information. All pawn shops are required to law to report both items and the seller to local law enforcement just in case the item is stolen. The Computer Forensic Lab is responsible for receiving seized computer and electronic devices and performing electronic forensic investigations into the contents of the devices. From this process, the Lab is able to gather evidence to support the investigations into criminal activity. The Special Victims Unit (“SVU”) investigates crimes where the victim is considered a “Special Victim.” This includes victims under the age of 18, victims with a disability, or elderly victims. The Robbery Unit is responsible with investigating all crimes involving robbery. Robbery is defined as a theft occurring with the threat of violence or action against another individual. The Homicide Unit investigates any death within the County that has occurred at the hands of another individual. The General Crimes Unit is responsible for investigating various crime which are assigned to the Unit by the Division Commander. This could include, but is not limited to, criminal damage to property, stalking, battery, or reckless conduct. The Motor Vehicle Theft Unit investigates the theft of all motor vehicles within the County. The Motor Vehicle Theft Unit regulates auto salvage and towing services within the County.

#### *Special Investigations Section*

The Special Investigations Section (“SIS”) consists of the Alcohol and Vice Unit, the Gang Task Force, the Narcotics Unit, the Crime and Intelligence Unit, the Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center, the Parcel Interdiction Team, and the Technical/Intelligence Support Unit.

The Alcohol and Vice Unit carries out investigations related to alcohol permitting and various vice involved crimes such as solicitation or prostitution. Establishments that are permitted to serve alcohol are subject to the laws regarding distribution and sale. The Unit helps to ensure that these establishments are not serving alcohol or selling alcohol to individuals under the age of 21 through periodically sending in “secret-shoppers” to test establishments to help ensure they are properly checking IDs when selling alcohol.

The Gang Task Force monitors and investigates gang activity throughout the County. The task force is divided into two groups; a Uniform Group that enforces and a Plain Clothes Group. The Uniform Group is able to perform traffic stops on suspected individuals and the Plain Clothes Group is able to investigate gang activity within the community. The Task Force is currently not set up to perform long term undercover investigations.

The Narcotics Unit is responsible for investigating the illegal sale and trafficking of illegal substances. Undercover Officers are used to investigate crimes involving narcotics in the County.

The Crime Intelligence Unit works with crime statistics to create predictions for crimes in certain areas. By discovering and assessing crime patterns and trends within the County, the Unit assists in proactive policing. The Unit also uses forms of social media as well as other online resources to research specific individuals suspected of committing a crime.

The Parcel Interdiction Team is responsible for working with mail and package services around the County to intercept packages containing illegal items and substances. The Parcel Interdiction team research address labels found on packages and obtains search warrants to search packages of suspicion.

The Technical Intelligence Support Unit is responsible for assisting in various tech-related operations within the Division. This includes assisting different units with set up of listening and recording devices to monitor various situations and individuals, wiring undercover Officers during various operations, implementing GPS tracking devices in order to track individuals suspected of committing a crime, and working with surveillance cameras.

#### *Crime Scene Investigations Section*

CSI is responsible for investigating crime scenes and processing evidence. This includes work in a chemical lab. The CSI Unit can process various kinds of evidence such as fingerprints, rape-kits, vehicle tests, ballistics, and various illegal substances. Evidence is collected by Officers within the Uniform Division and brought to CSI for processing. By Section policy, each CSI specialist has 21 days to complete all actions regarding the investigation of each specific crime, including evidence processing and reporting, post crime.

Within CSI there are Crime Scene Specialists who go to each crime scene to gather evidence and take photographs of the scene. Reports with information regarding the scene are written by the Specialists. The Specialists work on shifts: 24 hours a day, five days a week. Weekend and holiday shifts are staffed by two Specialists. These shifts rotate between each Specialist on staff.

#### *Uniform Division*

The Uniform Division consists of the six Police Precincts around the County, the Special Operations Section, and an Aide to the Assistant Chief. The six precincts in the County are as follows:

- North Precinct
- South Precinct
- East Precinct
- West Precinct
- Central Precinct
- Bay Creek Precinct

#### *Precincts*

Each precinct is responsible for the field operations within their specific unincorporated districts. Uniform Officers within each precinct that are assigned to field operations are scheduled to shifts. Shifts are 12 hours long and divided into rotations. There are two separate shifts Officers can serve on – Day Shift and Night Shift. Each shift is supervised by Shift Commander. There are two Sergeant Supervisors who supervise Officers on each shift. There are “A,” “B,” “C,” and “D” rotations. The A and B rotations are assigned to the Day Shift and the C and D rotations are assigned to the Night Shift.

Operations within the precincts are overseen by a Commander. Police Officers in each of the precinct carry out the duties of an Officer such as responding to all calls that dispatch assigns. Officers from the precincts also patrol continuously throughout the community. The precincts are responsible for conducting community outreach alongside the Crime Prevention Officers and with the direction of the Community Affairs Division. Precincts hold relationship building and outreach events such as Coffee with a Cop, Pizza with the Police, and bookbag collections for students.

During fieldwork, Mauldin & Jenkins visited the East Precinct. The East Precinct is allocated 58 Officers that are assigned to the field operations shifts. Currently, there are 13 vacant positions. Each precinct has current positions that are vacant. The below chart shows the amount of allocated and vacant Officer positions that report to the Rotation Supervisor within each precinct. This information is as of June 25, 2022.

	Allocated	Vacant
North Precinct	56	18
South Precinct	44	2
East Precinct	58	13
West Precinct	79	21
Central Precinct	64	8
Bay Creek Precinct	46	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>74</b>

Approximately 21% of all Uniform Officer positions that answer to the Rotation Supervisor are currently vacant.

### *Special Operations*

The Special Operations Section consists of six units; the Special Weapons and Tactics/Hazardous Devices Unit (“SWAT/HDU Unit”), the Aviation Unit, the K-9 Unit, the Accident Investigation Unit, the Motors Unit, and the DUI Unit. The SWAT/HDU Unit performs special operations requiring tactical skills that involve dangerous situations where lives are at risk. The HDU side of this Unit is responsible for the handling of situations involving Hazardous Devices such as homemade explosives or biological substance labs. The Aviation Unit conducts fly patrols around the community. The Aviation Unit is comprised of Officers that are flight trained. The equipment in the Aviation Unit consists of two ND-500 helicopters with movement mapping and spotlights in order to aid Officers on the ground in keeping track of suspects who are fleeing. The K-9 Unit uses dogs who are highly trained in apprehending suspects on the run. Dogs that work with Officers come home with their assigned Officers each day. The Department provides the supplies to take care of the dogs at home. K-9 Unit dogs are also trained to sniff out narcotics.

The Accident Investigation Unit is called out by the responding Officer to an accident when there is either serious injury or a fatality. The Accident Investigation Unit is a very reactive unit. The Motors Unit consists of Officers who are primarily on motorcycles. The Motors Unit runs radar scanners on the roads to check vehicle speeds. The Motors Unit also assists the Accident Investigation Unit to shut down roads or lanes for investigations, assists with traffic enforcement, and provides escort details when necessary. The DUI Unit consists of individuals who are trained in recognizing signs of a DUI. This Unit is called out when Police Officers would like the help of a DUI Officer to investigate potential DUIs.

#### *Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit*

The Teleserve Unit is responsible for taking police reports over the phone from individuals within the community and monitoring the online reporting system. This Unit consists mostly of light duty Officers. Light duty officers are Officers within the Department who cannot perform the usual tasks they are assigned to due to medical reasons or an ongoing internal investigation. The Unit is led by a Supervising Sergeant and consists of 11 assigned officers.

The RedSpeed Unit is responsible for monitoring the RedSpeed and Flock cameras to identify individuals speeding in school zones. The cameras pick up information such as the license plate and vehicle photo. Information submitted by the cameras must be checked by an Officer for quality to make sure that the individual needs to be sent a citation for the crime of speeding in a school zone. RedSpeed takes 24% of the citation fee. RedSpeed is also responsible for setting up and performing maintenance on each RedSpeed camera in the County. The Teleserve Supervising Sergeant also oversees the RedSpeed Unit.

Both the Teleserve and RedSpeed Units are able to have light duty officers assigned to them. As of our fieldwork, there are 26 individuals that the Sergeant oversees. This is a combination of the 11 assigned officers and 15 light-duty officers.

#### *Behavioral Health Unit*

The Behavioral Health Unit (“BHU”) was created in July of 2021 as a way to improve how the Department responds to situations where the mental health of an individual is in question. Currently, the BHU consists of six teams of Social Workers that are trained to deal with individuals with mental health problems. Currently, four out of the six teams are fully staffed, and the other two teams are expected to be staffed by the end of the year. The Social Workers are contracted through View Point Health. The teams are assigned to each precinct and are utilized when calls regarding mental health come into dispatch. Each Social Worker is joined by a Uniform Officer in responding to the situation requiring the help of the Social Worker. Social Workers are given bulletproof vests but are not supplied with any other tool (Firearm, taser, etc.). The addition of this new Unit has been generally positively received by the rest of the Department.

### **Communications**

Uniform Officers within the precincts attend daily roll-call meetings before each shift. The roll-call meetings allow the Precinct Commander to take roll call of all Officers assigned to the specific shift and provide shift assignments to each Officer. It is also an opportunity for Officers to receive updates on current situations around the Department and the precinct in order to be informed on specific criminal or non-criminal situations.

The Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief of the Operations Bureau try to attend a different precinct’s roll call each week, to provide Officers an opportunity to interact with the Chief and Assistant Chief and voice potential issues or concerns.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Uniform Officers currently manually write out tickets. The Bureau has begun looking into technology that would allow for Officers to input ticket information into a system using their in-vehicle computer that would digitally produce a citation and print it out on an in-car printer to be given to the individual. This could speed up the ticketing process for Officers and allow for the Officer to be able to respond to more calls in less time.

The BHU is a new addition to the Uniform Division. With creation of this Unit and the future implementation of the final two teams, the Department has demonstrated its commitment to taking proactive steps in helping the community. Social Workers are able to help provide the skills necessary to handle situations regarding individuals with mental health issues.

## Systems and Applications

### Business Watch International system

The BWI is a system that the Burglary Unit uses to monitor pawn shop activity for reported stolen items. Pawn shops are required to report sold and pawned items to this system in order for law enforcement to be able to track items of interest.

### Flock Cameras

Flock Cameras are used throughout the County to monitor road activity and to provide suspect identification. The Flock Cameras are made and installed by a company named Flock Safety. The cameras are able to read license plate numbers/information and store information about vehicles including license plate numbers, vehicle make and model, and various cosmetic details about the vehicles. The Department is able to use these cameras to locate suspects and monitor situations around the County in real-time with the help of the Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center at the Police Annex.

### RedSpeed Cameras

The RedSpeed cameras are used by the RedSpeed Unit to monitor individuals speeding within school zones. This is a fairly new technology that the Department has begun using. The cameras are able to monitor speed and then take a picture of the license plate and vehicle that is caught speeding within the school zone. Officers then check the information reported by the cameras for inaccuracies and either accept or reject the evidence. RedSpeed retains 24% of the fine once paid by the individual.

### Tiburon Dispatch

Currently, the Communications Division is using the Tiburon Computer Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) system to dispatch Officers to situations throughout the County and track/manage call information. This system is currently being replaced by a new CAD system, Central Square Computer Aided Dispatch.

The Central Square CAD system is currently being implemented throughout the Department. Central Square CAD will assist in the organization of calls for the Police Department and Fire and Emergency Services Department. Once dispatchers within E-911 answer a call and then submit it into the Central Square CAD system, the system informs the dispatcher of the closest available unit to send out to the situation. The Central Square CAD system will also allow Officers to access information regarding the call and look at the exact location of the event while in the field. Currently, the Central Square CAD implementation is behind schedule, but the full implementation is currently expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

### Ballistics IQ

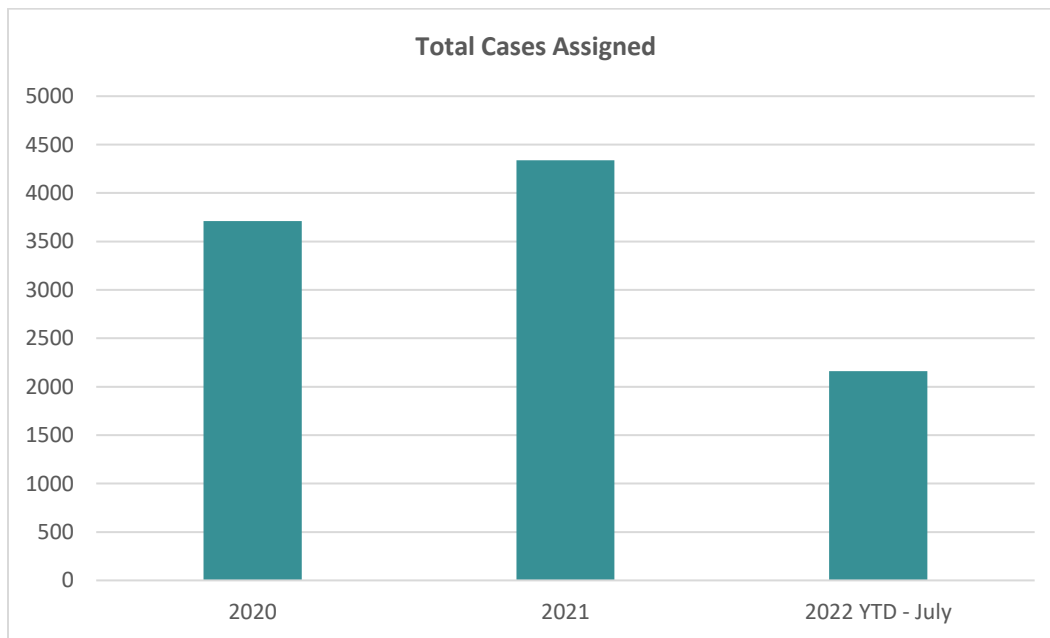
Ballistics IQ is used by the Crime Scene Investigation Section to do ballistics testing on used shell casings. The system analyzes the shell casings and then compares it with other shell casings within the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (“NIBIN”). The NIBIN houses information about a large number of shell casings spent. CSI uses this system to compare shell casings to see if a bullet was fired out of a known gun within NIBIN.

### SAFE Evidence Management System

The SAFE Evidence Management System is used by the Department to track evidence and secure evidence. This system is able to track chain of custody, facilitate communication between the Officers and the individuals responsible for the evidence, and automate the disposal approval process.

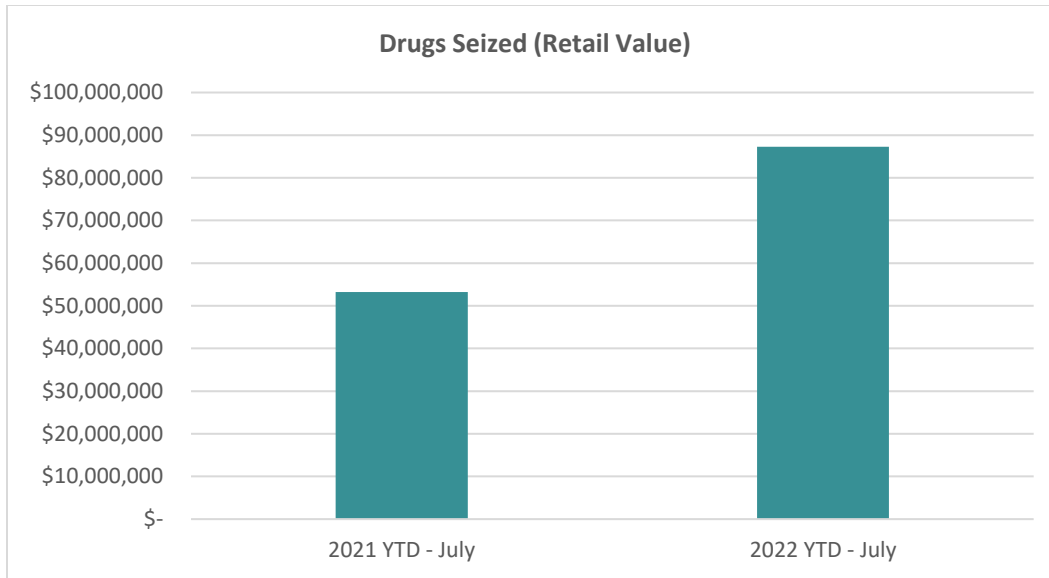
### Data and Performance Analysis

The Operations Bureau tracks a number of different data points month over month and the data is included in the monthly Chief of Police CompStat Report. For the Criminal Investigations Section (“CIS”), the total cases assigned is being tracked. The following graph shows total cases assigned to CIS for 2020, 2021, and 2022 up to July.



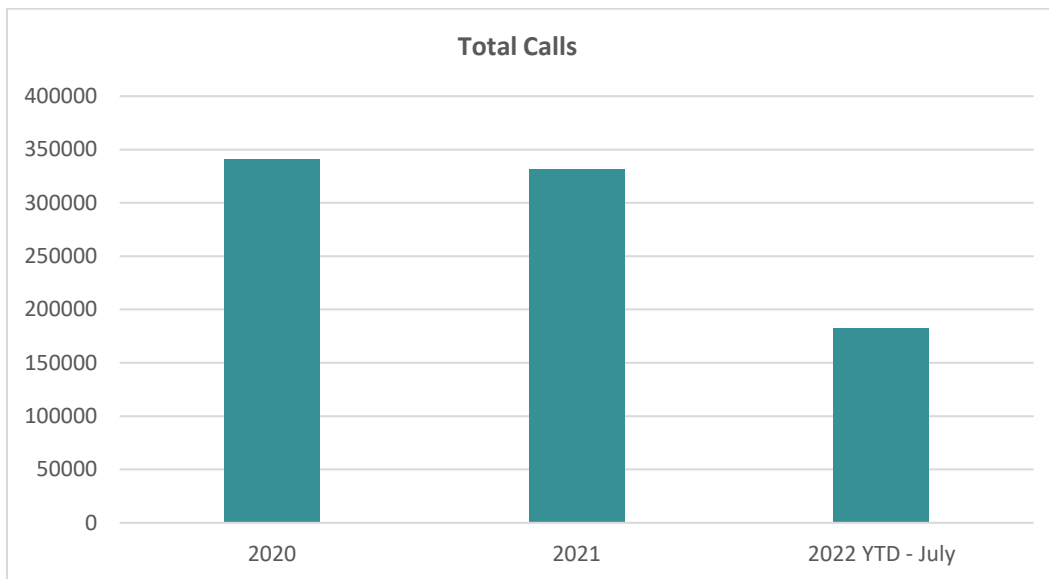
Total cases assigned for the year tracks to be around the same amount as 2021. The Special Investigations Section (“SIS”) is tracking data regarding total arrests made and the retail value of the drugs seized by the SIS. The following graph shows the retail value of all illegal drugs intercepted by the SIS up to July of 2021 and up to July of 2022.





As shown above, the SIS has already seized a little more than 30 million dollars’ worth of illegal drugs in “2022 YTD – July” which is significantly higher than compared to the previous year. If illegal substance seizures continue to follow this current year’s trend, then the Department could exceed last year’s total collections.

The Uniform Division tracks total calls each year. The following graph shows the number of calls for 2020, 2021, and 2022 year to date to July.



If this trend continues into the rest of the year, the Department could see the number of calls be greater than the previous year.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit is assigned light duty Officers that need to work in the Unit temporarily while they cannot perform their regular responsibilities.

Due to the current number of light duty officers within the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit, there is not enough workspace for each individual to work. The Department is currently tracking the month-to-month number of officers on light duty, but the Department is not taking action to expand the space for the Unit based upon the data.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should assess whether the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit can be moved to an area of the facility with a larger number of workspaces, or if there is additional flex space that could be utilized to accommodate the Unit's increase in personnel.

The number of light duty Officers that are being reported on every month could affect the amount of flex space that is provided to the Unit in order to potentially alleviate the current cramped working conditions.

**Observation 2:** Currently, the Crime Scene Investigation Section operates within the Department Head Quarters in a space that is small compared to the needs of the Section. The Section has the goal of being able to run ballistics tests with a live-fire component. This is currently not able to happen in the area they are in.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider the potential for moving the Crime Scene Investigation Section to another building or discuss the possibility of building a new space for the Section to conduct ballistics live-firing tests. This could also allow for the Section to house all necessary equipment related to lab tests in a larger more organized space and provide the Section with the necessary space to do additional in-house lab testing.

**Observation 3:** Currently, the Department does not provide cellphones for Officers to use while they are patrolling through the community.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should consider providing cellphones to Officers working within the Uniform Division of the Department. Officers could be able to take work calls on the provided cellphones as well as take any necessary photographs at the specific incident they are responding to. The Department should consider looking into the regular inspection of these phones if provided.

The new Central Square CAD system that is being implemented around the Department has the ability for a cellphone app. This app would allow for Officers to view CAD call data on their phone. This potential implementation could raise retention and morale within the Department.

## 3.C.4 Police Department – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Police Department to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Summary Recommendations

#### Continued Support and Implementation

**Observation 1:** The Department is currently undertaking two related implementations/initiatives – the implementation of the new Central Square Computer Aided Dispatch (“CAD”) system, and the build out of the new Situational Awareness and Crime Response Center (“SACRC”). The implementation of the new CAD system is behind schedule and is currently projected to be fully implemented by the end of 2022. The full operationalization of the SACRC is dependent on the implementation of the new CAD system.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider adding additional technical and/or project management resources to help ensure that both the new CAD system implementation and final build out of the new SACRC are completed within the current projected timeframe (end of 2022).

## 3.C.5 Police Department – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The perception among current civilian staff is that there is not a specific promotional path for civilian positions within the Department. Staff feel that the only way currently to be promoted is to work for a different Department or join the private sector.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider adding Promotional pathways to raise the retention rate among civilian staff. Allowing civilian staff the opportunity to move up in the Department could raise civilian interest and fill vacant positions where the Department is currently lacking.

**Observation 2:** Communications from leadership within the Department is currently sufficient. However, there is communicative disconnect between the different divisions and sections within the Department.

**Recommendation 2:** In order to potentially bridge the communication gap between the divisions and sections, the Department should consider looking into holding an annual internal “State of the Department” event. This event could allow for the Chief to speak to the entire Department regarding current successes and struggles within the Department.

This could also be an opportunity for the different divisions and sections to make a connection. By bringing people in the Department together to meet each other, this could promote conglomeration and improve overall morale, which in turn, could improve retention.

**Observation 3:** During the course of fieldwork, we heard frustrations of the length and timeliness of procurement activities when working with the Purchasing Division within the Financial Services Department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should ensure that service level agreements are established and communicated so that expectations are clear for all County departments when leveraging the Purchasing Division of the Financial Services Department. As certain procurements for the Department relate to public safety, the County should evaluate the potential exceptions to expedite the procurement process when needed.

**Observation 4:** During analysis of the employee survey, we heard frustrations regarding the Department policy regarding the permissance of facial hair on Officers.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider looking into the policy regarding Officer facial hair. The Department should consider allowing for a facial hair permissance policy in comparison to the Department’s new policy which allows visible tattoos on Officers. This could potentially strengthen morale and provide for greater retention within the Department.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position's ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership's personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of "1") if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.

**Observation 12:** As County departments are developing succession plans and workload assessments, there is inconsistent consideration of the changes in generations, and the values and interests of the emerging workforce. Departments and division are often envisioning that new hires will be comparable replacements for tenured staff with institutional knowledge.

**Recommendation 12:** The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workload analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.



## 5. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.

## 6. Strategic Roadmap

The following pages detail the 67 recommendations for the in-scope departments. The recommendations are categorized by applicable owner (enterprise-wide or single department), are assigned a prioritization level for implementation, and include a typical timeframe for implementation. The detailed report should be read in its entirety to better understand the context for the identified observations and recommendations. The County has the ultimate responsibility to determine the prioritization level and timeline for implementation of any of the recommendations in this report.

The County should dedicate resources and engage external specialists where needed to assist with implementation.

“The most dangerous phrase in our language is: *‘we have always done it this way’.*” – Grace Hopper

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should coordinate to create a formal process and set of specific requirements that inmates must meet to participate in Work Detail. This should include forms or checklists to ensure consistent review and assessment of all inmates.	1	1	3
Technology	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should continue to move towards a paperless, electronic process for documenting compliance before the American Correctional Association (“ACA”) and Prison Rape Elimination Act (“PREA”) audits. Electronic document management should alleviate any potential risk for lost documents and allow for easily accessible documentation during the three-year audit cycle.	2	1	3
People	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should coordinate with Human Resources (“HR”) to create and fill the position for a Sanitation Officer.	2	1	3
Process	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider designating a specific dorm for Residents who become inmates while they are in the Work Release program or seek to have them transferred to another correctional facility. This may assist in alleviating the concern of inmates learning about the processes and procedures of the Work Release program. Since Residents are allowed to leave the facility to work in their previous jobs, restricting communication between the inmates and residents should discourage cross-division illegal activities.	1	2	1
Process	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> In order to keep inmates from growing restless within the facility, the Department should coordinate and relook at the current length inmates need to have left on their sentence before they may participate in educational programs. Moving the current requirement back farther than six to eight months could allow inmates to have another activity they can invest in and help reduce the likelihood of the inmates growing restless within the facility.	1	1	1
Performance Assessment	Corrections - Support Services	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> In situations where an inmate does not complete or graduate a specific educational course, the specific reason should be tracked in order to assess the data and trends over time to potentially reduce/prevent future incompletions in the future.	3	1	3

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People	Corrections - Professional Standards Unit	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Unit should put more emphasis on active recruiting by reaching out to County Human Resources in order to become involved with County career fairs and strategically advertising open positions as other County departments do (billboard advertisements, social media, etc.).	1	1	3
Technology	Corrections - Professional Standards Unit	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Unit should work with County Information Technology Services (“ITS”) and HR to transition the orientation booklet to an electronic format that can be easily completed and submitted electronically. This may improve the completion rate and increase the number of applicants that the Department can consider for employment. This could also speed up the process for getting applicants through the hiring process with the elimination of required paper documents.	1	2	3
Performance Assessment	Corrections - Building Security	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if in-house maintenance staff positions or contracting with third-party maintenance vendors would alleviate potential delays in work order response at an appropriate cost. Alternatively, the Department should work with the Department of Support Services to determine if the volume of requests from the facility would support the creation of dedicated maintenance staff to support the facility.	3	1	3
Process	Corrections - Building Security	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should work with HR to determine if a daily timecard/timeclock system could be reintroduced to allow for timely and accurate capture of time worked. Timecards/ timeclocks are commonly used in the Corrections industry and are used by the Georgia Department of Corrections.	2	2	2
Culture	Corrections - Business Office Team	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should introduce quarterly budget-to-actual and strategic initiative progress meetings. More frequent meetings will help to ensure relevant stakeholders are aware of current progress and allow for discussion of potential changes in approach or adjustment to budgets based on actual revenues received or projected additional expenditures.	3	1	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency: 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation: 1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact: 1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Technology	Corrections - Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should request the Sheriff's Office to provide periodic detailed training to select "power users" or "champions" within the Department to gain a comprehensive understanding of all the offerings and usability within SmartCOP. The Department power users/champions (coordinating with Department leadership) should define the system usage and corresponding business processes, policies, and procedures for maximizing the utilization and consistency of SmartCOP within the Department. The power users/champions should conduct trainings for all current employees, and SmartCOP training should be a formal part of new hire orientation. The Department should also provide periodic "refresher" training of the use of SmartCOP and conduct periodic checksto ensure that SmartCOP is being leveraged within the Department as intended.	1	1	3
Process	Corrections - Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should ensure that staffing and assignment of overtime occurs regularly enough to provide more than 24 hours' notice of scheduled overtime, barring emergency or unplanned circumstances.	1	1	3
Culture	Corrections - Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> In order to potentially create a healthier environment for both inmates and Officers, a stronger emphasis on empathy and soft-skills training should be introduced into the current training process of new and current Officers.	2	1	2
Process	Fire & Emergency Services - Fire Chief's Office	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Departmental leadership should work with the ITS Department to develop means of effective communication, including videos, that comply with County security policies.	3	2	3
Culture	Fire & Emergency Services - Fire Chief's Office	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Fire Chief's Office should consider means of more strategic communication to ensure staff receive information relevant to their specific job functions and needs. Solutions might include fewer emails with more targeted information delivered to teams rather than Department-wide emails, or regular communiques down the chain of command with suggestions of what supervisors recommend their staff prioritize reading.	2	1	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency: 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation: 1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact: 1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Fire Chief's Office	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should continue investigating changes to service delivery in order to meet changing demands and improve employee retention. If data collected over the next few years indicates improvements to service delivery and retention through peak time schedules for medical units, the Department should continue to implement alternative shift models to meet the County's needs.	1	3	1
Process	Fire & Emergency Services - Business Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should work with the Financial Services and Law Departments to develop contracts with stronger enforcement powers and should review the process by which vendors are selected to ensure the Department contracts with the best possible vendors.	2	3	3
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Business Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should work with the ITS Department to identify an electronic checkoff system to automatically notify the Business Services Division of issues with fire apparatus and equipment when identified by active-duty personnel.	2	2	1
Process	Fire & Emergency Services - Business Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should continue to investigate innovative solutions to avoid unnecessary wear and tear on larger fire apparatus, such as Alternative Response Vehicles ("ARVs"). The County should consider approving ARVs in the Department's decision package and expanding the ARV program in the coming years.	2	3	1
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Business Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should consider a work order tracking system, especially one that can also help track the Department's capital and non-capital assets. The Division should work with the County's ITS Department to identify a solution. Several County departments already use potential solutions, such as Lucity, that could be repurposed for GCFES.	2	2	1
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Business Services	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should track and report leading and lagging indicators for each priority initiative to help determine the causes and results of trends in performance metrics. Additionally, the Division should utilize benchmarks to help indicate whether priority initiatives are achieving set goals.	2	3	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
People	Fire & Emergency Services - Community Risk Reduction	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the current law enforcement mandate requirement versus a requirement solely at the Senior Fire Investigator paygrade to determine whether the change would appropriately address the County's needs without significantly raising expenses.	3	2	1
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Community Risk Reduction	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should consider developing online forms for use by residents to register for participation in community programs. The Division should work with the ITS Department to determine the best solution for the forms, such as the Division's ArcGIS Survey123 tool.	3	2	3
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Community Risk Reduction	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should work with the ITS and Planning and Development Departments to determine if the Prevention and Enforcement Section can leverage Accela to autogenerate annually recurring compliance inspections.	2	2	3
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Community Risk Reduction	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should review its priority initiatives and ensure each one is measured through outcome data with adequate context to indicate whether progress is being made toward achieving goals.	2	3	3
People	Fire & Emergency Services - Employee Support & Training	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should ensure recruits are trained to an appropriate level to limit the amount of on-the-job training necessary (understand there will always be some). Departmental leadership should seek ways to address and mitigate concerns of rushed training. Departmental leadership should also expeditiously and transparently address concerns regarding decisions contrary to Training Academy staff recommendations to hire and retain recruits.	1	3	1
Process	Fire & Emergency Services - Employee Support & Training	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Departmental leadership, along with project managers either in GCFES or the Department of Support Services, should regularly communicate status of the Burn Module construction project to staff at the Training Academy. If progress has not been made on the project, the Department should encourage action be taken.	2	3	1

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Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Employee Support & Training	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of developing an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician training program to work in conjunction with the Paramedic College to help ensure Advanced Life Support certification.	3	2	1
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Employee Support & Training	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should review strategic initiatives and priorities to ensure data collected appropriately indicates whether the Division is successfully meeting those priorities and making progress toward goals.	2	3	3
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Employee Support & Training	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should revisit how metrics on the number of auto accidents, equipment/losses, and OJIs reported each month are phrased to ensure personnel don't feel pressured to not report events in order for the Division to achieve reporting goals.	2	3	3
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Operations	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should continue to investigate alternative shift models, such as peak-demand shifts for Paramedics, as a means to mitigate the number of overtime shifts required. The Department should also consider conducting cost-benefit analyses of other staffing models, such as part-time staffing, additional peak-demand shifts, public service internships, continuous staffing, etc.	1	3	1
People	Fire & Emergency Services - Operations	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should work with the Human Resources Department to understand staff concerns regarding the perceived discouragement of taking leave as it relates to overtime pay. The Departments should consider means to mitigate and address concerns regarding the leave and overtime pay relationship, such as stipends or other pay incentives for staff who work more than 24 continuous hours.	1	3	1
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Operations	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should consider incremental benchmarks for tracked performance metrics which help the Division set achievable goals that change over time as each successive benchmark is met.	2	3	3



Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Technology	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider implementing a data visualization tool, such as Microsoft PowerBI or Tableau, to create data visualizations of existing reporting data. As user proficiency increases, GCFES should work with the ITS Department support staff to identify additional data sets for analysis.	2	3	1
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Technology	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should replace medical unit flip phones with smartphones to provide field personnel with potentially life-saving mobile applications. The Department should consider expanding the number of smart devices in emergency vehicles for field personnel, and implement the related policies, guidelines, and controls to ensure smartphones are part of the standard issued equipment, remain up to date and charged, and are reserved for field use.	1	2	2
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Technology	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should work with the Police Department to determine the reality of the adjusted implementation date for the new computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) system. If continued delays are imminent, the Department should perform mission-critical updates on the legacy systems as necessary.	1	1	2
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Technology	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should conduct a needs assessment to define the requirements for the new records management system. The Department should develop the business case and conduct a procurement for a new records management system.	2	3	1
Technology	Fire & Emergency Services - Technology	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should investigate solutions to digitize more processes and necessary paperwork, potentially adopting secured digital signatures for all documents requiring approval and developing workflows for electronic routing and transfer of documents. Workflows would allow for transparency about assigned tasks and owners, approval status, and remaining steps.	2	2	2
Performance Assessment	Fire & Emergency Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider an in-depth functional assessment to determine if staffing levels across the Department are appropriate for the job functions required, and ensure that responsibilities and units are housed at the appropriate level with the appropriate sworn or non-sworn designation.	2	3	2

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Culture	Fire & Emergency Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> While Departmental accreditation may be a key initiative for the Department, leadership should ensure all necessary needs of the Department – and its personnel – are being met. Leadership should consider proposed strategic priorities and initiatives even if not included in the accreditation report, and should ensure staff understand why certain initiatives are or are not approved.	1	2	3
Process	Fire & Emergency Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> Departmental leadership should identify routine processes, procedures, and decisions which can be made by lower-lever management and allow downline managers to oversee and execute those processes, procedures, and decisions. Departmental leadership should work to eliminate unnecessary steps in approval workflows in order to make processes more efficient and effective, and instill a feeling of trust and empowerment in staff at all levels in the Department.	1	1	3
Process	Police - Office of the Chief	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Survey respondent numbers could benefit from more Department-wide promotion and advertising of survey availability. This could include greater quantity of posts on social media platforms to improve awareness. Mailers from the Department outlining the survey details and how to access it may increase awareness for those individuals who may not use social media.  The Office of the Chief should consider also utilizing more County resources to achieve this goal. Survey postings on the County website and County social media pages could allow for a broader viewing of the survey in order to potentially receive more respondents.	3	1	3
Technology	Police - Administrative Bureau	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> In order to track the fleet more efficiently, the Fleet Management Unit should consider working with IT to adopt a fleet tracking system. A fleet tracking system could also help with making sure necessary maintenance is complete in a timely fashion in order to reduce continued damage to the vehicle if timely service is not performed.	2	1	2

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Police - Administrative Bureau	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department and the County should evaluate if the inventory and Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) items currently in the 50-yard firearms range could be housed elsewhere in the County. Once the PPE is cleared out, the Department should continue its construction and build-out of the 50-yard range.	2	1	3
Process	Police - Administrative Bureau	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department and the County should consider discussing the current social media allowances provided to the Department. Being able to use social media to advertise job openings could help the Department in better reaching new applicants for hire.	2	1	3
Process	Police - Administrative Bureau	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider moving the Planning and Research Section from the Training Division to the Office of the Chief. The Planning and Research Section completes a large portion of their responsibilities in close coordination with the Office of the Chief. This could allow the Section and the Office of the Chief to work more congruently.	2	1	3
Process	Police - Operations Bureau	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should assess whether the Teleserve/RedSpeed Unit can be moved to an area of the facility with a larger number of workspaces, or if there is additional flex space that could be utilized to accommodate the Unit’s increase in personnel.  The number of light duty Officers that are being reported on every month could affect the amount of flex space that is provided to the Unit in order to potentially alleviate the current cramped working conditions.	3	1	3
Process	Police - Operations Bureau	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider the potential for moving the Crime Scene Investigation Section to another building or discuss the possibility of building a new space for the Section to conduct ballistics live-firing tests. This could also allow for the Section to house all necessary equipment related to lab tests in a larger more organized space and provide the Section with the necessary space to do additional in-house lab testing.	2	3	2

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Technology	Police - Operations Bureau	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should consider providing cellphones to Officers working within the Uniform Division of the Department. Officers could be able to take work calls on the provided cellphones as well as take any necessary photographs at the specific incident they are responding to. The Department should consider looking into the regular inspection of these phones if provided.</p> <p>The new Central Square CAD system that is being implemented around the Department has the ability for a cellphone app. This app would allow for Officers to view CAD call data on their phone. This potential implementation could raise retention and morale within the Department.</p>	1	2	2
Technology	Police - Technology	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider adding additional technical and/or project management resources to help ensure that both the new CAD system implementation and final build out of the new SACRC are completed within the current projected timeframe (end of 2022).</p>	1	1	2
People	Police - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider adding Promotional pathways to raise the retention rate among civilian staff. Allowing civilian staff the opportunity to move up in the Department could raise civilian interest and fill vacant positions where the Department is currently lacking.</p>	2	2	1
Culture	Police - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> In order to potentially bridge the communication gap between the divisions and sections, the Department should consider looking into holding an annual internal “State of the Department” event. This event could allow for the Chief to speak to the entire Department regarding current successes and struggles within the Department.</p> <p>This could also be an opportunity for the different divisions and sections to make a connection. By bringing people in the Department together to meet each other, this could promote conglomeration and improve overall morale, which in turn, could improve retention.</p>	1	1	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency: 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation: 1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact: 1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Process	Police - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should ensure that service level agreements are established and communicated so that expectations are clear for all County departments when leveraging the Purchasing Division of the Financial Services Department. As certain procurements for the Department relate to public safety, the County should evaluate the potential exceptions to expedite the procurement process when needed.	1	2	3
Culture	Police - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider looking into the policy regarding Officer facial hair. The Department should consider allowing for a facial hair permittance policy in comparison to the Department's new policy which allows visible tattoos on Officers. This could potentially strengthen morale and provide for greater retention within the Department.	3	1	3
People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.	1	1	1
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.	2	1	2
Performance Assessment	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.	2	1	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.	2	1	3
Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.	1	2	3
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.	2	1	3
Process	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant's work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.	2	1	3
Culture	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.	2	1	3

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency:  1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation:  1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact:  1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).	1	1	3
Performance Assessment	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.	2	1	3
People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.	2	1	2
People	Enterprise-wide	<b>Recommendation 12:</b> The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workforce analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.	2	1	1



**Phase 6 Operational and Performance  
Assessment – *Finance Department,  
Human Resources Department, and  
Gwinnett County Public Library System***

Prepared for:

**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

November 2022





# CONTENTS

- 1. Overview and Background ..... 1
- 2. Scope and Approach ..... 3
- 3. Departments ..... 6
- 3.A Finance Department ..... 7
- 3.A.1 Department of Financial Services – Accounting Division ..... 22**
- 3.A.2 Department of Financial Services – Budget Division ..... 26**
- 3.A.3 Department of Financial Services – Grants Division ..... 32**
- 3.A.4 Department of Financial Services – Investment Management ..... 39**
- 3.A.5 Department of Financial Services – Purchasing Division ..... 43**
- 3.A.6 Department of Financial Services – Standards and Controls Division ..... 51**
- 3.A.7 Department of Financial Services – Office of Strategic Excellence ..... 54**
- 3.A.8 Department of Financial Services – Tax Assessors’ Office ..... 60**
- 3.A.9 Department of Financial Services – Treasury Division ..... 69**
- 3.A.10 Department of Financial Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 78**
- 3.A.11 Department of Financial Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 80**
- 3.B Human Resources Department ..... 82
- 3.B.1 Department of Human Resources – Employee Engagement Section ..... 93**
- 3.B.2 Department of Human Resources – Benefits Division ..... 96**
- 3.B.3 Department of Human Resources – HR Operations Division ..... 102**
- 3.B.4 Department of Human Resources – Training & Technical Services Division ..... 108**
- 3.B.5 Department of Human Resources – Fiscal & Administration Division ..... 120**
- 3.B.6 Department of Human Resources – Technology Observations and Recommendations ..... 125**
- 3.B.7 Department of Human Resources – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 127**
- 3.C Gwinnett County Public Library System ..... 128
- 3.C.1 Gwinnett County Public Library – Administrative Services Division ..... 142**
- 3.C.2 Gwinnett County Public Library – Branch Services Division ..... 146**
- 3.C.3 Gwinnett County Public Library – Customer Experience Division ..... 157**
- 3.C.4 Gwinnett County Public Library – Development and Community Outreach Division ..... 168**
- 3.C.5 Gwinnett County Public Library – Facilities Management and Security Division ..... 172**
- 3.C.6 Gwinnett County Public Library – Human Resources Division ..... 176**
- 3.C.7 Gwinnett County Public Library – Marketing and Communications Division ..... 180**
- 3.C.8 Gwinnett County Public Library – Department-level Observations and Recommendations ..... 185**
- 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations ..... 188
- 5. Conclusion ..... 192

6. Strategic Roadmap .....193

# 1. Overview and Background

As part of the direction of the new Gwinnett County (“County”) Chairwoman and Board of County Commissioners, the County sought to conduct an Operational and Performance Assessment (“Assessment”) of the County’s operations and performance. The County engaged Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the Operational and Performance Assessment for all County departments under the supervision of the County Administrator which include the following departments:



- Communications
- Community Services
- Corrections
- Financial Services
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services
- Law
- Planning and Development
- Police
- Support Services
- Transportation
- Water Resources
- Public Library

The Assessment is being performed in multiple phases with two to three departments included in each phase. This report represents the work product of Phase 6 which includes the following departments:

- Finance Department
- Human Resources Department
- Gwinnett County Public Library System

Phase 6 fieldwork began in September 2022.

We commend County leadership for taking the proactive initiative to have a comprehensive and objective assessment performed as it demonstrates to County citizens and stakeholders that government leadership is committed to overseeing operations and fiscal management in a prudent manner with a commitment to transparency and accountability.

We also would like to recognize the numerous County employees throughout multiple departments and position levels who gave their time coordinating logistics, conducting interviews, providing requested information, and allowing Mauldin & Jenkins to observe and “job shadow” certain functions.

This Assessment report identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement. This report also identifies numerous recommendations and provides a Roadmap that should be leveraged to help the County reach its goal of “operational excellence” and “continuous improvement” within a framework based on transparency and accountability. Implementing positive change is never easy, but by leveraging the County’s greatest asset – its employees, and by clearly articulating and communicating the rationale and benefits of the desired change, we are confident that the County can successfully continue to enhance its operations and continue to provide quality, efficient, and effective services to the citizens and stakeholders of Gwinnett County.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” – Socrates

## 2. Scope and Approach

This section details the scope and approach performed by Mauldin & Jenkins to conduct the County's Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Scope

Phase 6 scope included the following departments:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Public Library

### Objectives and Goals

Assessment objectives include:

- Understanding the in-scope departments':
  - Operating environment
  - Organizational structures
  - Key workflow and business processes
  - Identification of "what is working well," "what needs improvement," and "areas for potential risk or concern"
- Comparing departmental operations to leading practices
- Identifying areas that are performing well to replicate throughout the County and areas for improvement
- Developing meaningful recommendations to improve/enhance departmental operations
- Developing a Strategic Roadmap for implementation of recommendations

Assessment goals include:

- Enhancing departmental operations and service delivery models to optimize efficiency and effectiveness
- Reducing risk and maintaining compliance
- Strengthening internal controls, policies and procedures, and governance
- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Enhancing customer service

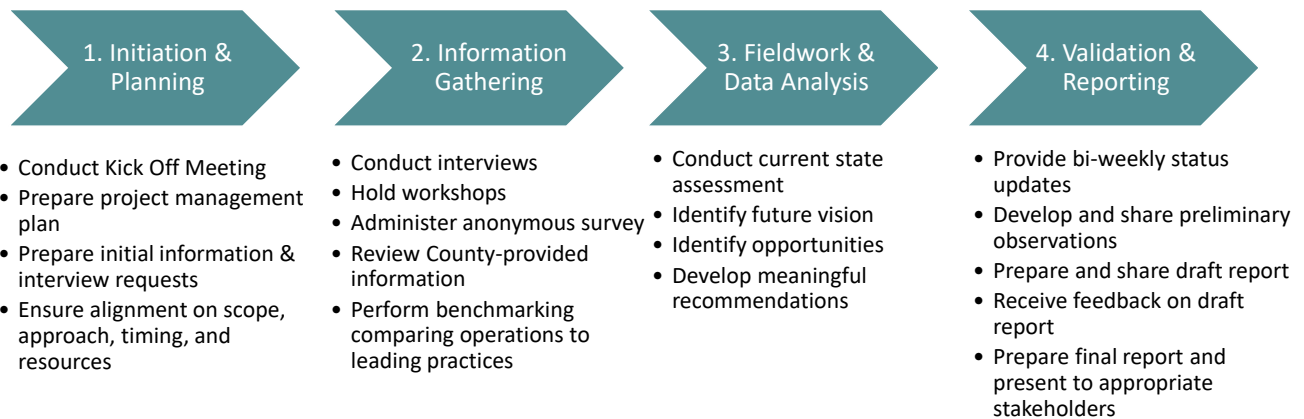
## Approach

Our approach for the Operational and Performance Assessment was based on Mauldin & Jenkins' proprietary transformation methodology – COMPASS. The COMPASS methodology was developed based on best practices, client input, and proven project and change management activities; and served as our framework for the Assessment.



We developed a workplan for the Audit which consisted of the following four phases:

1. Initiation and Planning
2. Information Gathering
3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis
4. Validation and Reporting



As part of the Operational and Performance Assessment, we performed the following key tasks to aid us in formulating our observations and recommendations:

- Requested and reviewed significant amounts of data and information such as:
  - Organization charts
  - Governing documents
  - Policies and procedures
  - Financial information
  - Contracts
  - Performance data
  - Other relevant information
- Conducted more than 85 interviews with the in-scope department heads, key management, and front-line delivery personnel

- Conducted “walk throughs” of multiple facilities and properties
- Performed “job shadowing” observations of various functions and tasks
- Delivered bi-weekly status updates throughout the engagement

This report represents the culmination of our Phase 6 work and presents numerous recommendations and a Roadmap for implementation. This report details our analysis and fieldwork completed between September and November 2022.

### 3. Departments

This section presents the current state, observations, and recommendations for the following County departments:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Public Library

Within each departmental section, the following is described where applicable:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Organization
- Strategic Priorities
- Leadership and Management
- Technology
- Customer Service
- Survey
- Technology Observations and Recommendations
- Department-wide Observations and Recommendations

Also within each departmental section, divisions are described and contain the following divisional attributes:

- Introduction
- Key Functions
- Communications
- Strategic Initiatives
- Systems and Applications
- Data and Performance Analysis
- Division-specific Observations and Recommendations



# 3.A Finance Department

## Financial Services at a Glance

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1 | Oversee the financial operations of Gwinnett County in compliance with state and federal laws, ensuring fiscal responsibility.
- 2 | Manage accounting, budget, and purchasing processes for the County government, ensuring each process adheres to strong internal standards and controls.
- 3 | Identify and appraise all taxable property in Gwinnett County, notify property owners of annual tax assessments, and oversee the tax assessment appeal process.
- 4 | Assist end-user departments in the management of grants through the entire grant lifecycle from grant writing through to compliance reporting.
- 5 | Promote continuous improvement throughout the County government through strategic planning, process improvement, information technology governance, performance measurement, and workforce development.

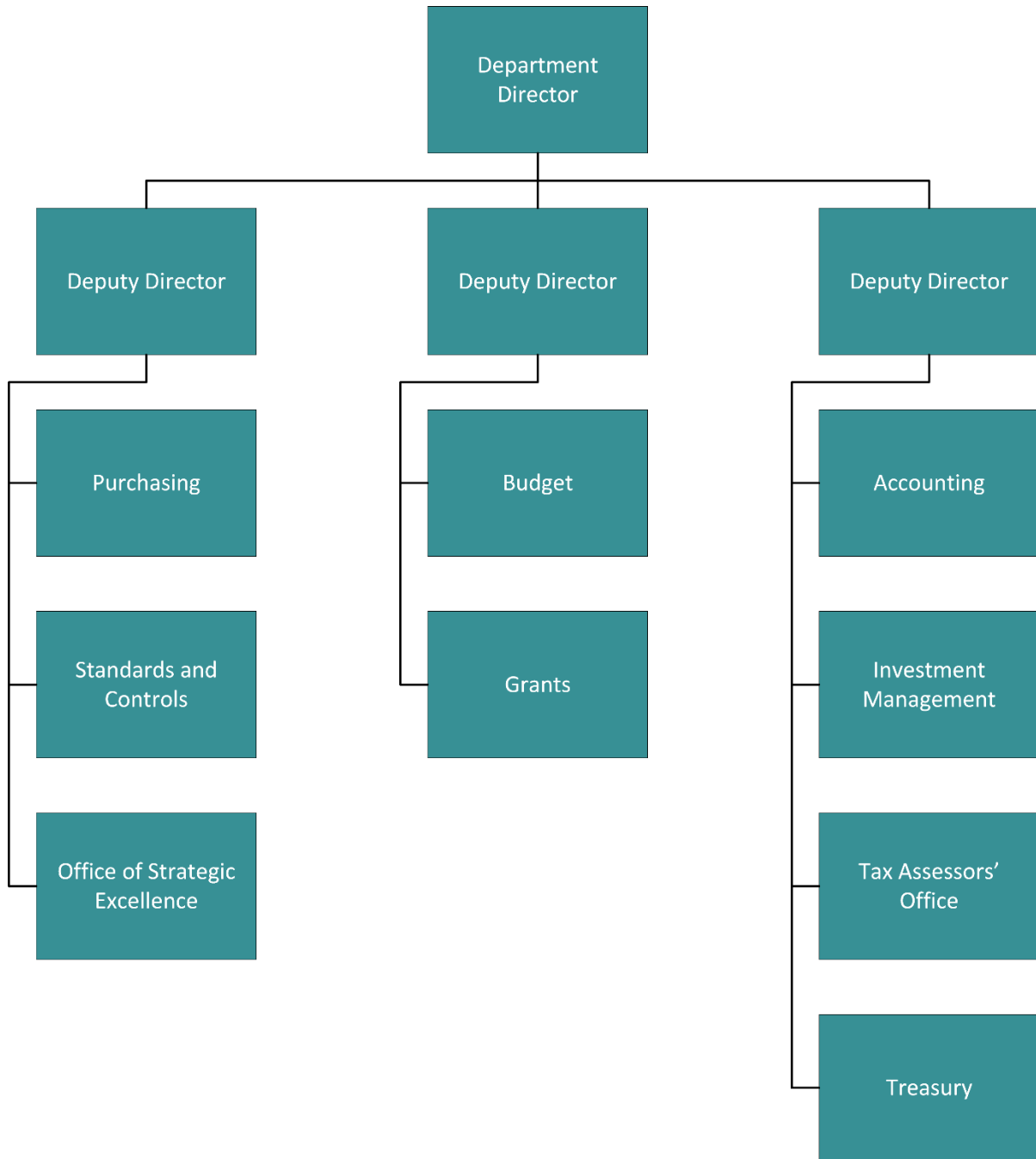
### RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):

<b>\$33,885,759</b>	<b>\$35,184,338</b>
Operating Expenses	Capital Expenses

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:

through August 2022	Financial Services
FTE Filled	134
Allocated	143

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



### AAA Bond Rating for 25 Years



Since 1997, Gwinnett County's management and financial policies have resulted in AAA bond ratings from all three bond-rating agencies – the highest possible bond rating. A high bond rating indicates financial stability and credit worthiness, allowing the County to save ratepayers through lower interest rates.

### 34 Years of GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award



Gwinnett County has received the Government Finance Officers Association ("GFOA") Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 34 years. The award is presented to governments whose budget documents meet certain criteria, including presenting the budget as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device.

### Working Toward Modernization of Functions



The Department of Financial Services is implementing new systems and workflows to modernize the Department's functions. For example, the Department has implemented GovGrants for grants management support, implemented DocuSign for electronic contract workflows, and is planning implementation of a cloud-based ERP system.

## Introduction

The Department of Financial Services ("Department," "Financial Services," "Finance," or "DoFS") manages the County government's financial functions, including budgeting, accounting, purchasing, grants management, debt management, capital funding, accounts payable, payroll, and tax assessment. Additionally, the Department oversees risk management, continuous improvement, and strategic planning for the County government.

## Organization

The Department of Financial Services is led by a Department Director and three Deputy Directors. Department staff are organized into eight divisions which report to the Deputy Directors:

- Accounting Division
- Budget Division
- Grants Division
- Purchasing Division
- Standards and Controls Division

- Office of Strategic Excellence
- Tax Assessors' Office
- Treasury Division

### Accounting Division

The Accounting Division is led by the Accounting Division Director, and is responsible for financial reporting and accounting transactions. The Division is organized into two sections: Accounting and Reporting.

The Accounting Section is supervised by an Accounting Manager and is composed of five Financial Analyst II positions. The Accounting Section is responsible for the monthly period close of the ledger, monthly bank reconciliations, and fixed assets inventory.

The Reporting Section is responsible for preparing the monthly financial reports, the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (“ACFR”) and the Budget in Brief and Budget documents. The Reporting Section also compiles and submits financial reports to the state as needed. The Reporting Section is led by a Reporting Manager, a position that is currently vacant. The Section includes two Financial Analyst II positions.

The Division also includes a Program Analyst I who currently supports both sections.

In addition to financial reporting and accounting transactions, the Division is also responsible for fixed asset inventory, though the Division doesn't have staff solely dedicated to this ongoing process.

### Budget Division

The Budget Division is responsible for managing the current year budget as well as assisting in preparing the next fiscal year budget. A Division Director oversees two sections: the Budget Section and the Fiscal Analysis Section.

The Budget Section oversees the current year budget within SAP, coordinating with end-user departments on current spend and forecasted needs. The Budget Section is also responsible for processing amendments and ensuring adequate budget controls are in place. The Budget Section is led by a Budget Manager who oversees four Program Analyst I positions and a Financial Analyst II.

The Fiscal Analysis Section provides budget analysis and forecasting services for the County. The Fiscal Analysis Section is led by a Financial Manager who oversees five Financial Analyst II positions and one Program Analyst I. The Financial Analysts serve as liaisons with the end-user departments, providing customer service and supporting the budget preparation process. The Fiscal Analysis Section also manages special projects, including serving as a neutral third party during the annual audit process for the identification of samples, developing inflation reports, and identifying leading budget administration and forecasting practices in other county governments for implementation in Gwinnett County.

### Grants Division

The Grants Division provides grants management support for all County departments, focusing on federal and state grants. A Division Director oversees two sections of grant management staff. Each section is led by a Financial Manager who oversees a Program Analyst I and three Financial Analyst II positions.

The Program Analysts serve as team leads and can provide additional analysis and assist with compliance reviews and technical assistance questions. Due to current staffing, they may also support duties and functions typically assigned to the Financial Analysts. Financial Analysts are responsible for grants management during the active award period, and also coordinate grant closeout and records retention. Financial Analysts are assigned a number of awarding agencies, or end-user departments, to try and keep similar grants together.

### Purchasing Division

The Purchasing Division manages the procurement function for the County, assisting Departments with solicitation for, development of, and maintenance of County contracts. The Division ensures all purchases comply with the Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance. A Division Director oversees two Purchasing Sections and one Contracts Section.

The two Purchasing Sections are each led by a Purchasing Manager, with five Purchasing Associate positions - one Purchasing Associate I and a variable number of Purchasing Associates II and III. The Purchasing Associate I performs the administrative tasks related to bid or proposal solicitation, contract award, and contract renewal. Purchasing Associates II and III function as Buyers, conducting the actual solicitation from initiation to post-award. Each Buyer is responsible for a number of end-user departments. A Purchasing Associate II is eligible for promotion to Purchasing Associate III with the Certified Professional Public Buyer (“CPPB”) certification.

The Contracts Section is led by the Contract Manager, with two Purchasing Associates III. The Contracts Section is responsible for maintenance of County contracts, including any change orders approved for those contracts. The two Purchasing Associates III are split between the end-user departments, though will assist with each other’s assigned departments as workload demands.

### Standards and Controls Division

The Standards and Controls Division (“SCD”) provides in-house technological support through system governance and workflow setup. The Division’s staff – a Division Director, an IT Associate IV, and a Project Coordinator – serve as the Department’s liaisons with the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department.

### Office of Strategic Excellence

The Office of Strategic Excellence (“OSE”) is responsible for promoting continuous improvement throughout Gwinnett County through strategic planning, process improvement, information technology governance, performance measurement, and customer service initiatives. The Office is led by a Division Director who oversees two sections, in addition to a Financial Manager, Project Supervisor, Project Coordinator, IT Associate IV, and Business Analyst.

The Process Improvement Section works with end-user departments to document, understand, and improve business processes. The Section is led by a Project Supervisor, who manages three Business Analysts.

The Systems Solutions Section collaborates with the Information Technology Services Department to develop and implement IT governance throughout the County. The Section is led by a Project Supervisor who manages a Program Analyst II.

OSE's functional org chart frequently changes based upon current projects, priorities, and initiatives. While approximately 64% of the Office's allocated positions report directly to the Division Director, staff are often paired based upon assignment and Business Analysts are reallocated from the Process Improvement Section based upon workload.

The Division's Financial Manager position has been vacant since the former Financial Manager was promoted into the Division Director position. The Department has not yet determined how best to utilize the role moving forward.

### Tax Assessors' Office

The Tax Assessors' Office produces the annual Gwinnett County Property Tax Digest through appraisals of residential, commercial, and personal property. The Office is led by a Chief Appraiser and Deputy Chief Appraiser. The Chief Appraiser administratively reports up through the Department of Financial Services, but functionally reports to the Board of Tax Assessors. The Office is comprised of five sections, two which report directly to the Chief Appraiser and three of which report to the Deputy Chief Appraiser.

The Deputy Chief Appraiser oversees the Residential Section, the Commercial Section, and the Personal Property Section.

The Residential Section conducts the annual appraisals of the more than 280,000 residential properties in Gwinnett County. The Section is led by a Section Manager, who oversees three Appraiser Supervisors. Two Appraiser Supervisors oversee five Appraisers while the third Appraiser Supervisor oversees four Appraisers. Appraisers are generally hired at the Appraiser I level and can be promoted through the Appraiser III level based upon Georgia Department of Revenue ("DOR") certifications. Previously, Appraisers could be promoted through to the Appraiser IV level. DOR recently changed requirements for the Appraiser IV certification, requiring supervisory experience before certification as an Appraiser IV – however, Gwinnett County requires Appraiser IV certification and experience before promotion to an Appraiser Supervisor, potentially preventing current and future employees from progressing beyond the Appraiser III level. Appraisers are each responsible for the residential properties within one or more high school feeder patterns. The Residential Section receives some support from contract appraisers.

The Commercial Section conducts the annual appraisals of all commercial properties in Gwinnett County. The Section is led by an Appraiser Manager who oversees an Appraiser. The current Appraiser in the Section is certified as an Appraiser IV. The Appraiser Manager and Appraiser oversee 16 contracted appraisers, supplied by Tyler Technologies' mass appraisal services.

The Personal Property Section conducts the annual appraisals of all personal property self-reported by the residents of Gwinnett County, including:

- Antiques
- Automobiles, watercraft, aircraft, etc.
- Books and manuscripts
- Collectibles (stamps, coins, wine, etc.)
- Fine art
- Firearms
- Gems and jewelry
- Livestock
- Machinery and equipment
- Musical instruments
- Photography
- Tangible business inventory

The Section is led by an Appraiser Manager who oversees an Appraiser. The current Appraiser in the Section is certified as an Appraiser I. The Appraiser Manager and Appraiser oversee eight contracted appraisers, supplied by Tax Management Associates.

The Chief Appraiser oversees the Data Analysis and Management Section and the Assessment Administration and Operations Section.

The Data Analysis and Management Section provides data support for the Office and services as the liaison with the County's Information Technology Services Department. The Section is led by a Section Manager who supervises a Program Analyst II and a Program Analyst I. The Section assists the rest of the Office through maintenance of databases and helping ensure the integrity of all Office data.

The Assessment Administration and Operations Section provides administrative and operational support for the Office and the Board of Tax Assessors. A Section Manager oversees two Program Analysts I, who are responsible for making corrections to the Property Tax Digest, providing municipality reports, and providing administrative support for the Board of Tax Assessors meetings. The Section Manager also oversees two sections: the Tax Assessment Support Section and the Taxpayer Services Section.

The Tax Assessment Support Section (informally known as the "Mapping Section") is led by a Tax Assessment Support Manager who oversees three Program Analysts I (informally known as "Mappers"). The Section reviews all County deeds to ensure County records are up to date regarding parcel splits, mergers, and adjustments.

The Taxpayer Services Section is led by a Taxpayer Services Manager who oversees two Program Analyst I positions and five Administrative Support Associate II positions. The Section provides the Office with reception services and assists property owners with the administrative side of appeals to the Board of Equalization and the Superior Court. The Section supplements its staff with temporary employees – most of the current staff were previously temporary employees in the Office.

In addition to the staff who comprise the sections within the Office, a Business Officer reports directly to the Chief Appraiser. The Business Officer serves as the office manager and HR liaison for the Tax Assessors' Office.

### Investment Manager

The Department includes an Investment Manager, who is responsible for managing the County's debt and all debt-related projects. The Investment Manager is also responsible for overseeing the County's investment portfolio.

### Additional Staff

In addition to the divisions described above, the Department has a Business Management team, a Project Coordinator, and an Engagement Manager.

The Project Coordinator provides support for special projects as needed and assists in the millage rate process and oversees costs of services studies for the Department. The Project Coordinator also liaises with the County's external economist who prepares digest value projections and economic analysis and forecasting for SPLOST and other County projects. The Project Coordinator reports to the Deputy Director who is also responsible for the Budget Division and Grants Division.

The Engagement Manager is responsible for engaging internal and external stakeholders for special projects and initiatives. The Engagement Manager is currently overseeing the County's Equity Action Plan development and implementation. The Engagement Manager reports to the Deputy Director who is also responsible for the Purchasing Division, Standards and Controls Division, and Office of Strategic Excellence.

The Business Manager reports directly to the Department Director and oversees a Business Officer and an Administrative Associate III. The Business Officer and Administrative Associate III manage the front desk of the Department, support the Department Director, manage the Department's conference room schedule, coordinate and order Department office supplies, assist with Department staff evaluation timeline management, process incoming invoices, design and implement team building and engagement activities and initiatives, and conduct other departmental business management functions. The Business Manager serves as the Department's HR liaison and provides HR support to the Deputy and Division Directors within Financial Services. The Business Manager has assisted with legislative affairs coordination, but that role will be transitioning out of Financial Services in the coming months.

### Strategic Priorities

Overall, the Department currently lacks the ability to focus on strategic planning due to limited staffing levels and persistent focus on staffing structure. Currently, the Department is engaged in seeking ways to fill vacant positions, especially long-standing and high skill vacant positions, while determining how best to utilize positions. Financial Services has made an effort to elevate positions when possible, though leadership recognizes not all current positions accurately reflect the level of responsibility entrusted to those positions. As the Department succeeds in making critical hires, the Department should be able to function less in a reactive manner, and focus more on long-term planning.

Along with staffing concerns, Department leadership have noted a lack of adequate documentation of processes and procedures, risking a loss of institutional knowledge and interruption of services when staff leave their positions. Divisions such as SCD and OSE have led the push to document processes and system work instructions to ensure continuation of functions, allowing the Department to focus less on relearning processes every time staff turns over and focus more on developing strategic priorities.

One focus for the Department is understanding the impact of inflation, both on services offered by the government and services utilized by the government. Financial Services recognizes the impact inflation is having on the Purchasing Division's ability to solicit and retain vendors for end-user departments, resulting in interrupted access to good and services. Staff across the Department have been tasked with measuring the impact of inflation and helping provide a bigger picture of how changes in the global business environment are affecting Gwinnett County government operations.

The Department recognizes a shift in County focus to more emphasis towards social service in the community. The Department is attempting to understand and define the core services performed by end-user departments in order to understand how to best allocate resources. More broadly speaking, Financial Services works to understand County leadership's priorities and ensure resources are adequately committed to ensure the success of stated priorities and initiatives.



## Leadership and Management

Staff were generally positive about leadership in the Department on a personal level. Leadership regularly engages with staff and encourages feedback from all levels. While lines of communication have been established via the Department's reporting structure, supervisors are generally understanding when senior leadership reaches out directly to staff-level employees and those employees respond in kind. Leadership is accepting of mistakes and encourages staff to participate in team building exercises.

Expectations for Department staff are high to successfully implement Department and County initiatives that occasionally exceed the duties and responsibilities listed in initial job descriptions. Coupled with staffing issues and the relative inexperience of many staff, high expectations create high-pressure situations within the Department. While staff generally agreed micromanagement is not an issue within the Department, leadership is perceived to heavily scrutinize some regular tasks and analyses, resulting in duplicative analyses and perceptions of lack of trust in employees' capabilities and expertise.

### Tax Assessors' Office

The Tax Assessors' Office inhabits a unique space in that the Chief Appraiser administratively reports to a Deputy Director within Financial Services, but functionally reports to the Board of Tax Assessors. Department leadership provides guidance and support to the Office in regards to position allocations, presentations to the Board of Commissioners, and other administrative matters, but there are not formal governance guidelines to inform levels of authority and decision-making, which complicates understandings of what authority and support should be provided. The differing priorities from Department leadership and the Board of Tax Assessors can result in uncertain direction for the Office. Counties within Gwinnett County's comparison set separate the Tax Assessors' Office from their respective finance department.

Within the Tax Assessors' Office, a disconnect exists between leadership (the Chief Appraiser and Deputy Chief Appraiser) and staff below the Section/Appraiser Manager level. Staff feel communication is provided on a need-to-know basis, with most staff not needing to know, resulting in inconsistent understanding of changes to policies and procedures. Communications do not feel intentional, with a lack of context around work instructions, changes to processes, and project assignment from leadership, resulting in uncertainty as to direction and expectations. The general sentiment is that staff below the Section/Appraiser Manager level do not have opportunities to bring issues to leadership's attention and leadership are either unaware of or unconcerned with the issues affecting staff. While staff respect leadership's experience and knowledge, staff feel the Chief Appraiser and Deputy Chief Appraiser have been removed from the field long enough that they are not familiar with current processes, systems, and expectations, leading to disconnects between leadership and staff and among sections.

Staff across the Office did express appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the new Assessment Administration and Operations Section Manager to bridge gaps between the sections, ensure all staff are treated equally, and make sure all staff have the resources and operational support needed to complete their jobs.

## Technology

The following describe the Department's current technology:

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Financial Services Department. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

### Corporater

Corporater is a performance management software application used by the Office of Strategic Excellence for building and maintaining the County's Management Framework application.

### GovGrants

GovGrants is a cloud-based grants management software application. The Grants Division is currently implementing the GovGrants Subrecipient Module, and the Grants Management Module implementation will begin in November 2022.

### FileNet

FileNet is an enterprise content management system used for document management and workflow. The Department uses FileNet to store and workflow contracts, invoices, and other financial documents.

### DocuSign

DocuSign is a software application used for electronic signatures. DocuSign is currently being implemented in phases within the Department.

### Riskconnect

Riskconnect is an integrated risk management information system, claims administration system, and health and safety management system. The Risk Management Unit uses Riskconnect for calendaring.

### Aumentum and ProVal

Aumentum and ProVal are software applications used by the County for tax collection and property valuations. The Tax Commissioner's Office primarily uses Aumentum, and the Tax Appraisers Office uses ProVal.

### CAMA Cloud

CAMA Cloud is a mobile software application used by appraisers in the field to review property data and create market value estimates. CAMA Cloud runs on iPads and syncs data to ProVal.

### Wdesk

Wdesk is a report development software used to develop templates for recurring reports and produce reports through the input of data and narrative.

## Customer Service

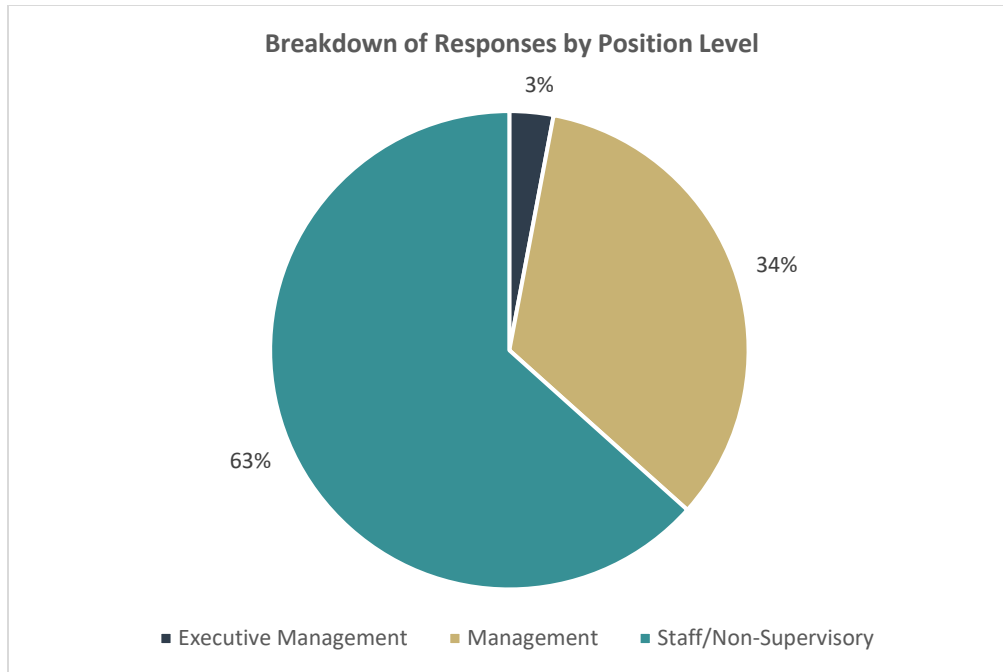
The Department's primary customers are end-user departments. Various divisions within the Department assign specific staff to a group of departments in order to provide consistent and expert services to the internal clients. Because so many of the Department's functions are decentralized, DoFS staff have little authority to enforce deadlines, standards, or policies with end-user departments. Different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. utilized by end-user departments create challenges compelling internal clients to provide data and approvals in a timely manner. Department staff believe that Department and County leadership often encourage Department staff to forgo policies and make exceptions for end-user departments when those departments' needs match leadership priorities, resulting in inconsistent application of policies and affecting the Department's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently. Staff feel the Department has little authority to tell end-user department "no" when end-user departments ask for exceptions and favors when their requests or submissions haven't been made according to set timelines.

The Department also provides services to members of the public – both vendors and property owners. The County has developed portals for members of the public, such as the portal used by the Tax Assessors' Office to document the status of property tax appeals. The vendor portal, however, only provides vendors with the ability to update their information – the vendors don't have access to procurements or invoice payment status. The Tax Assessors' Office primary customers are the residents of Gwinnett County, creating a more public-facing customer service effort. The Taxpayer Services Section responds regularly to resident questions via phone calls, emails, and walk-ins, and will transfer residents to the Appraisers when specialized knowledge is required. The Appraisers themselves regularly interact with the public during the conduct of inspections, and are expected to represent the County with professionalism and expertise.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Ninety-nine responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 39%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

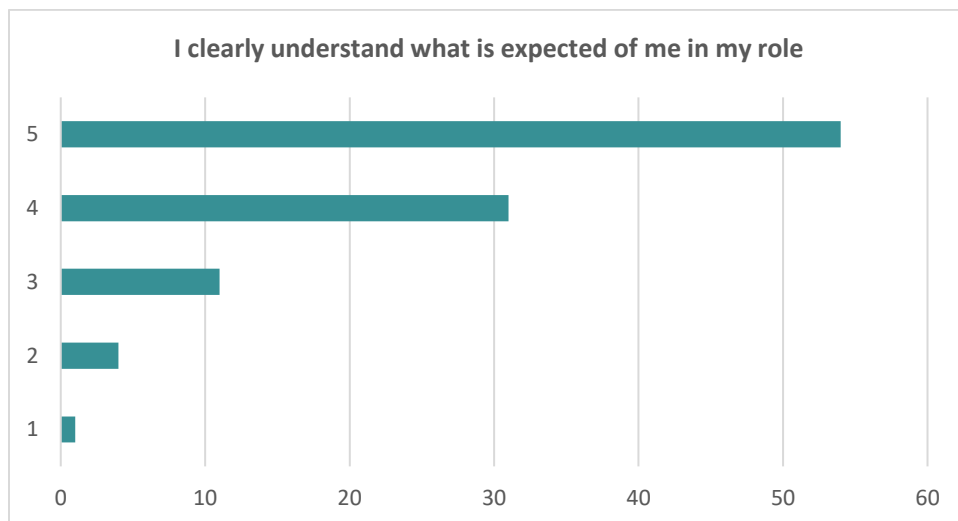
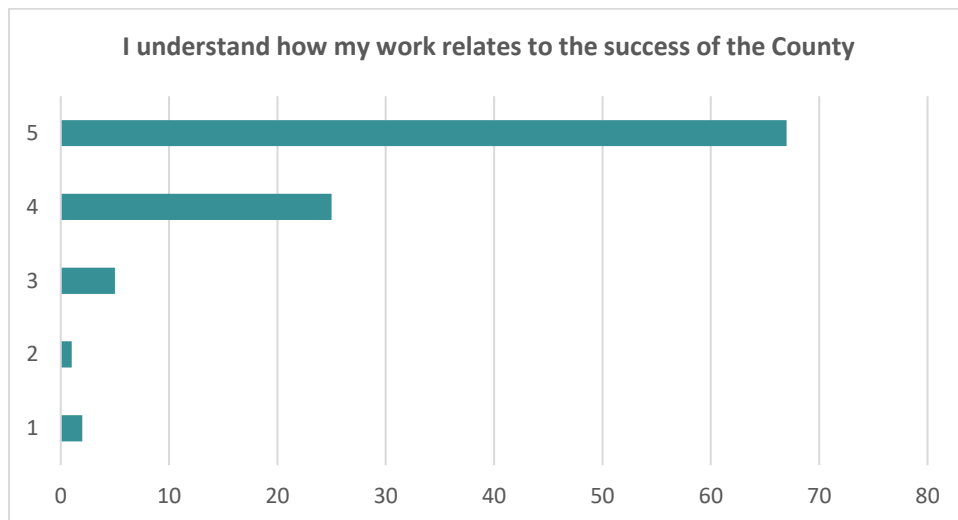
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

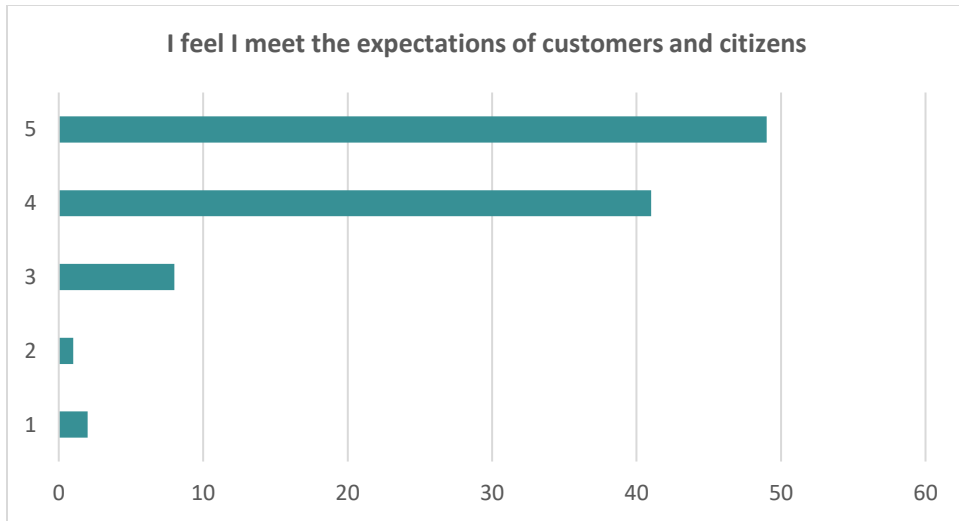
Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.5
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.3
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	3.9
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.5
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.3
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	3.0
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	4.1
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	4.0
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.9
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.6
My direct supervisor encourages my professional development	4.1
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Director) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.1

Survey Statement	Average Score
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Director) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.8
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Director) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.7
I am proud to work for the County	4.2
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.2

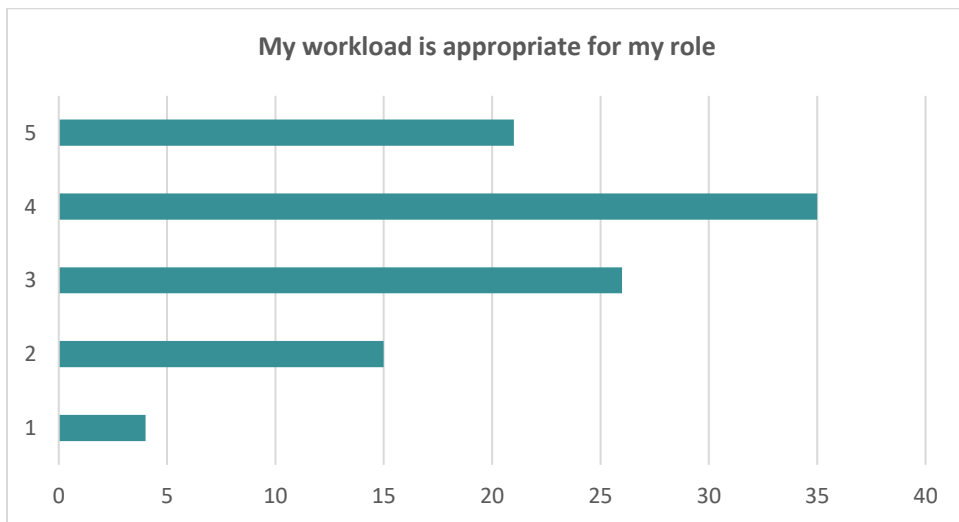
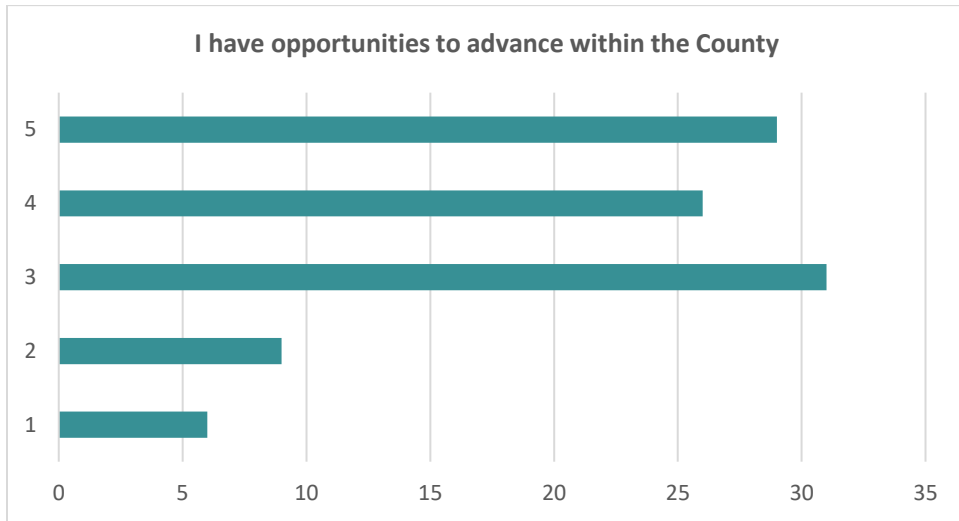
The average score for all the survey statements is 4.0. The lowest score is 3.0 and the highest score is 4.5.

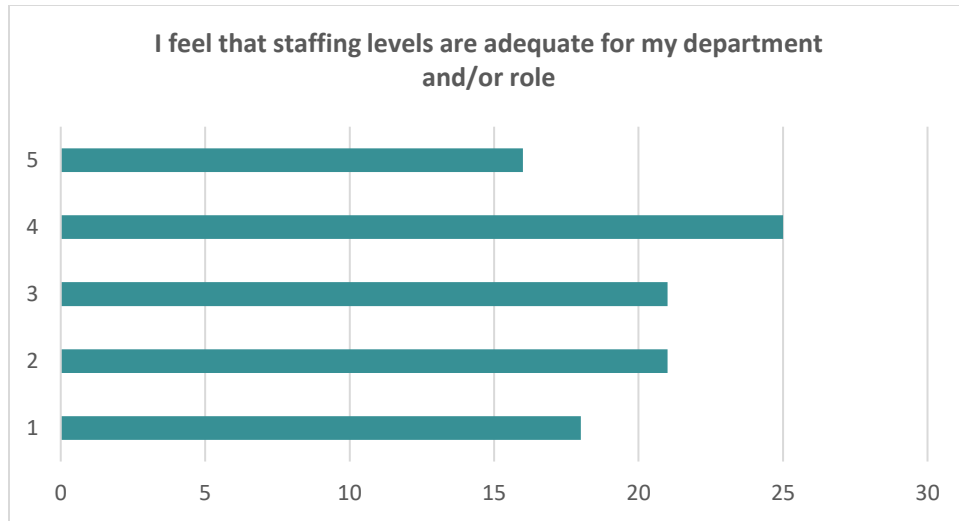
The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents indicated the strength of the Department’s teamwork and leadership’s emphasis on teamwork for the completion of tasks. Respondents felt that staff in the Department work well together.
- Respondents suggested strengthening communication between the Department and its end-user departments and between Department staff and leadership. Respondents indicated that they feel expectations from leadership are not explicitly defined or relayed to staff.
- Respondents indicated inadequate staffing levels are causing the Department to struggle to complete tasks on an appropriate timeline.
- Respondents stated the desire for more opportunities to telework. Respondents felt the Department has disallowed this type of working for employees who work solely on computers and encouraged leadership to revisit the policy.

## 3.A.1 Department of Financial Services – Accounting Division

The Accounting Division is responsible for the County’s financial reporting, capital asset inventory, accounting transactions, and maintaining Gwinnett County’s General Ledger. The Division anecdotally has one of the highest turnover rates in the Department, especially in the Reporting Section. Managers and above in this Division are expected to have their Certified Public Accountant (“CPA”) licensure, which leaves most current staff unable to progress to supervisory positions. Other than the opportunity to advance if positions open up, the County does not provide any incentive for current staff to pursue their CPA licensure, which may impact motivation to undertake the lengthy preparation and examination process (the average CPA candidate takes six to 12 months to pass all parts of the exam, with adequate time to study).

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Accounting Transactions
- Reporting
- Asset Inventory

### Accounting Transactions

The Accounting Section oversees the major accounting transactions for the County, such as account reconciliations, bank reconciliations, and balance reconciliations. Journal entries are made through a decentralized model – each department makes their own journal entries which go through an SAP workflow to be reviewed and confirmed by the Accounting Section and then the Accounting Manager. The Division has limited control over journal entries and questions resulting from the Section’s review can require significant back-and-forth between the Section and the end-user department.

In addition to the daily reconciliations and journal entry reviews, the Section conducts monthly and year-end closing. During monthly closing, the Section ensures all transactions have been coded to the correct period and then conducts a series of tests to ensure that every account is current and correct and that cash is balancing. At year-end, the Section again reviews all revenues and expenses to ensure they were coded to the correct period. Once each month and the year are closed, the Section notifies the Reporting Section of period close so the Reporting Section can use that period’s financial data in their monthly and annual reports.

As part of the accounting process, the Section provides regular training to end-user departments. The Section introduces end-user-department liaisons to accounting basics and explains journal entry workflows, capital asset inventory, and SAP leading practices.

### Reporting

The Reporting Section produces a series of monthly and annual reports, in order to provide transparent government and, as applicable, to comply with state and federal program requirements.



Each month, the Section receives notification of period closure from the Accounting Section, and exports transaction and General Ledger data from SAP to produce the Monthly Financial Status Report. Available on the County website, the Monthly Financial Status Report provides information about notable updates affecting the County's finances and updates on each County fund, detailing year-to-date revenues and expenditures versus prior year totals, current year forecasts, and the churn rate represented by a percentage of the total budget relative to the percentage of the year completed. Any budget adjustments and notable variances are detailed in the report, requiring significant collaboration between the Reporting Section, the Budget Division, and end-user departments. The Section also coordinates with the Communications Department for the visual production of each report.

The Section produces several reports on an annual basis, including the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report ("ACFR") and data required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for the Report of Local Government Finance. Most reports are set up in Wdesk – a compliance reporting system utilized by the Division – for easy entry and replication each year. The Section also coordinates with the Budget Division to develop the annual Budget Document, which presents the annual budget and state of the County and its government.

### Asset Inventory

The Division oversees the County's fixed asset inventory – an ongoing process to track and report on all fixed assets controlled by various departments. Each department conducts their inventory on a two-year cycle, with the process often differing from department to department due to the decentralized nature of the process. With the exception of larger departments with in-house processes and systems for asset management (such as Transportation and Water Resources), most tracking of assets is conducted manually.

Physical inventory audits are conducted on a biannual basis. The Division regularly finds mistakes when comparing reported-to-actual inventories and must make numerous manual edits to information provided by departments. Each cycle, departments are given a score based upon how well they've maintained their inventory (noted purchases or disposals, calculated depreciation, updated location information, notated work completed on the assets, etc.) – but Division staff feel low scores don't result in any consequences, leading departments to continue choosing not to prioritize asset inventory. Division staff will review every Board of Commissioners Agenda for asset-related transactions to ensure everything is appropriately tracked as not all end-user departments report these transactions or identify them as asset-related during the inventory process.

When reporting on asset status, the Division has to work with each end-user department's specific inventory platform (ranging from asset management platforms like Lucity to Excel documents) as well as export reports from various SAP modules to run comparisons. The Division has developed an Excel spreadsheet template which allows staff to track assets through the life of a project, providing commenting and reporting capabilities not available through other resources.

## Communications

The Division has regular communications with end-user departments to ensure questions are adequately addressed regarding journal entries and to coordinate fixed asset inventory. Initial transaction touchpoints are generally through SAP workflows, but follow-ups are conducted through less formal channels, such as email or phone. The Division does not have set department contacts within its staff – instead communications are handled by whichever staff member specializes in the particular activity requiring follow-up. Given the volume of turnover in end-user departments, this can cause challenges in identifying the current contact for particular activities.

The reporting conducted by the Division requires significant coordination with the Budget Division and the Communications Department. Whichever member of the Reporting Section is responsible for the report conducts the majority of the communication with the Budget Division and then, upon completion of the content, with the Communications Department.

## Strategic Initiatives

Division staff recognized in interviews the risks inherent in frequent turnover of staff without adequate documentation of processes and procedures. Currently, the Division's documentation is minimal, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge when staff leave the Division. Divisional leadership identified the need to start building out policies and procedures documentation to help alleviate the risks of institutional knowledge loss and ensure continuity.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Financial Services. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has yet to keep up with upgrading the system to the latest version of SAP. The Accounting Division uses SAP to review journal entries and monitor all accounting transactions. The Division also exports reports from SAP to use for fixed asset inventory and monthly and annual reporting.

### Wdesk

Wdesk is a reporting system offered by Workiva which the Division uses to prepare the County's monthly and yearly reports. The common reports have been set up in Wdesk as templates, so the Division's staff are able to replicate, even if they are new to the Reporting Section.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Much of the Division's performance assessment is based upon the timely completion of processes, from month and year-end close out to report preparation. Reconciliations and month close outs, for example, are expected to be completed on a specific timeline: the month close out should occur on the fifth or seventh business day of the next month (depending on where weekends fall) and reconciliations should be completed by the third week of the next month. We were not able to review any data regarding the Division's adherence to these timelines, as Divisional leadership have to manually check to see if timelines are being met – staff were not aware of reports that could be run within SAP or another system to monitor timelines.

In addition to tracking timely completion of processes, the Division reviews fixed asset inventories and grades end-user departments based upon their tracking and upkeep of these inventories. However, reports detailing failure to adequately maintain fixed asset inventories do not have the necessary visibility to ensure end-user departments prioritize addressing these failures.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division's staffing structure has extremely limited growth opportunities, with only one position between the Financial Analyst II level and Manager level. The Department prefers a CPA licensure for any supervisory position but provides no incentive for staff pursuing or becoming licensed as CPAs. Staff feel a lack of growth opportunities have led to high levels of turnover in the Division as staff leave for opportunities in private industry and in other Gwinnett County departments.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should review its staffing structure in order to address high levels of turnover. The Division should consider implementing additional promotional steps above or below the Financial Analyst II level in order to provide staff with a growth path. The Division should also consider incentivizing CPA licensure through monthly stipends or other forms of compensation.

**Observation 2:** Journal entries are completed by end-user departments in a decentralized manner, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. The decentralized model also results in a lack of authority for the Accounting Section when trying to compel end-user departments to complete transactions in a timely manner. This impacts the Division's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions, such as journal entries, to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management.

**Observation 3:** The County does not have a comprehensive fixed asset management policy governing how departments should record and track their fixed asset inventory. This leads to each end-user department recording asset-related transactions and reporting asset status in different systems and manners, resulting in challenges for the Division staff responsible for oversight of the inventory process. Lack of guidance from County leadership also results in a lack of authority for the Division when trying to compel end-user departments to provide asset information in a timely manner and prioritize the upkeep of their inventory.

**Recommendation 3:** County leadership should determine to what degree fixed asset inventory management is a priority and provide guidance to the Accounting Division and end-user departments regarding expectations around fixed asset inventory. If a high degree of accuracy in fixed asset inventory is a priority, the Division should consider determining a singular asset management system all end-user departments are expected to submit data through and should consider establishing a section for staff solely dedicated to fixed asset inventory management.

**Observation 4:** The Division's documentation of policies and procedures is minimal, risking loss of institutional knowledge and procedural knowhow whenever staff turn over.

**Recommendation 4:** The Division should prioritize documenting policies and procedures for regular Divisional activities, including reconciliation and report preparation, to ensure continuation of Divisional services regardless of staff turnover.

## 3.A.2 Department of Financial Services – Budget Division

The Budget Division is responsible for managing the current year budget, as well as assisting in preparing the next fiscal year budget.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Budget Preparation
- Budget Administration
- Budget Maintenance
- Monthly Financial Review and Analysis
- Forecasting

### Budget Preparation

The adoption of the annual budget at the first Board of Commissioners meeting in January also initiates the beginning of the next year’s budget preparation process. The Division holds internal meetings to review the last year’s budget preparation process and identify any revisions or corrections. The Division sets a budget process schedule, which is approved by County leadership – though the Division recognizes County leadership may request process changes throughout the year which will require adjustments to the schedule (for example, a second review by the County Administrator was added for the 2023 budget preparation cycle). Any state legislation that will affect the County’s budget and reporting requirements is taken into account and reported out to leadership. The schedule is distributed to stakeholders through a guiding document detailing processes and the timeline.

Over the course of the year, the Budget Division works closely with end-user departments to forecast their next-year needs and build out recommended operating and capital budgets. For example, starting in February, the Division starts training end-user departments in the capital planning process – providing necessary reminders and informing departments of any changes made to the process. The Division often provides training year-round as the budget liaisons in end-user departments can turnover frequently.

During the third quarter of the fiscal year (Gwinnett’s fiscal year runs from January to December), departments submit their Business Proposal Presentations (“BPPs”) identifying their forecasted budget needs for the next year and requesting decision packages of changes or additions to personnel. The Division assists departments in the preparation of their BPPs, providing recommendations and analysis before the BPPs are submitted to the County Administrator for the third level of review (the first two being the respective end-user department’s Director and the Budget Division). The BPP preparation and review period is the Division’s busiest time in terms of budget preparation, often requiring all Divisional staff to remain on-hand throughout the presentations with little to no opportunity for leave.

Following the first review by the County Administrator and any requested changes, the Division helps end-user departments prepare their BPPs for the fourth level of review. The capital budgets are presented to the Capital Review Team, which includes leaders from various County departments. The operating budgets are presented to the Chairwoman's Citizen Budget Review Committee – a group of Gwinnett County residents who review stated departmental needs and make recommendations on resource allocation. Each BPP is judged through a standardized grading system, and the resulting scores are presented to County leadership. Members of the Chairwoman's Citizen Budget Review Committee enter scores into various Excel spreadsheets, which have to be merged and consolidated manually.

The Budget Division uses the recommendations from the committee reviews to compile the proposed budget. Starting with the 2023 budget preparation cycle, the County Administrator reviews the budget one final time before it is presented to the Board of Commissioners. The budget is published in the fourth quarter and open for public comment, both online and during scheduled public hearings. Adoption of the budget in January restarts the cycle for the next year.

### Budget Administration

Once the Board of Commissioners adopts the budget in January, the budget becomes current. The Division is charged with administering and maintaining the current budget – reporting on budget status and managing any changes made to the budget.

Administration of the budget involves forecasting revenues generated through property tax and budgeting that revenue. The Program Analyst responsible for budget administration reviews the Annual Property Tax Digest produced by the Tax Assessors' Office to determine expected property tax generation and monitors changes in other revenue sources, such as the millage rate. The Program Analyst submits daily reports to Department leadership highlighting revenues and year-over-year revenue analysis. These analyses are often used for presentations by County leadership.

The Division also reviews all Board of Commissioners Agendas to ensure any decisions that will affect the budget are accurately reflected within the Agenda item and within the current budget.

### Budget Maintenance

Throughout the lifetime of each budget, the Division routinely runs reports to ensure the budget is balanced and meeting the needs of end-user departments. Departments frequently submit amendments to the budget, which the Division has to ensure are accurately reflected in SAP and in budget documentation. Each year's budget adoption resolution sets legal levels of authority governing authorization levels to reallocate money. For example, end-user departments may have authority to move money between operating expense line items, but need to request approval from the Financial Services Director to move money from operating to personal services. These changes require completion of a Director's Form, which is circulated within the end-user department before submitted to the Department of Financial Services. For larger changes to the budget, including budget increases, levels of authority are designated to the Financial Services Director, the County Administrator, and the Board of Commissioners.

The Division monitors each of these budget amendments, tracking the changes in SAP and providing reporting as necessary. When budget amendments require approval from the Board of Commissioners, the Division, along with the other relevant divisions within DoFS, reviews the Agendas. The Division performs mid-year budget reconciliation to ensure the budget is accurate and reflects all amendments and changes in revenues. At the end of the year, the Division presents the Board of Commissioners with a series of final changes to the budget to ensure necessary fixes are addressed, such as overspent accounts or budget categories.

If a County position is vacant for 90 days, Human Resources notifies the Division. The Division subsequently removes 90 days' worth of personal services budget from the relevant department for that position. Division staff felt the amount of work required to make the adjustments was not proportionate to the amount of money returned. Staff suggested in interviews the Division undertakes numerous inefficient processes due to outdated policies governing budget management.

### Monthly Financial Review and Analysis

The Fiscal Analysis Section collaborates with the Accounting Division each month to produce the Monthly Financial Status Report distributed by the Department. Each Financial Analyst in the Fiscal Analysis Section is assigned specific end-user departments and collects the monthly budget data from those departments' budget status in SAP. The Section analyzes reported expenses, revenues, transactions, open purchase orders, etc. to determine if reported budget figures are accurate and meeting targets. The Section compares budget status to month-over-month and year-over-year data as well as the churn rate, represented by a percentage of the budget relative to the percentage of the year completed. While the majority of end-user departments do their own analysis regularly, according to our interviews with Division staff, the Section does communicate regularly with departments to understand variances and correct errors.

In addition to the Monthly Financial Status Report, the Section also produces monthly reports on current global business environment factors that will affect County expenses, such as inflation and fuel costs.

The Division also receives and reviews requests to fill a new position or reallocate a position, once approved by the end-user Department Director and HR. The Division reviews how these requests will affect the department's budget and ensures the department has the funds available to pay the requested salary and benefits through the end of the year. Requests are submitted through NeoGov or an online form. The process, as well as other joint HR-Budget Division processes, is primarily manual with limited opportunities to track data or ensure reporting timelines are met.

### Forecasting

The Division recently expanded its forecasting function from providing annual budget forecasts to monthly budget forecasts. Each month, the Fiscal Analysis Section uses historical and year-to-date data to project the expected drawdown on each County fund at the end of the year, based on collected revenues and expenses. Currently, the Section does not receive any forecasting from end-user departments, performing all projections in-house.

As forecasting is still a relatively new function, the Division has not established a standardized procedure or set of resources for determining projections. Division staff are relying heavily on Microsoft Excel to conduct forecasting, without an adequate solution within the current ERP. Staff suggested in interviews Department and County leadership are often looking for predictions rather than projections, resulting in high levels of scrutiny and regular reforecasts of projections.

## Communications

The Division coordinates regularly with end-user departments for each of the Division's functions – ranging from budget preparation and maintenance to monthly reporting. The Financial Analysts in the Fiscal Analysis Section are each assigned specific departments and act as liaisons between those end-user departments and the rest of the Budget Division to ensure the Division receives all necessary data, forms, updates, and clarifications.

Internal communications within the Division are not rigid for the majority of the year, with managers and staff frequently checking in with each other informally. The Planner app in Microsoft Teams is used for schedule and task coordination when staff are teleworking. During the busiest period of the budget preparation cycle – BPP preparation and presentation – the Division hosts weekly budget preparation meetings, which include Departmental leadership, and communicate frequently with end-user departments.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division aims to continuously improve the budget preparation process. To this end, the Division conducts internal post-mortem meetings to discuss the successes and stumbling blocks in the past year's process to better arrange the schedule and process for the next year. The Division also regularly solicits feedback from end-user departments to understand how best to coordinate efforts.

The Division is also looking at ways to improve training for end-user departments. In addition to providing more regular training and developing documentation of training materials, the Division is also looking to shift the internal mindset of how training is conducted. Program Analysts and Financial Analysts conducting training have begun to focus less on just the technical aspects of entering the budget into SAP and more on providing guidance as to how to build out a thorough budget and Business Proposal Presentation.

Division staff indicated they have perceived a mindset shift away from stressing conservatism and cushioning in the budget. As a result, the Division understands County leadership expects more accuracy in terms of forecasting – which has led the Division to increase its forecasting timeline from annual projections to monthly projections and attempt to determine the most accurate way to calculate expenses and revues.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP Business Warehouse

The Budget Division uses internally developed custom templates in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to collect and prepare the budgets for the County's departments. The spreadsheet budget data is loaded into the SAP Business Warehouse ("BW") Module, which serves as the SAP budgeting module. Twice daily, data is pulled from SAP BW and loaded into the SAP ERP Central Component, which is used to validate budget availability for financial transactions. Data is downloaded from SAP BW into Microsoft Excel to create budget reports. The Excel reports are formatted before sending to senior management.

### Data and Performance Analysis

The Division maintains a task list of internal deadlines and tracks against the list to determine which deadlines are and are not met. This tracking helps guide changes to the annual budget preparation schedule.

With the potential for a new ERP solution, the Division will have the opportunity to conduct additional tracking of performance metrics and other data, alleviating the amount of manual data entry and analysis the Division currently performs. The system should help organize historical performance of budget progress in order to assist the Division make more accurate and timely projections.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** While the Division sets the budget preparation schedule and process at the beginning of the year, the Division regularly incorporates requested changes to the procedure from County leadership midway through the year, resulting in rushed deadlines for the Division and end-user departments.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should ensure the budget preparation schedule and process is developed in coordination with and receives approval from Department and County leadership. If leadership identifies desired changes to procedures, those changes should be communicated during the schedule and process development. Otherwise, changes to procedure should be held until the start of the next year's budget preparation cycle to avoid unnecessary delays or rushes.

**Observation 2:** In the conduct of annual budget preparation and management, the Division performs numerous manual processes (ranging from BPP grading and Director's Forms to 90-day vacant position budget takebacks and joint processes with HR) that can result in redundancy, high levels of human error, and levels of staff time expended for limited outputs.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider a full functional audit of current manual processes related to budget preparation and management to determine whether all processes are necessary and whether processes can be automated. As the County contemplates a new ERP, the Division should consider how the new system can be utilized to make processes more efficient and less prone to human error.

**Observation 3:** The Division has been tasked with forecasting County expenses and revenues on a more regular and accurate basis, however, the Division does not have a standardized method or reliable resources with which to develop projections. All forecasting is performed in-house by the Budget Division, with no expectation of end-user department producing their own projections.



**Recommendation 3:** As the Department contemplates the new ERP solution, the Division should review the system’s capabilities to provide forecasting tools and standardization. The Division should also consider discussing with leadership the possibility of end-user departments conducting some level of forecasting with any data and insight not readily available to the Budget Division.

**Observation 4:** The budget preparation, management, and reporting processes are outdated and prone to human error. All data is hand keyed into spreadsheets, and reports must be recreated each month, requiring extensive quality assurance reviews by Division management. In addition, the Division does not have modern dashboards, data visualization, or business intelligence tools for data analysis and reporting.

**Recommendation 4:** Budget Division staff is involved in evaluating the budget functionality of the new ERP system and plans to implement the budget module of the new system. In the meantime, the Division should consider working with the Information Technology Services Department or hiring contractors to improve the controls and macros in the Excel workbooks used for budget preparation. In addition, the Division should evaluate data analysis and visualization tools such as Tableau and Power BI for reporting.

## 3.A.3 Department of Financial Services – Grants Division

The Grants Division is responsible for the majority of state and federal grants awarded to the County. The Grants Division manages and supports the entirety of the grants management lifecycle, from opportunity identification and pre-award evaluation, through grant closeout and post-award evaluation.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Grants Opportunity Evaluation
- Grants Management
- Grants Reporting
- Grants Closeout

### Grants Opportunity Evaluation

Division staff work with end-user departments to identify and source potential opportunities for grant award. There is not currently a County-wide grant award prioritization or strategic evaluation.

One of the Division's Financial Analysts is tasked with performing grant research, assisting end-user departments with applications, and submitting applications as needed. The Division also maintains a schedule of regularly released opportunities and notifies the end-user department when these opportunities are scheduled for release. The Financial Analyst reviews the grant details, and develops a list or outline of the grant requirements, and shares this information with the end-user department, who serves as the final decision-maker on whether to apply for the opportunity. Financial Analysts administratively review the grant application content to ensure compliance with the Notice of Funding Availability ("NOFA") or other grant application. Financial Analysts ensure that the scope of work aligns with the required NOFA criteria, and that the proposed activities are allowable.

The Financial Analyst works with the end-user department to develop a budget for each grant. The budget must clearly tie grant activities to costs, and must include indirect or administrative costs, as required by the grant and in accordance with how the department shares costs. The Financial Analyst must also understand any local match or other cost-split requirements, and confirm that the end-user department's budget supports these costs.

Depending on the submission system, grant application responsibilities vary between the end-user departments and the Division. Currently, the Division is responsible for all submissions within grants.gov, the Federal grants management and application platform.

The County does not currently have a set dollar-value or evaluation process to ensure that the grant award and any post-award maintenance of effort requirements are appropriate for use of County funds.

All grant applications that require Board review and approval come through the Division for agenda item preparation and workflow.

## Grants Management

The grants management function encompasses all duties required during the period that the grant is active, with the exception of grants reporting. Grants management includes: award acceptance, financial management, compliance and monitoring, and technical assistance and support.

The Division maintains a Grants Management Handbook/Manual which is used to help ensure consistency in the post-award processes and procedures within the Division. As each awarding agency and granting fund source may have specific regulatory or program-specific requirements, this manual cannot address all potential questions or process modifications.

### *Award Acceptance*

Once the County has been awarded a grant, the Division is responsible for grant awards acceptance processing. This includes both financial processing and ensuring the approved budget is in SAP, but also reviewing grant terms and conditions and other awarding agency requirements. These requirements are compared with the end-user's processes and procedures and policies to ensure that the end-user department is prepared to comply with all grant requirements that current policies and procedures clearly document compliance activities and internal controls.

### *Financial Management*

All grant expenses are processed within the Division. Financial Analysts review for adequacy of backup documentation, compliance with internal policy and workflow requirements, and expense eligibility for payment under the grant program.

The Division is also responsible for ensuring appropriate budget oversight and manages budget status to ensure that appropriations match the available funds, and that all expenses are charged to the appropriate budget and object code. Financial Analysts are required to coordinate with end-user departments if a budget amendment or reallocation is needed. The Financial Analyst will prepare awarding agency requests, as appropriate, and submit the budget amendment in both the Enterprise Controlling Ledger and Grants modules in SAP.

The Division is also responsible for ensuring that the County is recouping all expended funds from the awarding agencies. For some grants, this involves developing a bill or invoice based on expenses incurred, and submitting that invoice to the awarding agency. For other grants, the Division draws down funds from a grant portal or other awarding agency system. As some awarding agency systems do not have adequate system-level controls, Financial Analysts may have to prepare the drawdown report and supporting documentation, and submit for manual review and approval to the Finance Director and Grants Manager. If the system does not have adequate user levels to allow for in-system controls, the Grants Manager is responsible for portal access and drawdown submissions for certain awarding agencies. The Division prepares and submits requests for funds a minimum of monthly, so long as there are expenses to support the need for a funding request. The Division communicates with the Cash Management Unit within the Treasury Division to ensure that requested funds are received and recorded to the appropriate grant.

For any federally funded grant where procurement or purchasing is required for the grant activities, Division staff must review all procurement to ensure the procurement type, evaluation criteria, and required terms and conditions are compliant with federal procurement regulations. The Division has created standard procurement templates, including federally required terms and conditions, for common federal awarding agencies. Financial Analysts review all contracts to ensure the end-user department has the capacity to ensure the contractor maintains compliance with the grant award.

At the end of each fiscal year, the Grants Division is responsible for ensuring grant receivables, purchase orders, and other outstanding items are appropriately reconciled. Many grants are multi-year, and often do not coincide with the County's fiscal year. This requires the Financial Analysts to prepare a number of accruals for grant funds at the end of each fiscal year, and then reverse these accruals at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Financial Analysts must also close out and re-obligate all funds on purchase orders, as the County does not currently carry over POs from prior fiscal years. Financial Analysts must also determine what position of the grant appropriation has not been spent, and prepare and upload a budget for the next fiscal year to load the remaining available funds.

#### *Compliance and Monitoring*

The Division is currently responsible for subrecipient financial compliance monitoring; any programmatic activity or performance monitoring is the responsibility of the end-user department, or a contracted vendor. The County currently utilizes a vendor to perform federal Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") subrecipient compliance reviews. Once the new Housing and Community Development Division is established, it will be responsible for all subrecipient monitoring for grants.

The Division also serves as the liaison for any grant reviews by awarding agencies, single audit-related reviews or sampling, and any requests from the Gwinnett County Internal Auditor's Office. This includes pulling requested information from SAP as well as liaising with the end-user department for other requested information, such as policies, programmatic activity documentation, or other compliance documentation.

#### *Technical Assistance and Support*

In addition to the above-listed duties, Division staff must also provide support to end-user departments who may have questions about allowable costs, terms and conditions, whether or not proposed changes in activities or budgets require awarding agency approval, and other questions around contracts, procurement, and other administrative activities. These vary based on the grant and the end-user department, and require a high-level of knowledge of the grant terms and conditions and any other regulatory compliance requirements. For some grants, it may also require a degree of interpretation to understand the intent of the requirements and how they would apply to specific circumstances and proposed activities.

#### *Grants Reporting*

Financial Analysts are responsible for all grant financial reporting. Depending on the awarding agency and the report format, the Financial Analyst may also be responsible for collecting and including programmatic reporting elements in the submitted reports. Reporting timelines vary based on the awarding agency, with some requesting monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual, or annual reports. The timeline between the end of the reporting period and the report submission date also varies by agency, so Financial Analysts must track a number of financial report and reporting deadlines.

Financial Analysts also verify reported performance metrics are only on the grant-eligible population, and do not represent departmental or division metrics

The Division also prepares a number of reports for the Board of County Commissioners and the County Administrator's Office, include reports on financial and programmatic progress. Due to limited staffing and SAP functionality, these requests often require lots of manual compilation of data, including coordinating with end-user departments and reviewing their data for completeness and accuracy.

### Grants Closeout

Once the grant's period of performance ends, Division staff are responsible for coordinating with the end-user department for any outstanding invoices, preparing the final financial reports, and coordinating any final request for funds.

For grants that included any capital projects, Division staff must also ensure that the capital project closeout appropriately calculates and identifies the federal participation in the project, any additional conditions of inventory management or disposition requirements.

The Financial Analyst also recalculates any program match, or spend requirements to confirm that the final activity meets all grant terms and conditions and that adequate supporting documentation exists to verify compliance.

The Financial Analyst is responsible for coordinating with the end-user department on all records retention requirements. Most state and federal grant requires a seven-year records retention period, including ensuring that the policies, processes, and workflows that are in place during the grant period are documented.

### Communications

The Division regularly communicates with end-user departments on grants-related matters. For grant applications, the assigned Financial Analyst holds at least one meeting in advance of application development, to define roles and responsibilities and discussion submission timeline.

During the grants management period, the assigned analyst ensures that there are at least monthly meetings to discuss grant progress, budget-to-actual progress, and any issues or concerns. Additional meetings may be coordinated around grant reporting deadlines.

Within the Division, there are regular meetings, and Division leadership is available as needed to assist with questions or additional support.

### Strategic Initiatives

The County has seen a significant expansion in pandemic-related grants. This sudden increase, coupled with an expanded County-wide focus on social and community programs, has resulted in a workload increase for the Grants Division. The Grants Division is focused on ensuring quality service while identifying opportunities for improved efficiencies in grants management.

Many end-user departments are either receiving grant funds for the first time, or seeing a dramatic increase in their grant funds, which increases the requests for technical assistance and program management support from Division staff.

Due to the increased workload, Division staff are acting more as processors of grant invoices, grant reporting, and other grant documents, rather than strategically and proactively working with end-user departments and analyzing costs, program activities, and compliance.

The County has recently announced the creation of the Housing and Community Development program within the Planning and Development Department, which may alleviate some of the internal workload, but there is not currently a County-wide assessment of the role of the Grants Division and where functions and responsibilities currently assumed by the Division may be more strategically placed elsewhere in the County.

Each Financial Analyst within the Division is charged with maintaining the entire lifecycle of their award, which does not allow for adequate time to strategically review for compliance, and requires significant subject matter expertise across a wide range of grant types and awarding agency requirements. It often requires the ability and authority to review and interpret grant guidance, and determine how to compliantly implement within Gwinnett County. As each Financial Analyst is responsible for an assigned set of grants, this could pose a risk of inconsistent interpretation or application.

Due to lack of experienced grants staff, Division management is regularly involved in the day-to-day of grants management. Internal controls are a critical component of successful grants management, so management is often serving as a secondary control for review and approval of grant elements. The lack of experience also means that management must provide additional training and support as questions arise.

## Systems and Applications

### GovGrants

GovGrants is a cloud-based grants management software application. The Grants Division is currently implementing the GovGrants Subrecipient Module with subrecipient portal going live in Winter 2022. Implementing the GovGrants Subrecipient Module provides the Division with process automation for grant submission, reimbursements, and scoring. Grant awards will automatically generate contract templates and integrate with DocuSign for electronic signature and SAP for transaction processing. The Division plans to begin the fit-gap sessions for the Grants Management module in November 2022, with plans for the system to go live in June 2023. The Grants Management module will allow end-user departments access for reporting, and can track KPIs that are custom developed for each grant. Until the new system is available, the Grants Division will continue managing grants under the current process, which requires significant effort to gather information to answer questions about grant funding.

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Financial Services. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System. The Grants Division utilizes SAP for budgeting, invoice and payment processing, reporting, and utilizes the grants module for grant tracking and management.

## Data and Performance Analysis

While the Division collects and aggregates a lot of grants reporting data, the current process is very manual and there is reliance on end-user departments to consistently track and report their data.

The introduction of GovGrants should assist in creating a single repository for grants data, and will allow for more real-time and ad hoc functionality.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The County does not have a strategic grants strategy, allowing each end-user department to determine which grants suit its needs. This results in fragmented grants strategy and may result in inefficient use of time or funding in pursuing grants that don't align with the County's overall strategic mission and direction. The current Grants Manual contemplates high-level evaluation of grant match with County or department strategy, but there is no formal assessment. Departments are applying for grants with a value of less than \$5,000, and spending more than \$5,000 in County time and resources to administer and support the grant.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should develop a comprehensive grants strategy, including criteria for objectively evaluating the value a grant may provide to the County or its citizens, the estimated cost of grants implementation and any post-grant maintenance of effort or additional costs.

The evaluation should also consider whether it may be more impactful for the County to leverage County funds to support programs that could be supported with grant funds. Utilizing County funds instead of time-limited or scope-limited grant funds could expand the potential impact and reduce compliance concerns with terms and conditions associated with grant funding.

The County should also consider a Grants Strategy position in the County Administrator's office, to assist in overseeing an enterprise-wide strategy and helping determine which opportunities are best suited for the County and which may be a better fit for community partners who can apply for grants with the County's support.

**Observation 2:** The Grants Division does not currently have a compliance role, delegating this responsibility to each Financial Analyst. This delegation of responsibility has created a more reactive compliance model, and creates a risk for inconsistent interpretation or application of federal or state regulatory or compliance requirements.

**Recommendation 2:** The Grants Division should create a Compliance Officer position, who can assist in researching and interpreting questions about compliance requirements, allowable costs, or allowable activities. The position should require experience with common areas of grant questions, such as procurement, labor and employment, and construction management. This role should also be responsible for subrecipient monitoring and contract oversight for any third-party grants management organizations.

**Observation 3:** The majority of the County's grants are not awarded on the same activity period as the County's fiscal year. As a result, the Grants Division performs a complex manual year-end closeout procedure to ensure that all grant budgets, purchase orders, and receivables are appropriately reconciled and accrued at year-end and then re-established in the new fiscal year.

**Recommendation 3:** As the County transitions to a new ERP, the Department should evaluate whether the option for carrying over prior year purchase orders and other grant financial records is feasible, or whether there are more automated means of recording year end accruals to reduce the current manual processes.

**Observation 4:** The County's records retention policies do not always align with grant awarding agency records retention requirements. Financial Analysts are responsible for working with end-user departments to ensure appropriate records retention compliance, including completeness of records. End-user departments do not always remember the depth and breadth of documents that may need to be retained for grants retention purposes, which can create challenges in producing documents during grant reviews or awarding agency monitoring.

**Recommendation 4:** The Grants Division should work with the Department of Support Services Records Management Section to draft County records retention policies specific for grants retention, including retention of archival copies of department policies, processes, and other organizational material that documents compliance controls. Training should be provided to Records Management Section staff, along with end-user staff who may have records management duties, to ensure consistent application of retention requirements for grant documents.

**Observation 5:** The new Grants Management application provides an opportunity to streamline the current processes through automation so long as all users support and consistently implement new processes and procedures.

**Recommendation 5:** The Grants Management application project team needs to develop a change management strategy that encourages the implementation team and end members to accept new processes and use the software functionality instead of designing the system based on the current business processes and practices.



## 3.A.4 Department of Financial Services – Investment Management

The Investment Manager is responsible for supporting the County’s fund reserves and financial position through effective management of the County’s investment portfolio, as well as assisting in preparation of debt issuance and ongoing debt management.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Debt Issuance and Management
- Pension Plan Investment
- Investment Portfolio Management and County Cashflow Forecasting

### Debt Issuance

The Investment Manager supports the County’s debt issuance process in coordination with the CFO and the County Administrator. The County’s ability to issue bonds at competitive interest rates to fund projects is based on the credit rating the County maintains. To assess the County’s creditworthiness and financial management, it must present to rating agencies on a regular basis. These presentations typically include information about the state of the County, its budget, strategic initiatives, and general economic conditions of the local area related to job growth, household income, employers, and the overall commercial market. The Investment Manager works with a third party financial advisory to collect and prepare some of the information used in the rating agency presentations. The Investment Manager also prepares the Preliminary Official Statement (“POS”) and the Official Statement (“OS”). The POS serves as a prospectus and notice to interested investors and provides a general overview about the proposed bonds. Once the maturity, interest rates, and prices have been determined the OS is issued with the detailed financial information.

The Investment Manager oversee the external organizations and vendors involved in the debt management process, and also collaborates with end-user departments, as applicable, on the day-to-day administration and utilization of bond funds. The Investment Manager does not have signature authority on bond-related payments and fund issuance; all items requiring signature must go through either the Finance Director or the CFO.

### Pension Plan Investment

The County utilizes an external investment advisor and nineteen investment managers to oversee the investment and returns on the County’s pension plan fund investments. The Human Resources Department is responsible for the County’s Retirement Plans Management Committee (“RPMC”). The Investment Manager reviews and oversees the external investment managers charged with managing these investments. The Investment Manager receives and reviews contractor manager invoices related to RPMC assets completeness and accuracy, but does not have signature authority related to these funds.

## Investment Portfolio Management

The County holds an investment portfolio that follows the state's guidelines on eligibility for both short-term and diversified investment strategies. The Investment Manager is responsible for evaluating the County's immediate and near-term cash needs to determine which funds may be invested, and whether to invest the funds in a more diversified or liquid strategy.

The Investment Manager utilizes the County Investment Policy to determine how portfolio funds are invested. The Investment Policy contemplates three types of portfolios:

- Liquidity Portfolio, which consists of cash, money market accounts, and "money market-like" funds such as Georgia Fund 1 and short-term Treasury notes that typically have maturities of less than one year;
- Investment Portfolio, which are investments with a longer-term average maturity that typically aligns with the longer-term liabilities and anticipated cashflows projected by the Investment Manager; and
- Bond Portfolio, which is primarily securities that have been designated for specific capital projects and/or capital project debt service payments.

There are currently several primary investment portfolio components: operating fund and capital fund investments. The County also utilizes sales tax portfolio management. Available funds can be invested in Georgia Fund One, a conservative investment vehicle administered by the State Treasury. Available funds can also be managed internally using procured investment vendors, in accordance with the guidelines for investment defined in the County Investment Policy. The County currently has two investment vendors – one is charged with managing primarily the short-term mortgage-backed securities component of the County's portfolio, while the other manages the more diversified long-term portfolio. The Investment Manager has some autonomy within the Investment Policy to set the duration targets for the investments; currently the strategy has most funds invested with a five-year or less maturity rate.

The County maintains several operating reserves, including an Enterprise Operating Fund Reserve and a General Fund Operating Reserve. Policy also allows for a Special Fund Reserve, as applicable. Each Reserve is governed by a reserve fund policy which outlines the County's requirements for liquidity or cash equivalent holdings, including long-term holdings that can be liquidated in five business days, as needed. The County maintains strong reserve positions, with the objective of maintaining a balance equivalent to three months of regular, ongoing expenditures. Enterprise funds that are regularly backed by the Operating Fund are only required to hold one month's worth of reserves.

As the County's cash needs changes throughout the year based on the receipt of other revenues such as property taxes, sales tax payments, business license renewals and utility payments, the Investment Manager reviews the income being generated from the portfolio to ensure it meets the immediate and near-term cash needs of the County. This strategy and associated analysis is based on accurate cashflow estimates from County end-user departments, who each have individual methods for calculating and forecasting their needs, especially for capital projects.

## Communications

The Investment Manager works with a seven-member Investment Committee to oversee the portfolio and develop the strategy for investment. Five of the members (The County Commission Chair, the County Administrator, the County CFO/Director of Finance, the Deputy Director of Finance, and the Investment Manager) are members based on their titles. Two additional members are external to the County; one must be from a like-sized local government, with the final member required to be a member of the public with an investment-like background.

The Investment Committee meets twice annually to review the portfolio's performance and to consider any needed changes. The presentations made at these meetings are provided to the Board of Commissioners as part of the monthly financial reports for the applicable months. The Investment Manager also prepares quarterly investment reports that are presented to the Board of Commissioners.

The Investment Manager regularly communicates with the CFO, Deputy Director of Finance, and County administration as relevant to specific projects, investments, or upcoming rating agency presentations.

## Strategic Initiatives

The portfolio is managed in compliance with the County's Investment Policy and is managed using a hold-to-maturity style, which is designed to develop strategic maturation targets that align with the County's cash needs while maximizing the potential return on investment of the funds.

The Investment Manager also maintains a strategy for liquidity, and adjusts the investment strategy and portfolio as needed to align with changes in the County's cash needs.

## Systems and Applications

Currently, a significant component of the reporting preparation and analysis must be performed manually. The Investment Manager must compile the reports from each vendor or advisor into a single report for presentation to the Investment Committee, as well as for internal reporting to the CFO and County leadership.

### SAP

The Investment Manager utilizes the investment management module in SAP to assist in managing performance of the investment portfolio. The current module is outdated and lacks functionality, which often results in the Investment Manager having to manually review and/or recalculate reporting information.

### Broker Dealer Systems

Several of the County's investment advisors provide access to online reporting tools that allow the Investment Manager to compare reports and assess changes in portfolio status and value over time. The online reporting can be compared to investment manager vendor reports for consistency in reporting and accuracy of vendor reporting. Not all of the County's investments offer these tools, so there is still a manual compilation and calculation process for a portion of the County's portfolio, including the Georgia Fund One investments and funds invested in CDs.

### Excel

The Investment Manager has developed internal reporting and compilation tools to assist in report preparation and fund value calculations. Due to the lack of online reporting of certain components of the current portfolio, the Investment Manager must manually calculate the portfolio yield.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Quarterly, the Investment Manager prepares investment performance results. Actual performance is collected from all of the County's fiduciaries and third-party investment managers and compiled for reporting to the County Commission. The Investment Manager compares portfolio performance to portfolio benchmarks, which are currently based on the U.S. Treasury one-to-three-year duration index.

The Investment Manager prepares reporting related to typical investment portfolio management statistics, such as yield to worst and average duration.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The investment management module in SAP does not offer all of the functionality to allow for easy review and comparison of portfolio management. The Investment Manager must manually compile data and prepare reports for use by County leadership and the Investment Committee. There is also not a single source of real-time data analytics.

**Recommendation 1:** As the County transitions to the new ERP, it should assess whether the new ERP's investment management module would assist in reducing the manual compilation of portfolio reporting data and portfolio yield. If not, the County should consider procuring or purchasing a third-party portfolio management software that allows for import of reporting data from a variety of systems or platforms and more automated reporting data and real-time data analytics.

## 3.A.5 Department of Financial Services – Purchasing Division

The Purchasing Division manages the procurement function for the County, assisting Departments with solicitation for, development of, and maintenance of County contracts. The Division ensures all purchases comply with the Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Procurement and Acquisitions
- Contract Development and Maintenance
- Vendor Outreach

### Procurement and Acquisitions

The two Purchasing Sections in the Division manage all County procurements and acquisitions over \$5,000, including both informal purchases (procurements \$100,000 or less) and formal sealed bids and proposals (procurements over \$100,000).

During preparation of the procurement, the Purchasing Associates II and III (“Buyers”) work with their assigned end-user departments to identify the procurement need, specifications, and develop the solicitation for a new contract as necessary. The Division is reactive to the needs of end-user departments, serving as a functional Division rather than strategic procurement body.

If a contract already exists, the end-user department submits a virtual shopping cart of good or services included in the contract, which is reviewed and approved to purchase order (“PO”) by the Buyers, allowing for the purchase to proceed. If a new contract is required, the Buyers will conduct the procurement according to the Purchasing Ordinance – required public notices will be distributed via the website and local media; if required, a pre-bid meeting will be held for potential offerors; Buyers will maintain the posting deadline; and Buyers will solicit the necessary number of bids. While end-user departments generally form the committees for any evaluation of proposals, Buyers ensure each proposal or bid meets the requirements of the solicitation and serves as the point of contact for vendors during the process.

When the end-user department is ready to recommend an award, the Buyers help negotiate the contract(s), working to ensure the County gets the best possible discount. As required by the Purchasing Ordinance, the Buyers prepare an Agenda for the Board of Commissioners to review all procurements over \$100,000. Approved contracts are executed and submitted to the Contracts Section for maintenance.

As part of the procurement process, the Purchasing Sections provide training to end-user departments to ensure relevant staff around the County understand the procurement process and timeline. Currently, training is conducted on an *ad hoc* basis when Buyers recognize turnover in the end-user-department positions responsible for purchasing. One element of the process introduced during training is the procurement timeline – the amount of time required to conduct each step, from the amount of time needed for the Division to review the request and the required posting period to the deadline for Agenda submission and the amount of time needed by the Law Department to review contracts.

The two Purchasing Sections conduct the procurement process and adhere to the procurement timeline as per the County’s Purchasing Ordinance. County and Departmental leadership express the expectation that the Division will adhere to the Purchasing Ordinance, however may also encourage the Division to advance and prioritize procurements deemed emergencies by end-user departments and not submitted with adequate time for proper review and Agenda preparation. Conflicting messaging regarding inconsistent application of procurement rules risks additional back-and-forth with end-user departments when documents are rushed and not prepared correctly, increased workload and unclear workflows for Buyers, and the need to reissue the solicitation when errors are identified after the solicitation has been posted or awarded.

#### Contract Development and Maintenance

The Division reviews and helps end-user departments write all contracts, including competitive procurement contracts, exemption contracts (exemptions are listed in the Purchasing Ordinance), and change orders. The Contracts Section reviews each contract for completion, execution, and common legal terms. If a contract is not complete or requires execution, the Contracts Section routes the contract to the necessary persons to address any omissions. The Section received basic training from the Law Department on the common legal terms present in the County’s standard contract – the County generally can’t legally agree to changes to these common terms, so the Contracts Section reviews these terms with vendors during negotiations in order to assist the Law Department’s review.

As part of the contract development process, the Division also checks vendors’ certificates of insurance, bonding, and other requirements placed on the vendor by the solicitation and/or the Purchasing Ordinance. While these checks are supposed to be conducted annually, during interviews staff suggested difficulty requesting updated certificates of insurance each year due to other priorities in their already-heavy workload.

After contracts are fully approved and executed, the Contracts Section enters the contract information into different modules of SAP, depending on the type of contract, which allows end-user departments to begin creating the virtual shopping carts which get routed to the Division’s Buyers.

Throughout the term of the contract, the Contracts Section updates each contract in the system based upon any actions taken, including renewals and contract amount changes executed through change orders. Contractually authorized renewals currently are initiated automatically unless the end-user department documents a formal complaint against an underperforming vendor. In the event of a formal complaint, the Purchasing Policy and Review Committee is convened to decide if and how long to place the underperforming vendor on a list declaring them ineligible to be awarded to for future solicitations. This review committee is the only method of vendor evaluation utilized by the County as a whole. While some individual end-user departments have implemented vendor evaluations, County-wide policies do not require vendor evaluations to be completed before contract renewals are processed – a common practice in government procurement.

Change orders to change contract amounts also have delegations of authority. The Purchasing Division Director may approve all change orders up to an absolute value of \$10,000; the Department Director may approve all change orders up to an absolute value of \$50,000; the County Administrator may approve all change orders up to an absolute value of \$100,000; and the Board of Commissioners must approve all change orders over an absolute value of \$100,000. Change orders must be reviewed, approved, executed, and entered into SAP just like the initial contract.

### Vendor Outreach

The Division hosts quarterly clinics to introduce the Gwinnett County purchasing process to vendors and answer questions potential bidders or proposers might have regarding government procurement or contracts. In addition to hosting quarterly events, the members of the Division attend community events hosted by various business and entrepreneurial groups. Some community events are at night or on the weekend, requiring staff to work outside their normal schedule without adjusting for that time during normal working hours in order to not fall behind; other community events occur during staff's scheduled hours, pulling them away from their workloads and responsibilities as the Division does not have staff specifically dedicated to vendor outreach.

### Communications

The Division interacts regularly with vendors and members of the public through vendor outreach events, as well as responding to questions via phone calls and emails.

Internally within the County, the Division regularly interacts with Departmental and County leadership, as well as end-user departments. Buyers learn of requested procurements through various sources: end-user departments might submit a paper form for certain types of contracts, an electronic form for other types of contracts, a virtual shopping cart through SAP, or might call or email the Division with their request. Each Buyer is assigned specific end-user departments and communicate regularly with their liaisons in those departments during a procurement. The Purchasing Associates I help the Buyers notify end-user departments of pending contract renewals and expirations in order to initiate the solicitation process with the end-user department. The Division has also developed electronic workflows for executing and distributing contracts to all relevant parties within the County Administrator's Office, the Law Department, the Department of Financial Services, and end-user departments.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division's primary objective is ensuring all County procurement complies with the County's Purchasing Ordinance. However, the current version of the Purchasing Ordinance was drafted in 2016, and therefore does not account for changes in industry and the global environment, such as significantly higher prices resulting in higher contract amounts, supply chain issues, and initiatives increasing procurement accessibility for small business enterprises ("SBEs") and disadvantaged business enterprises ("DBEs"). The current version of the Purchasing Ordinance has relatively low delegations of authority, requiring a disproportionate percentage of procurements to go through the Division's formal bidding processes and go before the Board of Commissioners for approval, creating heavier workloads for the Division's staff and extended procurement timelines, which may impact the viability of bid price accuracy. Bonding and insurance requirements in the current version of the Purchasing Ordinance might also act as a barrier to SMEs and DBEs being able to bid on and receive business from the County.

The Division is also working on various means of increasing procurement accessibility, especially for SBEs and DBEs, such as minority-owned business enterprises ("MBEs") and women-owned business enterprises ("WBEs"). The Division is looking at developing a training program for entrepreneurs and other outreach opportunities, though has limited ability to do so with current staff workloads. The Division is also reviewing bid documents to determine if any common expectations or requirements are preventing qualified businesses from submitting bids or proposals.

One active initiative for providing increased procurement accessibility is a partnership between the Division and end-user departments to determine which contracts can be split into smaller scopes of work to allow more SBEs and DBEs in the community to bid on the solicitations. While opportunities have been found, the initiative has increased Buyers' workloads and has resulted in contract awards to vendors who are unable to complete the work (for example, the vendors contracted to do the landscape maintenance for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services were unable to complete the scope of work, and currently Department of Fire and Emergency Services staff are assisting with landscape maintenance ), further resulting in increased workloads for Buyers as they have to reissue solicitations when vendors don't renew.

Another factor leading to decreased renewals and limiting procurement accessibility is the process for increasing the value of goods and services over the course of a contract's lifetime. Vendors are locked into a set percentage increase for their goods and services, which activates during each renewal, rather than relying on industry standards, such as adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index ("CPI"). Vendors often keep this percentage low on bids in order to win the business, so when the market value of goods and services increases more quickly than the annual increase allowed in their contract, vendors are often unable to continue servicing the County sustainably.

While Division staff were able to identify factors affecting procurement accessibility in interviews with our Assessment team, their ability to address these inhibitive factors are limited due to the Procurement Ordinance and heavy workloads.



## Systems and Applications

### SAP

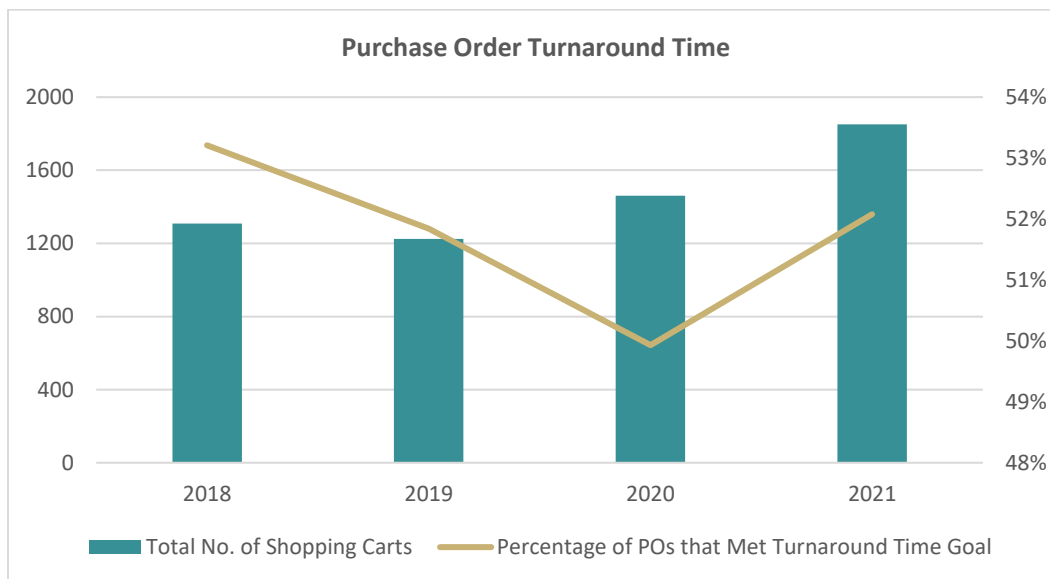
SAP is used as the system to create purchase orders and process procurement-related financial transactions. Contracts are manually loaded into one of two SAP modules, based on contract type, and users can select items from the contract and then add them to purchase orders. However, contract review, approval, and signatures are not automated and rely heavily on physical documents. The County is implementing DocuSign for electronic signatures in phases. The Division is not using other eProcurement features of the Supplier Relationship Management (“SRM”) module. The solicitation and evaluation of procurements are completed outside the system using manual processes.

### FileNet

FileNet is an enterprise content management system used for document management and workflow. The Purchasing Division uses FileNet to store contracts.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks performance through turnaround data on purchase orders, procurements, and contract processing; the number of Agendas processed; and the value of cost savings secured by the Division. For example, the following graph shows the total number of virtual shopping carts received by the Purchasing Department each year for 2018 to 2021 and the percentage of purchase orders arising from those shopping carts that met the turnaround time goal set for each type of procurement.



The data indicates whether the Division is achieving goals on individual procurements but doesn't necessarily indicate progress toward an overall strategic goal, nor does the quantitative data on its own provide a complete narrative of why POs weren't processed within the turnaround time goal.

While cost savings were identified by staff as a previous strategic goal, they indicated they don't feel it's a current priority – however they haven't shifted to begin tracking other metrics in response to current strategic priorities and initiatives.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division overall is reactive to the needs of end-user departments, serving as a functional rather than strategic procurement body.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should consider implementing process changes that allow staff to function more as a strategic procurement body, helping end-user departments better identify their needs and conduct long-range planning. While Buyers may not be experts in their assigned department's specialties, Buyers should be familiar enough to help their internal clients address potential deficiencies in procurement documents and provide recommendations to strengthen solicitation requirements and specifications.

**Observation 2:** Procurement is conducted as a partially decentralized function, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc., especially when it comes to solicitation preparation. The decentralized model also results in lack of authority for the Purchasing Division when trying to compel end-user departments to provide timely information. This impacts the Division's ability to consistently manage workloads and work efficiently.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions, such as solicitation preparation, to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management.

**Observation 3:** The Division provides procurement training to end-user departments on an *ad hoc* basis rather than a regular basis, potentially resulting in inconsistent training for purchasing agents in end-user departments.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should review its training program for end-user departments, considering both a more formalized training schedule as well as the method of delivery. A more regular training program, combined with as-necessary *ad hoc* training, can ensure relevant end-user-department staff get training on an ongoing basis.

The Division can also consider various training delivery models, such as developing online training modules or recorded training sessions for end-user department staff with the expectation all purchasers and approvers within each department complete the training modules on an annual basis. Another training delivery model might be occasional or regular delivery of policies and procedures to end-user-department staff as a reminder of the lessons learned in training.

**Observation 4:** The Division's current staffing level limits staff's ability to be proactive and strategic and ensure completion of expected duties – such as the annual confirmation of vendors' certificates of insurance. An increased emphasis on vendor outreach has additionally increased staff's workloads.

**Recommendation 4:** As a new ERP is implemented and new workflows established, the Division should evaluate its staffing model to determine whether additional staff are necessary or if current levels are adequate. A change in workflows, especially if eProcurement is implemented, might require changes in staff responsibilities and reporting structures.

**Observation 5:** Purchasing automatically initiates contract renewals as per the terms of the contract unless the end-user department documents a formal complaint against an underperforming vendor. While some individual end-user departments have implemented vendor evaluations, County-wide policies do not require vendor evaluations to be completed before contract renewals are processed.

**Recommendation 5:** The Division should consider implementing standardized vendor evaluations to be completed by end-user departments before contract renewal discussions. These vendor evaluations will provide the Division with necessary data about the performance of vendors and help Buyers guide end-user departments in updating solicitations when they are next published for bids or proposals.

**Observation 6A:** The Division has emphasized vendor outreach as a priority for serving the community. Vendor outreach has included hosting quarterly events and attending various community events, oftentimes requiring Divisional staff to work extra hours, or pulling staff away from their responsibilities during normally scheduled work hours.

**Observation 6B:** While the Division has made procurement accessibility a priority, the Division is not able to dedicate resources currently to addressing the factors which inhibit procurement accessibility due to other staff responsibilities.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should consider establishing a Purchasing Outreach and Access Coordinator to handle vendor outreach and address the factors which inhibit procurement accessibility. The Department should consider keeping this position separate from the Purchasing Division to avoid conflicts and ensure the personnel guiding community vendors through the purchasing process is not the same personnel conducting bid and proposal evaluations.

**Observation 7A:** The Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance was last updated in 2016. As a result, the Purchasing Ordinance does not address the current global business environment, such as supply chain issues and inflation-driven prices for goods and services, resulting in higher contract prices and more frequently cancelled contracts. Higher contract prices and frequently cancelled contracts in turn result in heavier workloads for Division staff due to more frequent preparation of Board of Commissioners Agendas and more frequent solicitations for the same goods and services.

**Observation 7B:** The Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance includes factors which may act as a barrier for small business enterprises and disadvantaged business enterprises to bid on County work. Factors including high insurance requirements and limited opportunities to increase prices with rises in market value may inhibit vendors' ability to do business with the County.

**Recommendation 7:** The Law Department should consult with DoFS in reviewing and potentially updating the Purchasing Ordinance to reflect the current global business environment and eliminate some of the barriers to procurement accessibility for small and disadvantaged business enterprises. The County should consider a range of policy updates, ranging from raising delegations of authority to conducting six-month Consumer Price Index reviews for more regular price increases on annually renewed contracts.

**Observation 8:** The Division does not have a modern eProcurement system, resulting in manual processes for contract management, strategic sourcing, vendor evaluation, and supplier management.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division should evaluate the eProcurement functionality of any new ERP system to automate source-to-contract functionality. Given the implementation timeframe, the Division may want to consider a standalone eProcurement system for all parts of the procurement process and integrate or replace the standalone system with the new ERP system procurement modules.

## 3.A.6 Department of Financial Services – Standards and Controls Division

The Standards and Controls Division (“SCD”) provides in-house technological support through system governance and workflow setup. The Division’s staff serve as the Department’s liaisons with the Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- SAP User Management
- Work Instructions for Systems and Workflows
- Internal ITS Liaison

#### SAP User Management

The Division was established under leadership who were involved in the initial implementation of SAP as the County’s ERP system, and therefore are some of the County’s leading experts on SAP’s workflows, security configuration, integrations, and general capabilities. As such, SCD provides extensive support in helping customize SAP in order to meet the Department’s and County’s system needs.

One of the primary ways SCD supports the Department’s use of SAP is through user management. When end-user departments identify new staff needing user access or current staff needing changed user access to SAP, the end-user department makes the request of ITS, who then emails SCD for evaluation of any finance-related security role requests. When requests are approved, user permissions are assigned based upon the specific people being granted access to the system, rather than people assigned to specific user roles. Because the County does not use standardized security roles, preferring to rely on customization in all aspects of the system, access permissions are inconsistent across end-user departments and across users with similar job functions. The County does not conduct proactive audits of department’s user access and security controls within SAP.

#### Work Instructions for Systems and Workflows

In addition to ensuring SAP functions in a way that meets the Department’s needs, SCD also works with the Department’s other systems to implement systems and develop workflows. For example, the Division has helped the Department implement DocuSign for various approval workflows, and is currently involved in implementing the new grants management system. During interviews, staff indicated an expectation the Division will be involved with implementation of a new ERP system.

The Division supports end-user departments by conducting document assessments of policies and procedures that govern financial workflows and system usage. In this role, SCD helps departments ensure their standard operating procedures and other documentation is regularly updated and missing work instructions for systems and workflows are developed. Because of the number of independent system requests from end-user departments and the amount of customization each department requests for their systems, SCD has to help each department develop unique work instructions rather than develop any universal documentation.

## Internal ITS Liaison

The Division serves as the Department's liaison with ITS. The Division provides system implementation support, working with ITS to customize systems to meet the Department's specific needs and providing user access as necessary. Additionally, SCD submits the requests for new staff in the Department to receive their IT equipment and other resources.

## Communications

The Division maintains regular communication with ITS, end users within the Department of Financial Services, and end users in other County departments. The Division coordinates with ITS and the HR Department to project manage end-user departments' system transitions, which involves significant back-and-forth with end-user departments to determine how to make systems meet the County's needs. While the Division maintains regular communications with each of its end users, the buy-in from end-user departments is inconsistent due to SCD's placement in the Department of Financial Services. End-user departments expect SCD will represent Finance's needs and opinions, rather than provide objective governance.

## Strategic Initiatives

The largest upcoming project for the Division will be the potential implementation of a new ERP solution, which will be a joint effort between ITS, SCD, and other departments. The Division's leadership have the necessary experience and a wealth of institutional knowledge, as they were involved in the last ERP implementation; however, the Division does not have any succession planning in place for continuing SCD's services once that leadership eventually retires or leaves. The loss of institutional knowledge would greatly affect the implementation or continued governance over the ERP system and other financial systems and workflows.

The largest struggle with current governance of SAP, according to staff interviews, is limited focus from end-user departments and County leadership on the end-to-end integration of all processes within workflows. For example, staff may not recognize how failing to submit their timesheet affects the processing of payroll, or how expensing goods upon receipt of the good and receipt of the invoice can result in budget errors that exist through year-end processing. Without understanding this workflow integration and leading practices for utilization of the ERP system, County staff and leadership can cause additional work for members of the Department of Financial Services and can set unreasonable expectations that can't be met due to system or workflow structure. The issue is symptomatic of a larger failure by most departments to prioritize enterprise goals and needs over individual department goals. The expectations for SCD require the Division to focus on strategic, County-wide workflows, work instructions, and controls for enterprise systems. However, functioning as a division of the Department of Financial Services results in conflicting priorities and a lack of perceived authority for SCD to enforce workflows and controls in end-user departments' system use.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Financial Services. The Division provides the Department with system customization and workflow support for SAP and approves all finance-related security role requests related to the system.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division has numerous opportunities to measure performance. For example, the Division could be tracking the number of user access requests routed to SCD and the user permissions requested, and then perform regular audits of whether users are actually granted the right level of security access for their function.

The Division could also define performance of the work instructions expectation for the County by tracking whether and how often end-user departments are updating their policies and procedures regarding system use.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** There is significant institutional system knowledge within the Standards and Controls Division staff. The Division staff support the SAP workflow security configuration and understand the integrations within SAP and between SAP and external applications. Knowledge of the current systems, processes, and integration will be critical in implementing a new ERP solution. The County would be at risk if the existing staff were to retire or leave the organization before or during a new ERP system implementation.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should proactively begin knowledge transfer and documentation of the existing staff's knowledge of the current ERP system processes and integrations.

**Observation 2:** Security controls and user access in SAP are granted on a case-by-base basis, with user permission customized according to the person rather than assigned based on fixed security roles. The Division does not conduct end-user-department audits to determine whether users have been granted the correct level of security access.

**Recommendation 2:** As the Division assists with the implementation of a new ERP solution, the Division should consider working with ITS to develop a series of standardized user roles with set security access and permissions. End-user-department staff conducting financial functions should be assigned user roles based upon their position rather than a customized set of permissions. Additionally, the Division should consider periodic end-user-department audits to determine if user roles provide the correct permissions to staff and whether all staff with user access are actually using the access granted.

**Observation 3:** Staff in end-user departments, as well as County leadership, are often unfamiliar with how various processes within workflows and systems are integrated and must follow in a timely (but not rushed) manner in order for successful completion of financial functions. Without understanding this workflow integration and best practices for utilization of the ERP system, County staff and leadership can cause additional work for members of the Department of Financial Services and can set unreasonable expectations that can't be met due to system or workflow structure.

**Recommendation 3:** The Division should consider regular training of County leadership, including Department Directors, on the County's ERP system to provide basic explanation of processes and workflows. If training County leadership on SAP is determined to be inefficient, the Division should at least consider training County leadership on the new ERP system after implementation.

## 3.A.7 Department of Financial Services – Office of Strategic Excellence

The Office of Strategic Excellence (“OSE”) is responsible for promoting continuous improvement throughout Gwinnett County through strategic planning, process improvement, information technology governance, performance measurement, and customer service initiatives.

### Key Functions

Key Office functions include the following:

- Process Improvement
- Management Framework Administration
- Systems Solutions Governance
- Outreach and Performance Management

In addition to the key Office functions, OSE may also be assigned temporary strategic initiatives and projects based on County leadership priorities or need for staff to support initiatives. OSE has served as the internal project liaison for this Operational and Performance Assessment.

### Process Improvement

The Process Improvement Section works with end-user departments to document and understand all of their current business processes, and work to identify commonalities or opportunities to leverage best practices throughout the County.

The Section is currently working with departments to develop a detailed Business Process Matrix (“BPM”) documentation process that identifies functions, processes, and related tasks for individual departments and divisions. The BPM describes each task, identified the responsible position, any cross-trained positions, the frequency of the task, and any systems needed to complete the task.

This Section takes on specific process improvement projects for individual departments or divisions, typically based on needs identified by the end-user department. For example, the Section recently worked with Elections in the Department of Community Services to identify and implement a more efficient poll worker timekeeping process.

The Process Improvement Section also works to identify opportunities where enterprise-wide improvements or direction may be beneficial. The Section assists in writing enterprise-wide policies and plans, such as policies for accident prevention and mitigation, brand management, and an enterprise-wide technology and innovation strategic plan.

### Management Framework Administration

Management Frameworks is the County’s performance management tool for enterprise reporting. Data from multiple systems is sent to Corporater via File Transfer Protocol (“FTP”). The data is extracted, transformed, and loaded from the source files into Corporater from multiple systems. Once the data is loaded into Corporater, it is used to create metrics, dashboards, and reports used by departments to manage operations and ensure alignment with strategic goals.



An IT Associate IV and Business Analyst within OSE are charged with administering Management Framework. The County Information Technology Services (“ITS”) Department only supports the servers that house Management Framework and provide no system or functional support for the application. The two staff tasked with supporting Management Framework focus primarily on the development and backend of the system, rather than focus on dashboard or data visualization.

Most of the data comes into Management Framework through a FTP site, with most other County systems that provide data feeding an csv file into the FTP which is then auto imported by Management Framework. Most of the data imports are based on custom-built reports in the end-user systems. Currently, there are approximately 20 systems exporting data for use in Management Framework. There is currently no internal data validation or comparison process within OSE; all end-user departments are responsible for ensuring that their data has been imported correctly and completely.

Management Framework will allow users to export system data to excel for additional analysis and use.

Management Framework may be updated based on requests from the County Administrator’s Office for additional or different data visualizations. It may also be updated based on requests from end-user departments who need to update or modify the data that is currently loaded into the application. For end-user departments, requirements are collected by other staff in OSE.

Management Framework has two standalone systems: a test system, and a production system. All requested changes or updates are developed in the test system, where it can be reviewed and validated. There is currently no end-user testing in the test system. OSE offers demonstrations of what has been designed in the testing environment to the end-user departments, but they cannot test it for themselves.

### Systems Solutions Governance

The Systems Solutions Section is responsible for collaborating with ITS to develop and implement IT governance to ensure that the County has an intentional strategic process for reviewing and managing end-user departments for systems and applications. The Governance Committee meets on a quarterly basis. Currently the Committee’s role is more functional than strategic.

The Systems Solutions Section has inventoried IT systems and applications throughout the County and can utilize this list to assess whether or not the County has an existing system or application that may meet the needs of an additional customer group.

This Section is also responsible for assisting in writing support documents for IT business cases. For end-user departments to request new or updated systems or applications, a business case must be developed that illustrates the need for the system or application as well as the business justification and anticipated return on the purchase. This Section works with end-user departments to develop the needs assessment and draft the business case justification.

This Section also heads up project management for enterprise-wide projects, such as the County’s project to procure and implement a new ERP system and the website modernization project. The Section collaborates with end-user department stakeholders to identify the needs, develop the proposed scope of work, and coordinate with the Purchasing Division to ensure a competitive solicitation is released and a thorough evaluation is conducted.

Others in OSE may also be tasked in supporting systems needs development or implementation. OSE staff recently led the development and release of an RFP for a customer service management system, and will be implementing a County-wide customer service training module.

### Outreach and Performance Management

A Project Supervisor in OSE, with the support of an available Business Analyst serve as the primary customer-facing component of OSE. This staff leads the efforts to enhance and improve performance reporting through Management Framework, ensuring that both KPIs and project management data are entered into Management Framework timely and accurately, and that the end-user departments are developing and utilizing strategic metrics that can provide insight and visibility into project and department performance.

These staff liaise between end-user departments and the Management Framework administration team. These staff work to understand end-user department's frustrations or concerns and then liaise with the Management Framework staff to understand and operationalize potential solutions. The Project Supervisor and Business Analyst also remind end-user departments of upcoming meetings where metrics will be reviewed, in order to ensure metrics have been updated in Management Framework.

Departments are required to develop an annual Business Proposal Presentation ("BPP") and present this BPP, along with a budget proposal, as part of the annual budget preparation process. To try and create some consistency in the process, the Project Supervisor developed a BPP template, to encourage departments to think strategically about their budget development and to demonstrate correlation between budget and performance.

There is not currently a formal relationship between performance indicators and budget development or analysis.

### Communications

Within OSE there are regularly team meetings, and opportunities for informal check-ins and discussions. The OSE Division Director meets weekly with the Deputy Director, and meets with Department and County leadership as needed, based on current projects and initiatives.

OSE's assignments can come from a number of sources – their Deputy Director or Department Director within Finance, the County Administrator's Office, or through proactive identification and project development. This can create conflicting expectations around priorities, time management, and who OSE is ultimately responsible to.

OSE is a fairly flat organizational structure, with approximately 64% of the allocated positions reporting directly to the Division Director. Staff often have to collaborate on projects and initiatives, and the flat structure allows for working relationships, but can create challenges in project leadership and management.

## Strategic Initiatives

OSE is charged with implementing several enterprise-wide initiatives for the County, but doesn't consistently have the authority to do more than make recommendations; in order to drive the County's desired growth and improvement, OSE may need the authority to compel action, and to help departments buy into the idea of the County's needs outweighing the needs or wants of individual departments. Staff feel that the lack of ability to gain buy-in and consistent support impacts the ability to realize leadership's vision and make the desired improvement.

Additionally, for some department directors who see the value of OSE recommendations, they and their leadership staff are focused on day-to-day and operational needs and do not have the capacity to operate at a more strategic level and support implementation of OSE recommendations.

OSE also works to ensure that all process improvements, system improvements, and other projects are driven by strong, valuable data and that the data ties into the County's overall strategic mission and initiatives.

The BPM project is designed to proactively identify potential duplicative or conflicting processes throughout the County, while also identifying leading practices for duplication and helping document institutional knowledge. Unfortunately, there is no follow-on work already in the pipeline, so staff must way to end-user departments to approach them with requests for assistance and support.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Financial Services Department. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

### Management Framework

Management Frameworks is the County's performance management tool for enterprise reporting. Corporater is the software application used by the Office of Strategic Excellence for building and maintaining the Management Framework application. Data from multiple systems is sent to Corporater via FTP. The data is extracted, transformed, and loaded from the source files into Corporater from multiple systems. Once the data is loaded into Corporater, it is used to create metrics, dashboards, and reports used by the Departments to manage operations and ensure alignment with strategic goals.

Originally purchased by the County to implement the Balanced Scorecard concepts, the application is supported by two staff within the unit. Other staff within OSE work with Departments to determine the requirements for the new reports and dashboards. Corporater is a global software vendor based in Norway with many large customers but has a limited presence in the U.S. public sector market.

## Data and Performance Analysis

As OSE is the primary administrator of the County's system for performance reporting and dashboard management, it works with end-user Departments throughout the County to collect and report metrics. As OSE has minimal authority to suggest or encourage new or different metrics, the metrics collected vary by what each end-user department identifies as important, or may vary based on initiatives driven by the County Administrator's office. Not all of the metrics currently collected and reported are more than "outputs" and do not often provide adequate insight into identifying pain points or leading practices that require additional review.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** OSE provides the opportunity to serve as additional support and staff for departments who want to introduce process improvement and efficiency initiatives, but there is not widespread awareness of the availability to support the efforts. more proactive promotion and engagement of services

**Recommendation 1:** County leadership should continue to promote the services and solutions that OSE can provide other County departments. OSE should also consider a roadshow, similar to the roadshow led by ITS, to promote its staff capabilities, and leverage existing success stories to encourage additional engagement.

**Observation 2:** The County's performance management program provides the Departments with useful information and is ahead of many other public sector entities regarding its performance management applications. In terms of systems, Corporater has served its purpose as the application used to build the Management Framework. However, the application's user interface is not intuitive and lacks some of the features of other data visualization tools. In addition, Corporater is a niche product with limited skill sets available in the open market.

**Recommendation 2:** To address the usability and skill set challenges with Corporater, the County should define the requirements for new performance management tools and develop a strategy for procuring new performance management applications. The strategy should include using the functionality of the new ERP system for financial and human resources dashboards plus tools and applications for the performance management of non-ERP data.

**Observation 3:** Management Framework reports are built from individual file extracts and do not leverage a larger data strategy. In addition, there do not appear to be any data governance standards to ensure data integrity between systems.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should take a holistic approach to data management and governance and define the requirements for an enterprise data architecture and management strategy. The strategy should include identifying and defining:

- common data elements and creating a data dictionary
- a central repository for data storage
- tools for extracting, transforming, and loading data
- data storage schemas such as data warehouses, data marts, and data lakes
- data analysis and visualization tools
- security controls for sensitive data

As part of the strategy, the County should consider conducting a pilot project with a data analytics cloud services provider such as Amazon Web Services (“AWS”) or Microsoft. These vendors offer tools, applications, and services that accelerate an organization’s ability to create a modern data architecture.

**Observation 4:** The current process for requirements gathering for requested updates or revision to end-user department dashboards and reports is somewhat informal, and may result in multiple communications between the Management Framework Staff, the Performance Management staff, and the end-user department staff to collect the needed information to assess whether the change can be implemented.

**Recommendation 4:** OSE staff in Performance Management and Management Framework should collaborate to develop a better requirements-gathering template and include the Management Framework staff in the requirements-gathering meetings. In addition, the Management Framework staff should provide the Outreach Staff with information and training on the capabilities of the Management Framework application.

**Observation 5:** OSE is involved in both Business Proposal Plan development as well as the capture and visualization of department performance metrics and project tracking. There is a missed opportunity to utilize OSE to leverage the combination of this data and insight with budget and financial data to better utilize data in decision-making, and understand the relationship between performance metrics and budget.

**Recommendation 5:** OSE performance management staff should be utilized more strategically, in evaluating department Business Proposal Plans and performance metrics and helping end-user departments develop performance metrics and KPIs that better align with funding priorities and decision packages. This should include developing logic models that clearly define the inputs, outputs, outcomes, budgets, and other resources necessary to drive performance, and to ensure that the performance metrics truly align with and contribute to the Gwinnett Standard and the County’s mission and strategic initiatives.

The County should consider working towards performance-based budgeting in the coming years.

## 3.A.8 Department of Financial Services – Tax Assessors’ Office

The Tax Assessors’ Office produces the annual Gwinnett County Property Tax Digest used by the Tax Commissioner’s Office through appraisals of residential, commercial, and personal property.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Valuation of Property and Digest Development
- Appeals
- Contractor Oversight
- Mapping (Public Record Updates)
- Data Support
- Administrative and Customer Support

### Valuation of Property and Digest Development

The three sections that report to the Deputy Chief Appraiser – the Residential Section, the Commercial Section, and the Personal Property Section – conduct annual appraisals of all real property in the County and all reported personal property.

Residential and Commercial Appraisers conduct on-site inspections of properties throughout the County, following guidelines from the Georgia Department of Revenue (“DOR”) and utilizing the condition and features of the property along with sales comparison, costs, and income approaches to determine the value of the property. Appraisers enter the results of their appraisals into ProVal for creation of the Annual Notices of Assessment, which are mailed to property owners each April and provide an explanation of the appraised value of the property.

Each Residential Appraiser is responsible for one or more high school feeder districts. As a result, each Residential Appraiser values approximately 20,000 properties each year. The most recent DOR triennial audit of Gwinnett County, conducted in 2020, recommended appraisers value approximately four thousand property each year, based upon International Association of Assessing Officers (“IAAO”) industry standards.

Due to a limited number of staff managing a high number of appraisals each year, in addition to other day-to-day responsibilities, all training for new Residential Appraisers is in the field, while immediately performing appraisals and other tasks required of the job. The Office does not have a training program in place to partner new Appraisers with experienced staff for training as new Appraisers are needed to immediately take over one or more high school feeder districts.

One Residential Appraiser Supervisor and one Residential Appraiser are also responsible for all special conservation exemptions in the County, governing specific types of farmlands. The Section has limited cross training on special conservation exemptions and other specialty responsibilities assigned to Appraisers, risking succession planning and continuation of duties challenges should any Appraiser with specialized knowledge leave.

The Gwinnett County staff of the Commercial Section personally perform fewer appraisals, spending more time reviewing the appraisals completed by the contractors.

The Residential Appraisers also monitor any real property sales in their assigned district. All property sales are input into the County's records to ensure proper listing of ownership. The Appraisers must review the sales to understand the specific type (such as qualified or nonqualified sale) and code the sale appropriately. Each sale is entered into ProVal and compared with the Multiple Listing Service ("MLS") sale record to ensure the County's record is accurate and complete for property topography, aerial visualization, and sale value. Currently, Appraisers average around 30 sales to be coded each day. Coding sales is primarily a task that, while administrative, requires a basic understanding of appraisals. Coding sales was previously conducted by support staff in the appraisal sections who fulfilled administrative duties but had that basic understanding of appraisals in order to fully support the Appraisers.

New construction, including improvements to existing structures, must be reviewed by Residential and Commercial Appraisers, as well. Appraisers visit the location of any new construction to measure and value the changes to the property. The new construction is then sketched into the system to document the layout of the property – this responsibility was also previously conducted by administrative support in the appraisal sections but is now conducted by the Appraisers.

Personal Property Appraisers rely on self-reported property data from County residents. The Appraiser Manager will go into the field to conduct requested appraisals, while the contracted appraisers review business licenses and tax returns that list personal property.

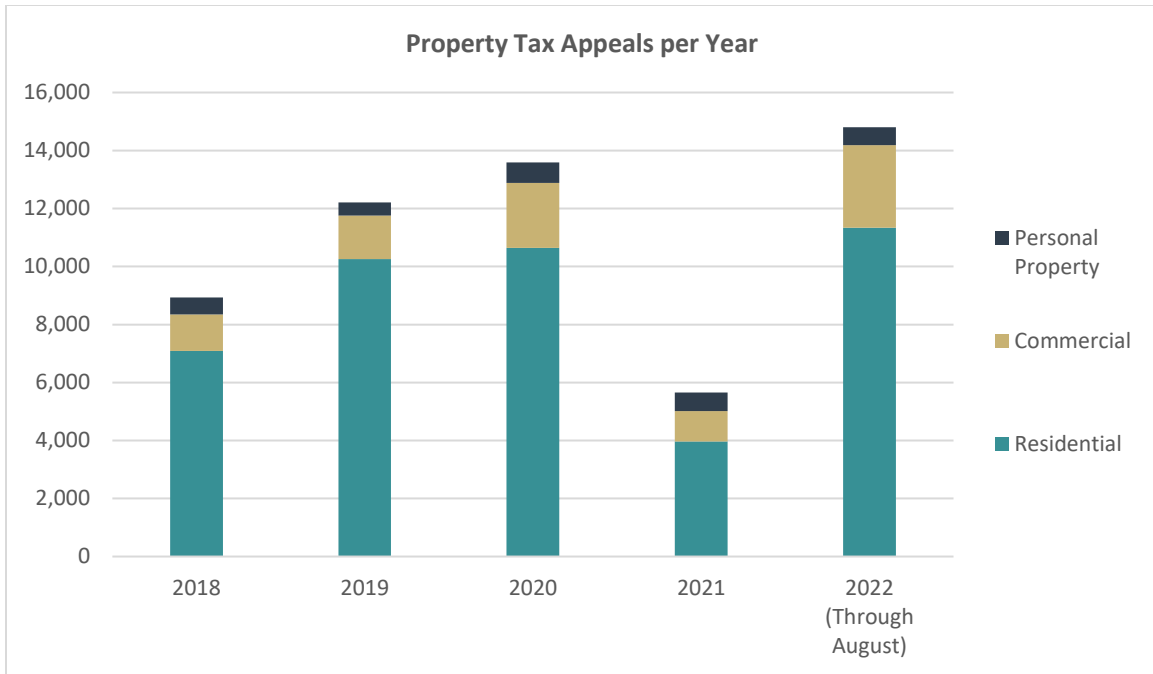
Per DOR guidance, all valuations are expected to be equitable and follow the definition of fair market value. The Office uses all of the appraisal data for the year to produce the Gwinnett County Property Tax Digest, which is submitted to the Board of Tax Assessors for review and approval. The Property Tax Digest is then provided to the Tax Commissioner's Office for the creation of tax bills and to the Budget Division to forecast revenues. The Property Tax Digest must, by law, accurately reflect the value of properties and public record of land ownership as of January 1 of that year.

In addition to including tax assessments for unincorporated Gwinnett County, the Property Tax Digest now includes property tax valuations for most of the cities in Gwinnett County, even though the cities still produce and send their own tax bills. Because each city uses their own system, forms, and process, data is often provided inconsistently, untimely, and (in the case of cities using hand-written forms) illegibly.

Production of the Property Tax Digest is the primary annual responsibility of the Board of Tax Assessors as required by law.

## Appeals

When property owners receive their Annual Notice of Assessment, they have the right to appeal the valuation to the Gwinnett County Board of Equalization with further appeal to the Gwinnett County Superior Court. The following graph shows the change in property tax appeals per year.



With the exception of a dip in 2021, the number of property tax appeals have been growing year-over-year. The number of residential and commercial appeals in 2022 had already exceeded prior year highs as of September 9, when the data was provided to Mauldin & Jenkins. Each Residential Appraiser, for example, has averaged more than 1,000 appeals this year.

When a property owner appeals their appraisal, the Appraiser assigned to the case decides whether to send the appeal on to a hearing or to try settling the appeal. For commercial and personal property appeals, the Appraiser (including contractors) who conducted the appraisal generally serves as the expert in the hearing. The Residential Section, however, recently implemented a policy of assigning each Residential Appraiser a day for Board of Equalization or Superior Court hearings, meaning Appraisers need to review the notes prepared by their colleagues as they represent appraisals conducted by several members of the Section. Different expectations from different Appraiser Supervisors have led to inconsistent documentation of appraisals in the system, causing challenges for Residential Appraisers defending their colleagues' valuations.

If the Appraiser decides not to settle, or no settlement can be reached, the Appraiser appears before the Board of Equalization and/or Superior Court to defend the values assigned or decision made (taxability of the property, denial of exemption, etc.) by the Tax Assessors' Office. The Appraiser pulls comparable property appraisals, records of neighborhood sales, and any taxpayer documentation in order to justify the valuation or decision.

If an appeal is successful, the Office prepares and mails an Amended Annual Notice of Assessment.

Throughout the appeals process, the Taxpayer Services Section provides administrative support: communicating with the Board of Equalization and Superior Court, scheduling any necessary pre-Superior Court hearings or arbitrations, and ensuring all appeals updates are current in ProVal so residents can see the status of their appeals on the Office's website.



## Contractor Oversight

While the Residential Appraisers conduct the vast majority of residential property valuations and appeals, the Commercial and Personal Property Sections rely heavily on contracted appraisers to conduct the required appraisals and appeals of those appraisals. Anecdotally, the Commercial and Personal Property Sections used to be staffed by a full complement of Gwinnett County employees, however the Great Recession led to layoffs and a change in staffing structure. As a result, the Gwinnett County staff function less as Appraisers and more as contract managers. The primary exceptions are on-site personal property appraisals and appraisals of multi-million-dollar commercial properties, which the Gwinnett County staff conduct personally.

Office staff in the Commercial and Personal Property Sections initiate all workflows and assign appraisals to the contractors. As contractors complete their appraisals, the Office staff audit the contractors' work in order to ensure accuracy and completeness on all appraisals and appeals. Staff across the Office expressed concerns with contractors' work and work ethic. Staff feel contractors don't have the same pride in their work as Gwinnett County employees, resulting in less precise work. The contracts with the three companies – LMC, Tyler Technologies, and Tax Management Associates – don't include consequences for late work, resulting in delays that would be unacceptable for County employees. Some of the contracts were reworked during the most recent solicitation to include standards for quality of work, leading to some improvement; however, staff overall expressed ongoing frustration with the state of the mass appraisal contracts managed by the Office.

## Mapping (Public Record Updates)

The Tax Assessment Support Section (informally known as the "Mapping Section") read the legal descriptions of all property changes and maps said changes out to ensure all property lines and ownership are reflected accurately in the public record. The Program Analysts within the Section (informally known as "Mappers") review all deeds submitted to the County after real property transactions to determine if changes were made to the dimensions of real property. Changes made by the Mappers reflect merging, dividing, and minor adjustments of property. In order to ensure all updates to the public record are correct, Mappers work closely with the County's GIS experts and perform extensive research into property transactions – including communicating regularly with the attorneys involved in the transactions.

For plats divided up into subdivisions, the Mappers assign new parcel numbers to each of the newly created plats and record these parcel numbers in the public record. New properties are transferred to the Residential and Commercial Sections who run reports to determine the classification of the new property and assign to the correct section (the Residential Section must further assign to the correct Appraiser based upon the school district).

## Data Support

The Data Analysis and Management Section provides the primary data support for the Office, in addition to serving as the liaison between the Office and the Information Technology Services Department. The Section provides data support through maintenance of databases and monitoring of data integrity.

The Section supports Appraisers during the valuation process in the beginning of the year by completing data audits for various properties. During data audits, Section staff compare samples of data input into ProVal against original source documents and data sources to review for accuracy and completeness. As the year progresses, the Section helps compile data into Excel spreadsheets which are transferred to a third-party printer to print and mail the Annual Notices of Assessment. Any Amended Annual Notices of Assessment are likewise compiled and sent to the printer.

The Section works regularly within ProVal to ensure the system is meeting the needs of the other sections within the Tax Assessors' Office. The Section customizes the backend whenever the capability exists to update tables and databases to ensure reporting and data pulls provide the necessary information in the right format for the Tax Assessors' Office, the Tax Commissioner's Office, and the Department of Financial Services. Throughout the year, the Section conducts audits of the data within the system to ensure there are no issues with entry. The Section functions as in *de facto* quality assurance ("QA")/quality control ("QC") role as the Office does not have a formal QA/QC function.

In addition to maintaining the data, the Section also develops dashboards and performs forecasting for both the County and the cities represented in the Property Tax Digest. Regular updates are provided by the Section to the Board of Tax Assessors and the Tax Commissioner's Office on the status of appeals and any other updates that might affect tax assessments and bills. Additionally, the Section uploads any required data to state entities, such as DOR.

### Administrative and Customer Support

The Assessment Administration and Operations Section, and the two sections that comprise it, provide administrative support for the entire Office, as well as customer support for Gwinnett County property owners.

In support of the mapping work done by the Mapping Section, staff record all property transfers to ensure the public record remains as accurate as possible. The Section also reviews permits from the County and each of the cities to determine if permitted work will affect the dimensions or valuation of the real property. Similar to data collected for the Property Tax Digest, the permits provided by the cities are inconsistent, leading to difficult ensuring accurate transcription of the data into Gwinnett County's systems. Currently, only one Program Analyst is trained to review and record permits, as there is limited training within the Mapping Section and between the Mapping and Taxpayer Services Sections.

The Taxpayer Services Section provides the first level of customer service for Gwinnett County property owners. The Section staffs the front desk and responds to incoming phone calls, which are manually tracked via a phone log. The Section often transfers callers with questions to Appraisers due to lack of knowledge regarding mass appraisal.

### Communications

The Office operates in several distinct silos – with notable breakdowns in communication between different sections. In interviews, staff indicated they have limited to no interaction with staff from other sections, with some staff unsure if they are supposed to interact with those outside their functional area.

For example, while the Assessment Administration and Operations Section provides administrative support for some key functions of the Office, such as appeals and Board of Tax Assessors meetings – overall, the Section is unable to provide full administrative support for the appraisal sections due to a lack of integration and familiarity with the work done by the Appraisers. As a result, Appraisers perform their own administrative duties, ranging from coding sales to sketching new construction projects in the system.

## Strategic Initiatives

In general, the Tax Assessors' Office struggles to function strategically due to limited staffing levels and overwhelming workloads. The Office spends considerable time determining how to meet recurring deadlines with current staffing levels and avoid staff burnout. The Office is reviewing how properties are grouped together for appraisal and analysis to determine if different groupings might equalize or alleviate workloads. The Office is also looking at improved technologies and systems, such as CAMA Cloud – a mobile mass appraisal tool – to make the appraisal process more efficient.

## Systems and Applications

### Aumentum and ProVal

The Tax Commissioner's Office uses Aumentum for records management. The Tax Assessors' Office uses ProVal for mass valuation. However, Aumentum and ProVal are separate systems developed by different companies and then acquired by Harris Corporation. Harris is in the process of integrating the products as part of upcoming releases. Recently, the County transitioned Aumentum from the on-premise version to the cloud while ProVal remains an on-premise application. Currently, the Office is hiring a consultant to review current system capabilities and Office needs, which may lead to the consultant writing an RFP to replace the current system with a new system or a series of integrated systems.

During the period in which the Tax Commissioner's Office is building the tax bills (approximately six weeks), the Tax Assessors' Office is not able to enter any new information into ProVal, resulting in all staff having a six-week backlog of data entry on top of all current data entry to be entered. The systems do not have a staging platform for entry of data without pushing said data live.

### CAMA Cloud

CAMA Cloud is a mobile software application used by appraisers in the field to review property data and create market value estimates. CAMA Cloud runs on iPads and syncs data to ProVal.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Tax Assessors' Office collects vast amounts of data regarding property, transactions, and updates to the public record. The Office also collects a lot of performance data to determine the workloads of its staff. Most staff in the Office are required to submit reports detailing their daily activity, ranging from phone calls received and made to the exact number of property transfers or appraisal reports completed. Management indicated in interviews that this data is used to adjust workloads and advocate for additional positions, however, we did not review any documentation confirming this utilization. Staff across the Office suggested the requirement to complete daily work reports leads to a perception of lack of trust from leadership.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Appraisers are generally hired at the Appraiser I level and able to be promoted through the Appraiser III level through Georgia Department of Revenue (“DOR”) certification at those levels. Previously, Appraisers could be promoted through to the Appraiser IV level. DOR recently changed requirements for the Appraiser IV certification, requiring supervisory experience before certification as an Appraiser IV – however, Gwinnett County requires Appraiser IV certification and experience before promotion to an Appraiser Supervisor, potentially preventing current and future employees from progressing beyond the Appraiser III level.

**Recommendation 1:** The Office should coordinate with the Department of Human Resources to review Appraiser job level requirements to ensure they are not contradictory those set by DOR. The Office should consider opportunities for higher level Appraisers, such as Appraisers III, to gain supervisory experience, such as through serving as team leads or as staff trainers.

**Observation 2:** Staffing levels decreased during the Great Recession, with many positions replaced by contracted appraisers. Staff positions, however, have not grown to meet growth in the County, resulting in overwhelming workloads, especially for Appraisers. The most recent triennial audit of the Office conducted by DOR in 2020 indicated the County falls significantly below industry standards for staffing levels, with each Residential Appraiser conducting more than 20,000 valuations each year. Industry standards suggest an Appraiser conduct four thousand or fewer valuations each year to ensure high quality appraisals.

**Recommendation 2:** The Office should review its staffing model for all positions, but especially for Residential Appraisers. While the Office cannot meet industry standards suggested by DOR in the short-term, the Office should develop a long-term plan for gradually increasing staffing levels in order to develop more balanced workloads. The Office may also look at alternative staffing models, such as supplementing County staff with additional contracted appraisers.

**Observation 3:** The Office relies on cities within the County to provide data and permits for use in the Gwinnett County Property Tax Digest and maintenance of the public record. The cities each use their own processes, methods, systems, and forms for collecting and sharing this data, resulting in inconsistent data transfers to the Office and risking inaccuracies in data transcription.

**Recommendation 3:** The Office should consider developing standardized forms to provide to the cities for data and permit collection to ensure consistent collection of data from each city.

**Observation 4:** Each Residential Appraiser Supervisor has different expectations for record management in ProVal, resulting in extra follow-up by Appraisers assigned to oversee another Appraiser’s property tax appeal.

**Recommendation 4:** The Residential Section should introduce and enforce standards for ProVal entry. The Section may consider workflow or process modification to provide quality assurance/quality control of appraisal reports.

**Observation 5:** The Commercial and Personal Property Section employees spend the majority of their time managing their respective contracts for mass appraisal support, especially in order to enforce quality standards that are not uniformly present in the Office’s support contracts. Contracts do not consistently include standards for quality, contractor qualifications, and expectations of timeliness.

**Recommendation 5A:** The Office should work with the Purchasing Division the next time a contract is up for solicitation to determine the appropriate degree of enforcement authority that can be written into the contract to ensure contracted appraisers provide quality work in a timely manner. The Office should utilize the Purchasing Division as experts in solicitation and contract development, relying on the Division's expertise to ensure adequate enforcement authority.

**Recommendation 5B:** The Office should consider establishing a Contract Manager position to provide oversight over the development and execution of contracts, allowing appraisal staff to focus on conducting appraisals and related activities.

**Observation 6:** Limited cross training of employees performing highly specialized, and often technical, tasks risks a loss of institutional knowledge and interruption in the conduct of certain functions if trained employees leave their current positions.

**Recommendation 6:** The Office should increase cross training opportunities for employees within and across sections to ensure succession planning and continuation of duties should current employees leave their positions. The Office should also ensure all policies and procedures, especially highly specialized and technical processes, are adequately documented.

**Observation 7:** The Office has issues with communications and perceived opportunities to engage with leadership. Staff perceive disconnects existing among sections and a disparity in the treatment of different sections. The disparity is felt through inconsistent communications and visibility of leadership. Leadership often appears to be unaware of or unconcerned by issues expressed at the staff level.

The perceived disconnect among sections has resulted in staff believing they are not allowed to engage with employees in other sections. The disconnect also limits employees' understanding of other sections' responsibilities, resulting in staff unaware of opportunities for cross-section collaboration and support.

**Recommendation 7:** Office leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all sections. Communication should include both formal Office announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions among coworkers. Leadership should encourage collaboration among sections and assist sections in determining how to provide support for other sections' functions.

**Observation 8:** The current staffing structure housing all administrative staff in one section, separated from Appraisers both functionally and physically in the office, has resulted in difficulty ensuring Appraisers receive adequate administrative support. As a result, Appraisers perform numerous duties that could be performed by administrative support professionals who have received basic training in the appraisal process.

**Recommendation 8:** The Office should review its staffing model to determine how best to provide Appraisers with administrative support. If the current structure precludes the Office's Administrative Support Associates from providing this support, the Office should consider establishing administrative support positions in the appraisal sections.

**Observation 9:** The current applications used by the County for records management and tax appraisals require integration but are all on different versions and platforms. While Aumentum and CAMA Cloud run on modern cloud infrastructure, the ProVal software remains on premises. In addition, the current version of ProVal is outdated and heavily customized, with limited in-house knowledge of the software and the customizations. Currently, the Office is hiring a consultant to review current system capabilities and Office needs, which may lead to the consultant writing an RFP to replace the current system with a new system or a series of integrated systems.

**Recommendation 9:** Before writing a possible RFP for the replacement tax appraisals system, the Office should work with the Tax Commissioners' Office to conduct a needs assessment to document the current state, identify the challenges with the current state and define the future state processes for records management and appraisals. Once the future state is defined, the Office should define the new system's requirements and conduct a market scan of the existing vendors offering systems that meet the Office's requirements.

**Observation 10:** During the period in which the Tax Commissioner's Office is building the tax bills (approximately six weeks), the Tax Assessors' Office is not able to enter any new information into ProVal, resulting in all staff having a six-week backlog of data entry on top of all current data entry to be entered. The systems do not have a staging platform for entry of data without pushing said data live.

**Recommendation 10:** The Office should coordinate with the Information Technology Services Department to determine if the current system is capable of holding new data entry without pushing that data live. If not, the Office should include the data entry freeze in the needs assessment recommended for ProVal.

**Observation 11:** Most staff in the Office are required to submit reports detailing their daily activity, ranging from phone calls received and made to the exact number of property transfers or appraisal reports completed. Management indicated in interviews that this data is used to adjust workloads and advocate for additional positions. Staff across the Office suggested the requirement to complete daily work reports leads to a perception of lack of trust from leadership.

**Recommendation 11:** The Office should ensure all workload reports completed by staff are being appropriately utilized and are not creating additional inefficiencies and strains on employees' time. The Office should review current procedures to determine if any workload data can be automatically pulled from systems rather than requiring manual completion of workload reports.

## 3.A.9 Department of Financial Services – Treasury Division

The Treasury Division is responsible for a number of financial services, including cash management, overseeing the County’s banking relationships, risk management and claims processing, disbursements, and payroll processing.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Accounts Payable
- Vendor Management
- Payroll
- Risk Management
- Cash Management

### Accounts Payable

The Accounts Payable (“AP”) Section is responsible for entering County invoices for payment, vendor management, and ensuring purchasing card transactions are reconciled and accurately posted.

Vendors may submit invoices directly to AP through an alias email account which can be accessed by multiple Division staff. The Financial Support Associate will review open POs to determine if the invoice matches an existing PO and if a goods receipt has been provided by the end-user department to confirm complete and timely receipt of the goods and/or services. If there is no goods receipt, the invoice is sent to the end-user department through FileNet for review and approval. End-user departments who receive invoices directly from vendors perform the required internal review and approvals before submitting the invoices to AP through FileNet.

Currently all keying is performed manually. SAP does not offer Optical Character Recognition (“OCR”) that would allow for scanning of invoices and uploading of scanned information, so all invoices must be manually entered into SAP twice.

The majority of the County’s vendors receive payment via ACH; for those that request a physical check or will not accept ACH payments, the AP Division prints checks approximately once a week.

For summary billings or other interface payments that come through, the staff review the payments to confirm that they have been uploaded correctly and that information imported correctly, but AP is not responsible for manually entering and processing these payments. For the Courts, each Court is responsible for sending over a file that is uploaded for payment. While the Financial Analysts do not process the individual payments, the files are still reviewed for general upload accuracy and file completeness.

One of the Financial Analysts is currently shared with the Risk Management Section, and supports claims collections.

A Financial Analyst is responsible for reviewing all construction-related invoices to ensure that the contractually agreed-upon retainage has been withheld, and is responsible for processing the final retainage payment once the project has been confirmed completed. This Financial Analyst must review the contracts for the project to confirm the conditions and percentage for withholding as well as the conditions for release, as well as any contractually obligated supporting paperwork, such as a certificate of occupancy or explicit authorization from the managing end-user department.

AP responsibilities including administering the purchasing card (“P-card”) program and ensuring that all payments are coded for payment and have posted to the correct department and financial chart field accounts. For P-Card management, each P-card holder is responsible for budget coding, uploading the supporting documentation, and initiating the workflow for each purchase. Each p-card holder has two weeks to reconcile the prior month’s transactions. The Financial Analyst II is responsible for reviewing all charges and confirming that the bank statement matches the fund and transaction-level details for all P-card changes.

Travel payments are processed through the SAP travel module. Either the traveling employee or an appointed end-user department liaison is responsible for entering all travel through the travel module portal. Employees also have the option of paying all travel-related direct expenses using their P-card. Departments that report to the County Administrator are required to use the SAP travel module; departments led by elected officials are not required to use the travel module and may use a fillable reimbursement form to request travel payment.

Employees may receive advances of certain estimated travel costs, such as per diems. Employees have one week after returning from the trip to enter their expense statement and reconcile any cash changes. Employees may return overpayment of advance either through payroll or by writing a check to the County.

The Section is also responsible for issuing all 1099s for the County, overseeing the stale check and Department of Revenue escheatment reporting process, and processing all juror payments. For any check that has been outstanding for 90 days, SAP automatically generates a notice in the vendor’s account in the vendor portal, reminding them that there is an uncashed check. Division staff will start contacting vendors shortly after the 90-day period to determine if a check needs to be reissued.

### Vendor Management

The Accounts Payable Section staff are also responsible for all vendor management within SAP. While vendors can submit their own information through the vendor portal, all information must be reviewed and approved by a Financial Analyst.

The Vendor Portal is predominantly a self-service portal, with vendors updating or adding their own information into the system. The Financial Analyst II is responsible for verifying the accuracy of any Tax Identification Number (“TIN”) provided by a vendor, verifying the IRS-listed name matches the name on the W9 or other official paperwork provided by the vendor.

The Financial Analyst II also calls the vendor contact to verify any changes made to existing accounts, or to confirm any added bank accounts or contacts. The Financial Analyst II does not currently perform bank account validation for any new or modified bank accounts.



## Payroll

The Payroll Section is responsible for ensuring that County employee payroll is processed. Regular payroll processing occurs on both a biweekly and monthly schedule, with payroll processing off-cycle payments as needed. The Payroll Section is responsible for setting the calendars for payroll processing-related deadlines.

The Payroll Section relies on the Human Resources Department for all initial employee information, and all benefits-related corrections. Employees are responsible for entering their own time, and each end-user department designates the appropriate internal reviewers and approvers.

Each pay period, the Section is responsible for reviewing that everyone has entered time and time has been approved by designated end-user department staff. Each Financial Analyst II is responsible for a number of end-user departments, with the Payroll Manager taking responsibility for one department. The Section utilizes a variety of reports, some auto-generated and some run by the Section employee, to ensure that all current employees are receiving pay, and to review for any payroll amounts that appear to be significantly out of range (*e.g.*, no payment or a significant increase in payment). All potential outliers must be investigated and resolved before payroll can be cleared to run.

Payroll Section staff liaise with identified liaisons in each department to resolve payroll-related issues, such as unreleased or unapproved time. Many departments only have a single liaison, which can create challenges in meeting the timeline related to cutoffs for payroll processing. Some departments have backup liaisons, but there is not consistent communications with Payroll about liaisons being out of the office, so Payroll staff often find out about absences when they reach out to request assistance in resolving an issue.

This Section is also responsible for preparing and submitting all federal and state taxes, including all monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting. For most of these reports, Section staff run financial system reports, then manually recalculate the withholdings to ensure the completeness and accuracy of system reports. If the two match, then report data is compiled and prepared. The Section also prepares withholding reports for employees who are on the State of Georgia's retirement systems, on fire pension, and the peace officer's pension fund.

The Payroll Manager is responsible for processing garnishment withholdings and sending those payments to the eligible entity.

## Risk Management

Risk Management focuses on two primary duties: insurance policy management and safety and loss prevention.

### *Insurance Policy Management*

The County holds approximately 14 policies that insure approximately \$8 billion property each year.

The Risk Manager is also responsible for coordinating with the purchasing department and Law to ensure that all contractors that do business with the County can meet the County's insurance requirements. The County's insurance requirements and coverage levels have not been comprehensively reviewed and updated in several years.

The County is self-funded, and utilizes the limits defined in the Official Code of the State of Georgia and immunity, as applicable.

For claims where payments are owed to the County, the Section is currently using a staff shared with the AP Division to assist in claims collection. Given current workloads in both AP and Risk Management, there is not a staff member available to do this more than part-time.

The County internally manages the majority of claims filed against the County's policies. The Financial Analyst II is the primary claims handler for the Department. responsible for most of the auto claims, liability claims, and property damage claims.

The Risk Supervisor is a working supervisor and typically oversees the processing of complex claims, such as those that include high-value property loss or those with injury settlements.

The County's internal property deductible is set at \$1,000, and end-user departments are expected to handle any property damage under \$1,000. The County utilizes a risk fund to pay costs associated with auto accidents. The Division communicates with the Department of Support Services' Fleet Management Division to determine if auto damage can be repaired without filing claims.

For auto accidents that require processing a claim, Fleet system generates a report for all tickets categorized as accident related. Risk Management gets a report weekly summarizing all costs and activity. Risk Management is responsible for charging the deductible to the end-user department and paying the fleet costs from the risk fund.

The Risk Management Section utilizes Riskconnect for claims management and calendaring. Riskconnect communicates with a SharePoint the County has established for internal claims reporting, and information input through the SharePoint automatically initiates a Riskconnect claim. Staff are expected to report all incidents within 24 hours, and upload the claim with additional data, such as police reports, once that data is available.

Riskconnect also has email capabilities and can prepopulate claims-related information into emails that can be send to Fleet or other internal staff.

### *Safety and Loss Prevention*

The Safety Officer, along with several vendors, are also responsible for coordinating and hosting a variety of trainings for County employees, such as defensive driving. Many end-user departments are responsible for a portion of the department-specific trainings that are needed, but this is not consistently a staffed position in departments throughout the County.

The Safety Officer also provides feedback to end-user departments in the County about risk mitigation, based on seasonal or cyclical needs along with any themes or trends in complaints or claims.

The Safety Officer conducts plant and park inspections which result in a report documenting the current condition of the assessed facility and recommendations for reducing risk and improving safety conditions.

The County currently utilizes a decentralized model for managing and maintaining certificates of insurance from vendors and those who may utilize County space. This same model is utilized for maintaining certificates on equipment within County facilities, such as boilers, heaters, elevators and escalators. Departments are expected to email Risk Management with updated certificates.

## Cash Management

Cash Management includes several duties, including contract management, revenue recognition, and investment-related accounting services.

### *General Cash Management*

Cash Management processes all wire payments for the County. This includes real estate transactions, same-day investments, and payments to vendors that will only accept wire transfers. Financial Analysts are also responsible for processing any stop payments or return of funds that were paid to the County via ACH.

Cash Management is also responsible for cash forecasting, including daily cash forecasting and assessing funds available for current obligations. The Financial Analyst works with end-user department project managers to understand cash needs for large-scale capital projects to ensure that cash will be available as needed. This Section is also responsible for ensuring that property tax funds are properly recorded and immediately invested. The County typically uses an account that offered overnight liquidity for these investments.

### *Contract Management*

The County currently holds more than 200 accounts in a number of banks, including deposits split under the Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service (“CDARS”).<sup>1</sup> Some large County deposits qualify for CDARS which breaks up those large deposits and placed a portion in a network of banks. CDARS funds are managed by a single institution that is responsible for issuing a consolidated statement, but helps banking institutions avoid FDIC deposit insurance limitations. Some elected officials manage their own banking relationships, while others utilize the County’s relationship with the procured banking firm.

The Cash Management Section also manages the County’s contract with the armored courier who collects physical cash from 40 locations around the County. Cash Management is responsible for confirming deposit of these funds at the location level.

### *Revenue Recognition*

One of the Financial Analysts is also responsible for the recording Treasury’s cash and revenue. While the County operates on a decentralized Accounts Receivable (“AR”) model, Cash Management is responsible for recording all treasury receipts, contract receivables, and grants revenue.

Cash Management is also responsible for all merchant processing. Merchant processing averages around 2 million transactions annually representing more than \$300 million in revenue. A Financial Analyst II is responsible for coordinating with the merchant services provider and the end-user department’s software systems to ensure that the appropriate payment methods, interfaces, and merchant IDs are being used.

### *Investment-Related Duties*

Cash Management is also responsible for debt service related to bonds including payment bond orders, paying bond holders, and reviewing invoices for agent fees, trustees, and other management entities. Currently all transactions are recorded and managed at the fund-level, rather than pool level, which requires multiple entries for each action taken in each fund.

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<sup>1</sup> CDARS was reorganized in 2021 and is now known as IntraFI Network Deposits.

A Financial Analyst in the Cash Management Section is responsible for all of the accounting transactions in SAP related to the investments managed by the Investment Manager including principal and interest posting, recording income, and confirming funds are available for trade.

## Communications

Each section within Treasury has regular formal check-in meetings, as well as daily and weekly checkpoints for workload evaluation and time management. There are also biweekly Division-level managers meetings.

Communications with end-user departments vary, as many end-user departments have internal processes and communications protocols that are not consistent throughout the County. High turnover in end-user departments have complicated the communications between end-user departments and the Division. There is not currently a formal training process for end-user department liaisons, which results in varying training and understanding amongst the end-user departments.

Risk Management has monthly meetings with the Law Department to review the status of current claims and litigation.

For Payroll, the Section has created a manual to assist end-user department liaisons, and the Section has participated in HR trainings to provide additional guidance and support. There is not currently any training or manual to support newly promoted managers in understanding their role in time review and approval, and Payroll spends a significant portion of their week reaching out to end-user department liaisons to resolve unapproved time or other issues that may cause payroll not to process correctly.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division has several ideas on ways to improve workflow and processes to improve efficiency, but struggles with available time and end-user department buy-in to make all of these changes.

The County's current risk philosophy tends to be more reactive than proactive and mitigating, part due to staffing level and workload. The Risk Management Section relies heavily on institutional knowledge and subject matter expertise and has not documented all processes and procedures. The County's ordinances around claims, settlement, and insurance have not been comprehensively evaluated and updated in some years.

Having a single employee serving as the primary claims handler and a working supervisor creates challenges in prioritizing new claims with recovery on longer-term or dormant claims.

The County's settlement ordinance no longer reflects the current state of claims against the County and data on recent claims settlement and payments should be utilized, in addition to reviewing the operational authority identified in the ordinance.

Given the large number of vendors that the County does business with, staying ahead of potential fraud is a large concern for the Division. Staff are working to verify all vendor portal changes and ensure there are multiple levels of tracking within both Treasury and end-user departments as appropriate, but this can be challenging given the speed of change in social engineering and fraudulent representation.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Financial Services. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

### Riskconnect

Riskconnect is an integrated risk management information system, claims administration system, and health and safety management system. The Risk Management Unit uses Riskconnect for calendaring. Riskconnect has the ability to create journal vouchers related to accident account payments, but the County is not currently utilizing this functionality.

Riskconnect communicates with a SharePoint the County has established for internal claims reporting, and information input through the SharePoint automatically initiates a Riskconnect claim.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Much of the Division's processing and performance is reliant on timely, accurate, and complete data from other end-user departments or the public. As such, there is minimal performance analysis currently.

Riskconnect can provide metrics and data on claims, such as time of claim, values, types of claims, etc. As there are not written procedures for claims entry and update there is inconsistent entry which may result in data that cannot be compared. Need to do more with the data, better understand the County's risk areas and pain points in claims, leverage for additional safety training risk mitigation efforts internally.

AP tracks some workload management metrics, such as number of invoices processed daily, number of checks issued weekly, number of transactions in queue. The past-due invoices are reviewed to understand where the issue is, and to determine if there are themes or trends in getting all invoices paid timely.

Cash Management works to get spend-down schedules for large projects to assist in cashflow projections, and requests timely notice of funds coming into Treasury, but the response from end-users is based on their internal staffing and workload needs and varies accordingly.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Many sections within the Treasury Division oversee decentralized functions, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. The decentralized model also results in lack of authority for sections within Finance when trying to compel end-user departments to provide timely information. This impacts the Division's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management. Specifically, the County should consider assessing safety and risk mitigation, certificate of insurance collection and acceptance, cash management, and revenue recognition.

**Observation 2:** AP does not currently utilize Optical Character Recognition (“OCR”) which would allow for scanning of invoices and conversion of scanned data into the ERP. Currently, AP Division staff must manually enter invoice data into two sections of SAP for invoices to be processed.

**Recommendation 2:** As the County transitions to a new ERP, it should consider introducing Optical Character Recognition (“OCR”) for invoice processing to reduce manual data entry and allow AP Division staff to spend more time on value-add tasks.

**Observation 3:** The County provides inconsistent training for managers and other supervisory staff who are required to review and approve employee time. Current training varies based on the end-user department, and results in inconsistent practices and understanding of the need for timely review and approval. The lack of consistency can cause issues for payroll preparation and release.

**Recommendation 3:** The Payroll Section should work with HR to ensure that the County offers recently hired or promoted supervisor staff training on the official process for review and approval of employee time. This training should be recorded and available on the employee portal as needed.

**Observation 4:** Current staffing levels in the Risk Management Section are not adequate to support the current workload, resulting in conflicting priorities and lower priority items not being addressed as quickly. This is particularly challenging in pursuing collection of claims payments owed to the County; the Section is currently utilizing an AP Section staff to support these claims recovery efforts.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider contracting with a third-party administrator to pursue unpaid claims owed to the County. The County should also consider assigning longer-term or more complex claims to the third-party administrator, to free up staff time for more proactive analysis and risk mitigation practices.

**Observation 5:** The County has not recently updated its insurance requirements and coverage levels for contractors who do business with the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County should review and revise its insurance and bond coverage and requirements for contractors who do business with the County.

**Observation 6:** The County does not have current written procedures for insurance claims processing and risk management practices.

The Risk Management Section is not taking full advantage of the functionalities and features offered by Riskconnect, its claims management software. The Section has not developed formalized procedures to ensure consistent data entry and system utilization, which results in data that cannot be analyzed or used for decision-making, or more nuanced understanding of risk.

**Recommendation 6:** The Risk Management Section should request additional training from Riskconnect about the application’s features and functionalities. Based on this additional understanding, the Section should update its processes and data entry practices and develop written processes and procedures. As needed, Risk Management should provide training to end-users to ensure consistency in system use and data entry standards

**Observation 7:** The County currently collects cash and check payments at a number of facilities, with each facility requiring regular pickup of collected funds via armored courier.

**Recommendation 7:** The County should conduct cost-benefit analysis to determine if a cash handling policy that incorporates smart safe technology to reduce the number of armored car routes required.

The County may also want to assess the use of cash to determine if it would be more efficient to reduce the number of cash-handling facilities and create more centralized cash receiving hubs.

**Observation 8:** There are staffing challenges in most of the divisions within Treasury, ranging from inability to hire staff, to needing to hire inexperienced staff to replace long-tenured staff, to losing staff to growth opportunities within other divisions or County departments.

**Recommendation 8:** The Division should consider adding automated promotional opportunities to many of the Financial Analyst positions, to create additional opportunities for promotion and growth that reflect employees gained skills and experience.

## 3.A.10 Department of Financial Services – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Department of Financial Services to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed a summary recommendation for the Department specifically related to the implementation of the new ERP system. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Summary Observations and Recommendations

**Observation:** Implementing the new ERP system is a generational project that significantly impacts the County's current and future operations. Based on our fieldwork, we have the following observations related to the new ERP system implementation:

- **Customized Business Processes:** The current ERP system is heavily customized with non-standardized business processes. Cloud ERP systems do not allow software customizations and require customers to adhere to the software vendor's business processes.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Adhering to the software vendor's business processes requires collaboration across Departments and agreement on common business processes. Currently, there is limited cross-departmental collaboration and a lack of standard business processes.
- **Staffing:** The County is facing a staffing shortage in all areas. The new system will require commitments from the Departments' operational staff to participate in the project, which takes time away from their existing job responsibilities.
- **Data Conversion:** When moving to new ERP systems, organizations must consider the effort required to convert configuration and transaction data from the legacy system to the new systems. Given the age and customized level of SAP, the County could face complex data conversion issues.
- **Budget:** ERP system implementations are expensive. It is unclear if the County has a comprehensive budget addressing all potential expenses.

**Recommendation:** The County should develop a comprehensive plan and supporting documentation for the entire ERP implementation that includes strategies to address the following:

- Project Governance Structure
- Project Budget
- Project Management Office and Vendor Management
- Project Resource Plan, including staff allocation and backfill plan
- Procurement of system integration services and other consulting services



- Current state documentation, including business process documentation, system integrations, user's roles, and workflows
- Process mapping of future state business processes
- Data Conversion Strategy
- Organizational Change Management
- Project Timeline and Implementation Plan (Pilot, Phased Approach, Big Bang, etc.)

In addition, the County should conduct lessons-learned calls with similar public sector organizations that have implemented cloud ERP platforms.

## 3.A.11 Department of Financial Services – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** The Department relies on a lot of interconnectivity and interdependency among the divisions that isn't always well explained and defined. For example, the Budget Document is a collaboration between the Accounting and Budget Divisions, even though it would seemingly be primarily a task of the Budget Division.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should consider developing internal onboarding or a better Department orientation and documentation explaining what each division, section, and even certain positions are responsible for to help staff understand interconnected processes and duties.

**Observation 2:** The Department uses a limited set of position titles and job grades across its divisions. These position titles and job grades are often not adequately reflective of the responsibilities assigned to those roles. Current position structures also limit the opportunities for growth within the Department.

**Recommendation 2:** The Department should consider a job classification study to determine if adequate job classifications and grades exist within the Department, and whether those classifications are appropriately reflective of responsibilities and growth opportunities.

**Observation 3:** Many divisions within the Department oversee decentralized functions, creating challenges in end-user departments each having different processes, methods, timelines, forms, etc. The decentralized model also results in lack of authority for divisions within Finance when trying to compel end-user departments to provide timely information. This impacts the Department's ability to consistently manage workload and work efficiently.

**Recommendation 3:** The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management. Specifically, the County should consider assessing budget preparation and management, cash management, certification of insurance collection and acceptance, journal entries, revenue recognition, safety and risk mitigation, and solicitation preparation and contract development.

**Observation 4A:** The Tax Assessors' Office administratively reports up through the Department of Financial Services but functionally reports to the Board of Tax Assessors. Department leadership provides guidance and support to the Office in regards to position allocations, presentations to the Board of Commissioners, and other administrative matters, but there are not formal governance guidelines to inform levels of authority and decision-making, which complicates understandings of what authority and support should be provided. Differing priorities from Department leadership and the Board of Tax Assessors can result in uncertain direction for the Office.

**Observation 4B:** Counties within Gwinnett’s comparative set, such as other Metro Atlanta counties, do not house the Tax Assessors’ Office under their respective finance departments.

**Recommendation 4:** The Department should consider a functional assessment to define the functions and authority of the Board of Tax Assessors and develop documentation delineating roles and responsibilities between the Department and the Board of Tax Assessors. The County should also consider different reporting structures for the Tax Assessors’ Office, moving the Office out of the Department of Financial Services.

**Observation 5:** The current organizational structure within Financial Services has resulted in merging of some transactional and strategic responsibilities, resulting in a loss of strategic functionality.

Additionally, certain functions have grown and become more enterprise-wide and strategically focused as they have evolved over time. Housing these functions in Financial Services has resulted in a loss of autonomy and ability to effectively manage strategic priorities and initiatives for the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The Department should separate transactional budget functions from strategic budget oversight, and consider moving strategic budget functions under the County Administrator, in an Office of Management and Budget, or similar structure. The Office of Management and Budget should work with end-user departments to align budgets with performance management and the County’s strategic goals and initiatives. This newly created Office should be empowered to identify critical performance metrics and work with end-user departments focus on meaningful data collection to drive decision-making and true evaluation of performance and value of services.

The County should also evaluate the functions currently housed in the Office of Strategic Excellence and the Standards and Controls Division and realign these functions based on County-wide strategic value and oversight. Business process improvement and enterprise-wide system user authorities and workflow functions should be moved into the County Administrator’s Office. These functions should be utilized to lead enterprise-wide system migration, workflow development, transformation, and governance development. Staff should have the authority to compel action that is in the best interest of the enterprise, when needed. This work should be conducted in collaboration with current efforts to evaluate departmental processes and workflows to identify efficiencies and streamline and standardize processes throughout the County.

This new unit within the County Administrator’s Office can assist in business case development for new systems, and helping end-user departments meet their needs by leveraging technologies currently in place throughout the County. This unit would also work with ITS and the end-user departments to develop workflows that are appropriate for the business use while also maintaining appropriate internal controls and separation of duties. However, the County should define the criteria for enterprise projects, systems, and business cases from tactical IT projects, systems, and business cases to delineate the functions of the new unit with the County Administrator’s Office and the ITS Department’s Business Strategic Services Division. As appropriate, the County may need to reorganize certain functions from the ITS Department’s Business Strategic Services Division to ensure the appropriate authority, knowledge, and project management skills exist both units. In addition, the County will need to clearly separate business case development functions from business relationship management functions that should remain within ITS.

# 3.B Human Resources Department

## Human Resources at a Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 | Manage day-to-day human resource activities in accordance with governing laws and policies for all County employees and eligible ex-employees including recruitment, onboarding, compensation, benefits, position classifications, employee relations, employee wellness, employee records, and organizational development.
- 2 | Maintain employee records and information through maintenance and management of the County's Human Resources Information System.
- 3 | Oversee the selection and vendor management for benefits administration.
- 4 | Provide services and support to County departments to enable department-driven human resources strategies.

**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

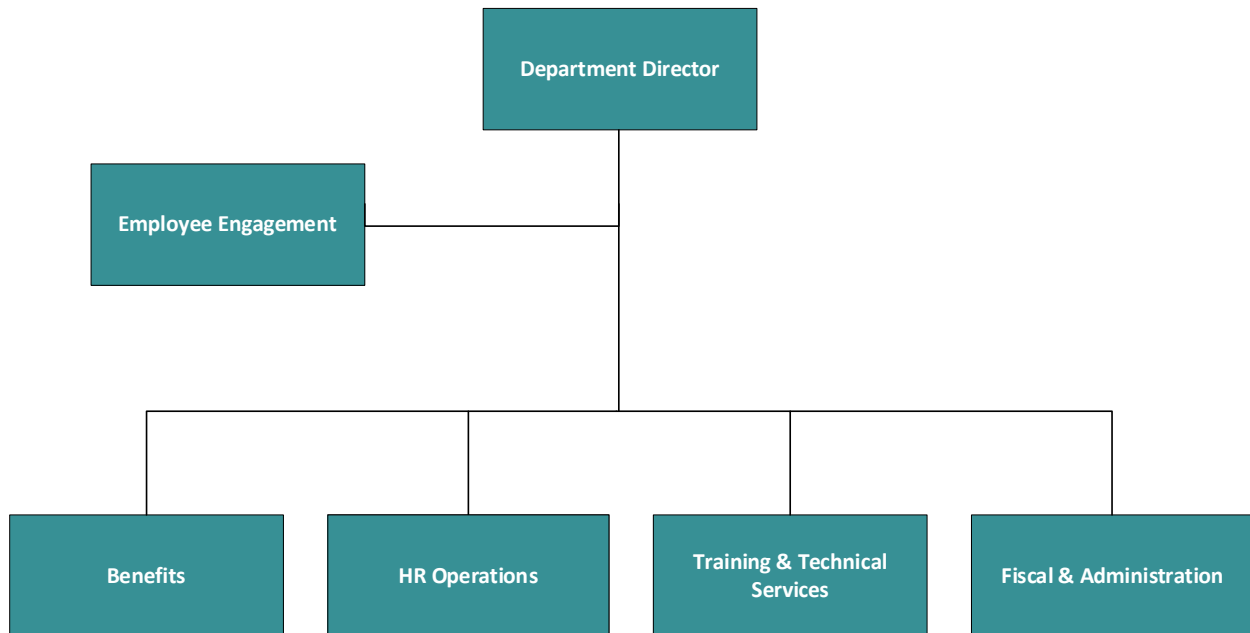
**\$85,496,069**

Operating Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	through August 2022	Human Resources
	Filled	50
Allocated		60

## Organization Structure



## Commendations



### Wellness as a Priority



The County and the Department have long provided leading benefits packages to employees, and in recent years added additional benefits focused on employee wellness. This year, Gwinnett County was ranked No. 4 on Atlanta Business Chronicle's Healthiest Employers list in the Extra-Large Company category (5,000-plus employees) and also ranked No. 91 out of the Healthiest 100 Workplaces in America by Healthiest Employers.

### Ease of Access



The Department maintains a Call Center that is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist the public and all active/retired Gwinnett County employees. The Call Center enables direct assistance from Department professionals for all types of human resource inquiries, and is heavily utilized during open enrollment periods.

### Emphasis on Employee Engagement



In April 2022, the Department created two Employee Engagement positions for the purpose of helping to ensure the County is creating and maintaining a positive and healthy work environment for all County employees. Since the creation of the positions, an employee perception survey launched in November with the objectives of assessing employee perceptions, taking demonstrable actions, and positioning the County as an "Employer of Choice."

## Introduction

The primary purpose of the Gwinnett Department of Human Resources ("Department" or "HR Department") is to manage employee-related processes for Gwinnett County employees from pre-hiring activities such as recruitment and interviews, through separation from the County. The Department manages the benefit packages provided to employees, training courses, FMLA claims, salary adjustments, performance appraisals, recruitment and hiring, in addition to promotions and demotions. The Department also supports all Gwinnett County Departments through dedicated Operations Service Teams.

## Organization

The Department of Human Resources is led by the Department Director. There is one section and four divisions that report directly to the Department Director:

- Employee Engagement Section
- Benefits Division
- HR Operations Division

- Training & Technical Services Division
- Fiscal & Administration Division

### Employee Engagement Section

The Employee Engagement Section was created in April of 2022 and is responsible for helping to ensure that the County is creating and maintaining a positive work environment for all Gwinnett County employees with the goal of being an “Employer of Choice”. The Employee Engagement Section reports directly to the Department Director. The Employee Engagement Section is led by an Employee Engagement manager and is supported by an HR Program Coordinator.

### Benefits Division

The Benefits Division is responsible for the administration of benefit packages that are provided to retired and active County employees. The Benefits Division is comprised of three main Sections within the Division:

- Wellness & Outreach
- Benefits Administration
- Retirement

The Division is led by a Deputy Director of Benefits. The main function of the Deputy Director is to oversee the administration of benefits and wellness initiatives offered and delivered to County employees. The Deputy Director is also responsible for oversight of three managers: a Wellness & Outreach Manager, a Benefits Administration Manager, and a Retirement Manager. In addition, an HR Program Coordinator also reports directly to the Deputy Director.

The Wellness & Outreach Manager oversees two positions: an HR Associate III, and a Marketing & Resources Coordinator. The Benefits Administration Manager oversees three positions: two HR Associates IIIs and an HR Technician. The Retirement Manager oversees four positions: three HR Associates IIIs, and one HR Technician.

All of the Sections within the Division have similar responsibilities but manage different vendors for various types of benefits. The Division’s main responsibility is to manage, coordinate, and communicate with vendors that are contracted by the County to provide various benefits. The Division reviews contracts and service agreements with vendors to ensure compliance and quality control. The Division is also responsible for providing customer service through a Call Center that is administered and managed by the Fiscal & Administration section. Fielding calls from County employees is a large portion of the Division’s workload during open enrollment (when employees are allowed to make modifications to their benefit packages) which took place this year (2022) for active employees from October 19 to October 28 and for retired employees from October 18 to October 28.

### HR Operations Division

The main function of the HR Operations Division is to provide support for all HR functions to Gwinnett County Departments. The HR Operations Division consists of four Operations Service Teams.

The Operations Division is led by a Deputy Director. Each Operations Service Team (“Team”) is led by a Manager and supported by three support staff with the titles of HR Associate III or HR Specialist. Although all of the Teams are similar because they serve as the HR functional point of contact for all Gwinnett County Departments, each team is assigned different County departments to support. Currently, Teams #1 through #3 are in full operation and each support six to eight different Gwinnett County departments. While Operations Service Team #4 has recently been formed due to rising demand, it is not yet fully staffed or operational.

### Training & Technical Services Division

The Training & Technical Services Division is responsible for providing training for Gwinnett County employees and providing Human Resources Information Systems (“HRIS”) management within SAP – the County’s HRIS and Enterprise Resource Planning (“ERP”). The Division also manages other HR systems and applications such as the recruiting system NeoGov. The Training & Technical Services Division is led by a Deputy Director. Two HR Technical Coordinators report directly to the Deputy Director, and support technical and compensation projects and perform data analysis.

In addition to the HR Technical Coordinator positions, the Training & Technical Services Division contains the following sections:

- Training
- HRIS
- Records

The Training Section is responsible for scheduling, facilitating, and administering various training programs for County employees. The Training section is led by a Manager who receives support from three HR Associates III.

The HRIS Section is responsible for supporting the SAP HRIS and coordinating with vendors to help ensure that County employees are able to access benefit services. The HRIS Section is led by a Manager and includes two HRIS Analysts and an HRIS Senior Analyst.

The Records Section is responsible for maintaining County employee records and entering and maintaining data in the SAP HRIS. The Records Section is led by a Manager who receives support from four HR Technicians.

### Fiscal & Administration Division

The Fiscal & Administration Division is responsible for administration of the Department, administration of the Call Center, as well as completion of fiscal responsibilities such as budgeting and assistance with the creation of the Department’s annual business plan. Additionally, the Fiscal & Administration Division is responsible for reviewing and filing HR vendor contracts and the payment of HR vendors.

The Fiscal & Administration Division is led by a Division Director. An HR Program Coordinator, Business Officer, Administrative Support Assistant III, and an Administrative Support Assistant IV report directly to the Division Director. Two Administrative Support Assistants II report to the Administrative Support Assistant IV.

## Strategic Priorities

Current Department strategic initiatives include:

- The new creation and build out of the Employee Engagement Section
- Enhancing the current recruiting solution (NeoGov)
- Planning for the potential migration from the current SAP HRIS to a new HRIS

The Employee Engagement Section was created in April of 2022 to enhance the County's work environment and improve County employee retention efforts by understanding the factors that motivate employees to maintain or terminate employment with the County. The goal of the new Section is to help the Department be more proactive by helping ensure that County employees are satisfied in their positions, the work environment, and career potential. The Section aims to use feedback data from County employees to make decisions and implement changes. Other specific goals and objectives of the Section are still being identified.

NeoGov is the recruiting solution currently being used for recruitment efforts by the County. Applicants are able to upload their materials to NeoGov and track the status of their application. Once an applicant is hired, they can no longer use NeoGov for the hiring process and have to send their onboarding documents and paperwork through email to an HR employee. The HRIS Section is currently working to implement an onboarding module within NeoGov that would allow newly hired candidates to upload and access paperwork and therefore would allow for a more streamlined hiring and onboarding process.

Lastly, the County is considering a change from the current ERP system that also serves as the County's HRIS. If the County decides to move from the current SAP HRIS, the HRIS Section will be responsible for assisting with implementation and migrating to the new system which includes ensuring all relevant employee and HR data is embedded within the new HRIS. The decision of if, and which new HRIS is selected will have a great impact on the Department and the HRIS Section in particular, as it will likely be a multi-year project for the Section.

## Leadership and Management

There has been significant turnover in leadership in the Department at the Director level within the last five years. The new Department Director aims to build more partnerships with County departments and enhance customer service to the Department's internal and external customers. Due to work demands and lack of staffing, the Department Director is currently involved in many day-to-day operational tasks and not being able to consistently function at the strategic level.

## Technology

The following describe the Department's current technology:

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management and payroll. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.



### SAP SRM

SRM is a product of SAP that facilitates the procurement of goods via a web-based platform. SAP SRM supports the full procurement cycle starting from source and purchase to pay through complete procurement process with suppliers and effectively managing supplier to build long-term relationship. The Department uses SRM for processing purchase orders.

### uPerform

uPerform is a content development and delivery tool designed to create, edit, distribute, and manage content, including documents, simulations, and eLearning courses.

### NeoGov

NeoGov is an online applicant tracking system for posting jobs, applicant screening, and job offer extensions. The Department is currently in the process of implementing NeoGov's onboarding module.

### FileNet

FileNet is an enterprise content management system used for document management and workflow. The Department uses FileNet for storing electronic policy documents and forms.

### Nakisa

Nakisa is used to create organization charts based on data from the SAP HCM system.

### Cisco Contact Center

Cisco Contact Center is used as part of the Call Center and delivers call treatment, omnichannel contact management, contact routing and network-to-desktop CTI over an IP infrastructure.

### Webex

Webex includes a Cloud Contact Center which is used as part of the Call Center and is a software solution that allows organizations to handle all inbound and outbound customer communications.

## Customer Service

Customer service for the Department is twofold: the Department provides internal HR services for all County employees and County departments, and provides external services to County stakeholders through recruiting.

Internally, the Department serves all County Departments through their HR Operations Service Teams. For each County Department, there is a single Operations Service Team assigned to them that provides HR functional support. Also, County Department maintains "HR Liaison(s)" that help serve as HR points of contact for each department.

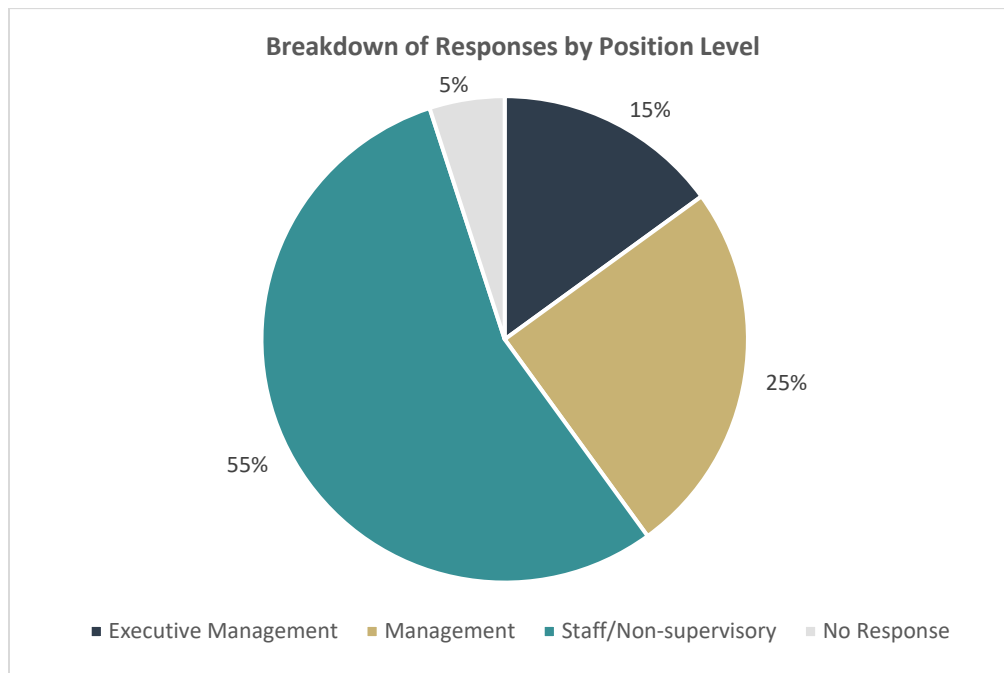
Externally, the Department serves stakeholders through recruitment. The Department manages all hiring processes leading up to when an applicant becomes a Gwinnett County employee.

The main medium through which the Department provides internal and external customer service is through the Call Center which routes inquiries regarding any HR function or service to the appropriate HR Division. The Call Center serves the public in addition to internal County employees.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

Thirty-four responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 68%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

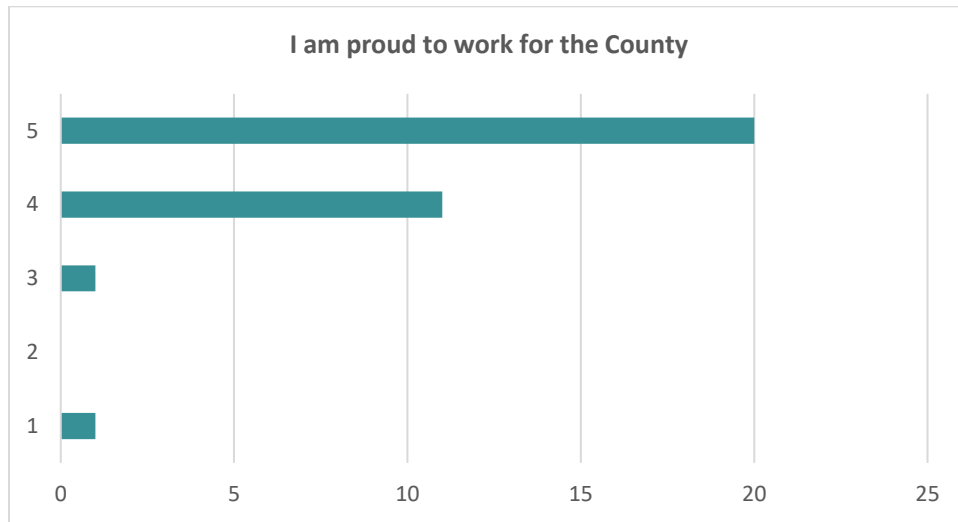
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

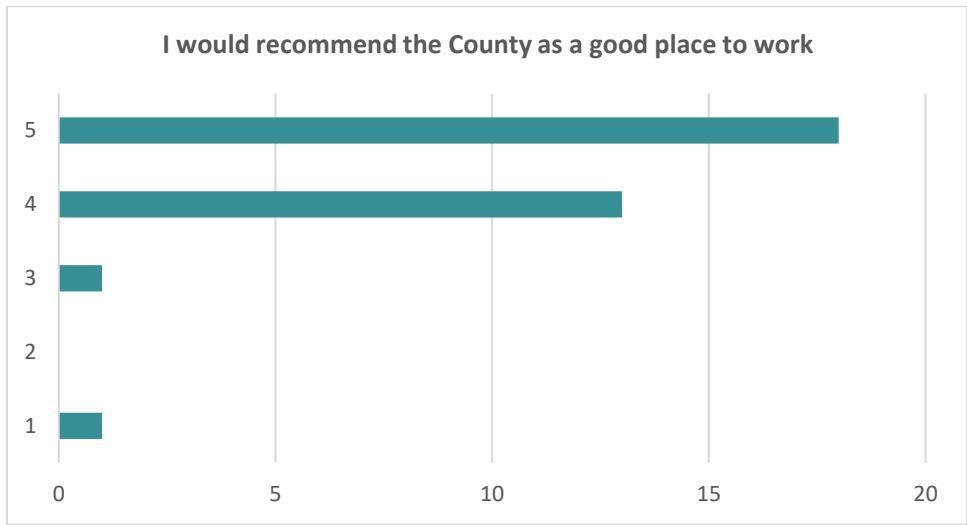
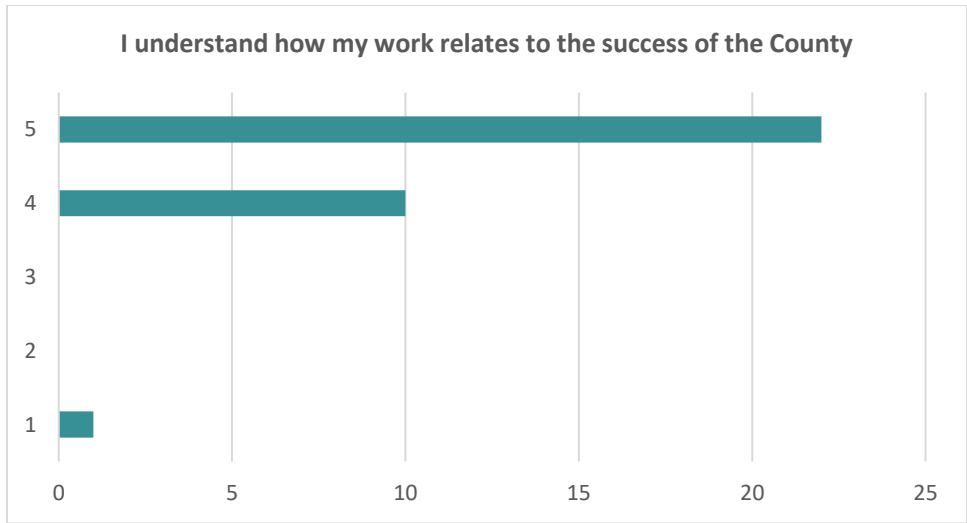
Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the County	4.6
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.2
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	4.0
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.5
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.1

Survey Statement	Average Score
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	2.8
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	4.2
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	4.0
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.7
I have opportunities to advance within the County	3.6
My supervisor encourages my professional development	4.1
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.2
I trust Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	4.0
Management (County Commission Chair, County Administrator, and my Department Head) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.4
I am proud to work for the County	4.5
I would recommend the County as a good place to work	4.4

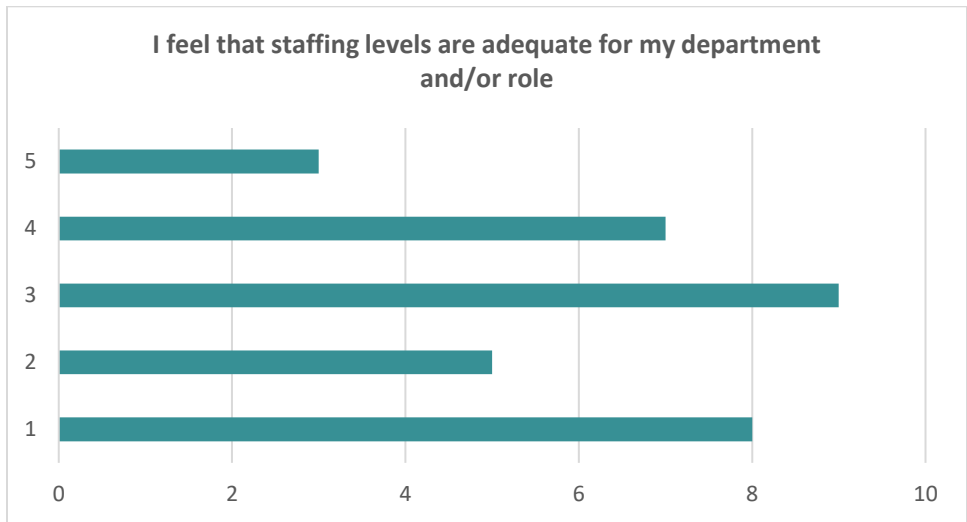
The average score for all the survey statements is 4.0. The lowest score is 2.8 and the highest score is 4.6.

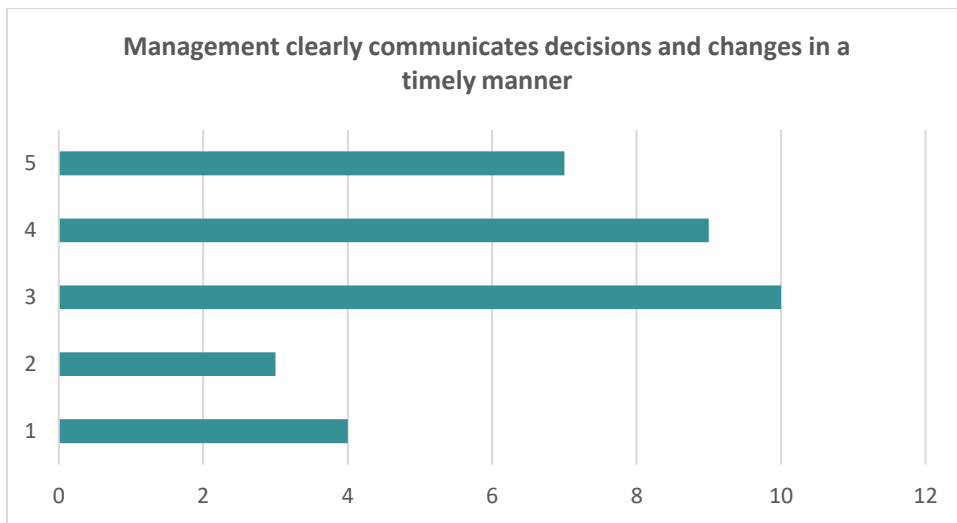
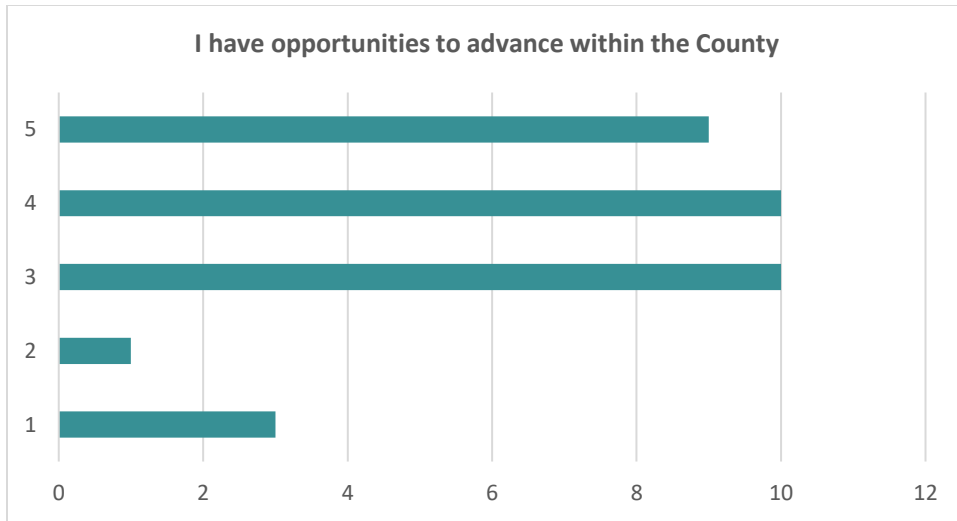
The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents identified teamwork, professionalism, and a recent culture shift as the Department’s greatest assets as changes in leadership have allowed the Department to be open to change.
- Respondents noted that the reason for improved Department performance is because of enhanced and more frequent communication from new leadership in addition to improved collaboration and cross-training which allows those in different roles to step in to assist others. However, respondents noted that the greatest opportunity for improvement of operations and service delivery is more consistent and formal communication and implementation of an open-door policy. Respondents mentioned the lack of consistent staff meetings and expressed concern that non-supervisory staff feel excluded from decisions that affect them the most.
- Respondents expressed concerns over the large number of management meetings held in the Department that are unorganized, lengthy, and not meaningful.

- Respondents noted the need for more standard operating procedures to keep processes consistent and up to date along with more management training and cross-training.
- Respondents expressed concern for the number of manual processes and paperwork required in general within the Department and also for the hiring/onboarding process.

## 3.B.1 Department of Human Resources – Employee Engagement Section

The Employee Engagement Section (“Section”) is responsible for helping to ensure that the County and the Department are promoting a positive and healthy workplace for all Gwinnett County employees.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Employee Feedback
- Data Tracking

### Employee Feedback

The Section was created in April 2022 to integrate County employees with the Gwinnett culture and understand employee motivations. Therefore, a large part of the Section’s efforts are devoted to analyzing current HR data, and obtaining feedback to understand factors that incentivize employees to maintain employment in the County and why some may be inclined to separate from the County.

Since the Section’s creation, the major project that has been employed to serve the employee feedback function is a County-wide survey that launched on November 7. The goal of the survey is to help the County better understand the pulse of employees, and to be more proactive in efforts to create an “Employer of Choice” environment. The Section aims to be more proactive by understanding employees’ perceptions regarding County culture and work environment, and how to maintain and/or increase employee satisfaction. The recent Employee Engagement survey gauges employee perspectives towards the work environment, culture, job expectations, communications, career growth, compensation packages, job satisfaction, and other related attributes. The results of the recent Employee Engagement survey will be analyzed and assessed for future action.

### Data Tracking

An additional function of the Section is to provide leadership with employee trend data and metrics to help make future decisions. However, since the Section’s creation, the Section’s two employees have not been able to solely focus on this function because the two Section members have been supporting Operations Service Teams due to vacancies.

Although the Section has mainly been supporting Operations Service Teams, the Section has explored future platforms to utilize for data collection. As an example, to improve the exit survey process, the Section has explored utilizing Survey Monkey and has considered building out a process through SAP to collect and analyze feedback.

When the survey that launched on November 7 closes, the Section plans on utilizing the data and feedback obtained to help achieve the Section’s goals and increase proactive efforts to create an “Employer of Choice” environment.

## Communications

The intent of the Section is to better serve the employee population by understanding employee perceptions for future action. The main approach utilized by the Section to achieve this goal is to maintain active communication with County employees. Therefore, communication is a vital role of the Section. Formal communications are still being established, but the Section has taken steps towards receiving and measuring feedback from employees through the employee engagement survey. When feedback is received from the engagement survey, the Section will analyze and assess the results for future actions.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Employee Engagement Section is currently spearheading a County-wide employee survey that launched on November 7<sup>th</sup> to obtain employee feedback on County culture and initiatives. Also, the Section is currently leading a project to develop and debut a new hire survey to understand new hires' perceptions of and experiences with the hiring process.

In addition, the Section is working to improve the exit survey process to collect data regarding the positive and negative perceptions of exiting employees' experiences with the County.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management and payroll. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The main data utilized by the Section are responses to exit surveys to identify trends in responses and improvements that could be implemented going forward. Also, once responses and feedback are obtained from the Employee Engagement and New Hire Survey projects currently being implemented, the Section will utilize data from both surveys to identify themes and trends. The Section also plans to collect data on the timeline from recruitment to hiring to provide insight into the recruitment and hiring processes. As the Section is still being formally developed, the Section's intent is to leverage existing HR data throughout the County for assessment and actions aimed at establishing the County as an "Employer of Choice".

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The current focus and priorities of Section employees has not been fully focused on employee engagement efforts due to Section personnel supporting Operations Service Teams due to position vacancies.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should aim to fully staff the Operations Service Teams, and then allow the Employee Engagement Section staff to focus on its intended mission as opposed to supporting the Operations Service Teams.

**Observation 2:** When the Section was created up until the present, personnel have been given flexibility and freedom to define scope, direction, and goals as they have not yet been formally defined in detail by leadership.



**Recommendation 2:** County/Department leadership should formally define and detail the goals, scope, and daily responsibilities of the Employee Engagement Section and its two positions, to ensure progress towards the Section's original intent.

## 3.B.2 Department of Human Resources – Benefits Division

The Benefits Division (“Division”) is responsible for administering benefit and wellness packages to County employees, managing relationships with vendors, and providing assistance to active and retired County employees regarding benefits enrollment.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Wellness & Outreach Benefits Administration
- Benefits Administration
- Retirement Benefits Administration
- Vendor Management
- Customer Service

### Wellness & Outreach Benefits Administration

The Wellness & Outreach Section (“Section”) administers wellness benefits for active and retired Gwinnett County employees. The benefits administered by the Section include:

- LifeWorks employee assistance program
- Maven family planning benefits
- Noom lifestyle program subscription
- Calm app subscription: A tool for improving mental health and sleep through guided meditation, and other content to increase mindfulness
- Ginger app subscription: An app in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente that helps users cope with anxiety and stress to relationships and careers
- ShareCare app subscription: Gwinnett County has partnered with ShareCare which that offers enhancements to programming, wellness offerings, and a new app tailored to user’s health experience

In addition to administering the wellness benefits above, the Section is responsible for implementing any changes to wellness & outreach eligibility policies or to benefit packages in general if the County decides to switch providers or plans.

### General Benefits Administration

The Benefits Administration Section (“Section”) administers all benefits for active Gwinnett County employees. The Benefits that are administered by the Section include:

- Two Kaiser Permanente HMO and two Aetna Maximum Choice health insurance plans
- Life insurance plans
- Three Cigna dental plans
- Two VSP (eye care provider) vision plans
- Voya supplemental plans

- MetLife life insurance and short-term and long-term disability plans
- WEX flexible spending accounts and health savings accounts
- ID Watchdog identity theft protection coverage
- The Gwinnett Employee Wellness Center: A wellness center available to all benefit-enrolled County full-time employees as well as their dependents that provides preventative care, disease management care, and other services for asthma, and weight management to name a few

In addition to administering these benefits, the Section is responsible for implementing any changes to benefits eligibility policies or to benefit packages in general if the County decides to switch providers or plans.

### Retirement Benefits Administration

The Retirement Section (“Section”) is responsible for administering retirement benefits to active employees in addition to facilitating the retirement process for employees and administering benefits for retired employees. The retirement benefits administered by the Section include:

- Voya 457(b) and 401(a) plans
- TransAmerica pension plans
- Humana Medicare plans
- MetLife life insurance and short-term and long-term disability plans
- WEX flexible spending accounts and health savings accounts
- VSP vision plans
- Cigna dental plans
- Davies health plans
- Workers’ compensation plans

In reference to the Voya 457(b) and 401(a) plans, employees are unable to change their contribution amounts after they are hired.

In addition to administration of the benefits previously listed, the Section is also responsible for notifying active employees of when they are eligible for Medicare benefits. Through SAP, the Section is able to track when employees become age-eligible for Medicare. When an employee is 90 days away from eligibility for Medicare, the Section notifies the employee. The Section also hosts Medicare seminars for those who become eligible to explain the process of switching over their current medical plans to a Medicare plan.

The Section facilitates the retirement process for existing employees who wish to retire. Once the Section receives notification that a County employee wishes to retire, the Section reaches out to the employee to schedule a meeting to discuss potential retirement. During the meeting, Section personnel discuss the steps for retiring and explain how the employee’s current benefits may change and which benefits the employee is eligible to maintain.

The Section stays abreast of changes to retirement benefits by being part of quarterly Retirement Plan Management Committee (“RPMC”) meetings which the County Administrator participates. The RPMC consists of seven members including appointees of the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator, three Ex-Officio members of the HR Department, and two appointed County employees. The following are the responsibilities of the RPMC:

- Invest the assets of the Trust in accordance with Georgia Law, the terms of the Plan, and the Investment Policy
- Appoint Investment Managers with delegated authority to manage Trust assets
- Settle claims, debts, or damages due or owing to the Trust
- Employ suitable agents, actuaries, accountants, investment advisors’ brokers and counsel, and to pay their reasonable expenses and compensation

The Section is responsible for creating meeting agendas and presentations, taking notes, and overall management of the meeting. Any changes to plans or vendors that result from RPMC meetings will then be implemented by the Section.

### Vendor Management

For quality assurance purposes, all sections within the Benefits Division are responsible for managing vendors to help ensure the selections that employees make on the self-service portal are provided to the vendors. Vendor management in the context of the Benefits Division signifies managing relationships, and holding vendors to the terms of service outlined in contracts between the vendors and the County.

Each Section reviews the service guarantees and helps ensure that vendors that are specific to the benefits offered by their Sections are complying with contracts. The Sections also manage the vendor contracts and can submit changes as needed. In addition, if employees have issues with a medical bill from one of the vendors, the employees can contact the Benefits Division, and Division personnel will assist them with escalating their issue or claim to help ensure resolution. If vendors fail to meet service guarantees (a promise that a service will meet certain customer expectations or standards) as contractually stipulated, the vendors are contractually obligated to refund the County for lack of service provision.

Another aspect of vendor management includes participating in the Request for Proposal (“RFP”) process when the County decides to offer new benefits, decides to switch a current benefits provider, or renew vendor contracts. All Benefits Section managers participate in the process of scoring RFPs for the purposes of awarding a service provider with a contract to provide a certain benefit for County employees.

### Customer Service

The Division is responsible for customer service to help ensure that employees are receiving their selected benefits and are able to easily access the self-service portal through SAP. The main channel that the Benefits Division uses for customer service is the Call Center that is managed by the Fiscal & Administration Division of the Department. The Call Center acts as a triage managed by the Fiscal & Administration Division and any benefits-related calls are directed to the Benefits Division.

Fielding calls from customers is a large portion of the Benefits Division's workload during open enrollment which took place this year on October 18 for retired employees and October 19 for active employees. During annual open enrollment, personnel from each section sign up for time slots to log in to the call center and help customers.

An additional aspect of customer service for the Benefits Division are outreach events to advertise benefits offered. To encourage employees to enroll in benefits, the individual Sections will coordinate with vendors to host events in the County where employees can receive information about plans offered. Section personnel will travel with the vendors to different Gwinnett County departments to be available for questions about specific wellness, benefit, and retirement plans.

## Communications

A large portion of communications within the Benefits Division revolve around vendors. Individual Sections maintain relationships with vendors and have meetings with representatives of the vendors to discuss any issues with their services or concerns. For example, the Benefits Administration Section hosts biweekly meetings with vendors to check-in with vendors and address any concerns by either party.

Throughout the year, but especially during open enrollment, the Division proactively communicates with employees by distributing annual enrollment guides. Annual enrollment guides detail the benefits offered by the County to employees and offer comparisons between plans.

The Division demonstrates reactive efforts through the call center which is a large part of their communications with employees as the Division is available to answer questions and communicate with customers on daily basis.

## Strategic Initiatives

The County prioritizes offering competitive benefits to employees to help increase recruitment and retention. An initiative being spearheaded by the Board of County Commissioners is the continued focus on the "Total Wellness" approach to benefits including financial, physical, and mental benefits. In August of this year (2022), the Division hosted a Wellness Fair to advertise wellness benefits and educate employees about how to take advantage of their benefits, as wellness tends to be stigmatized and perceived as less important than other benefits.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

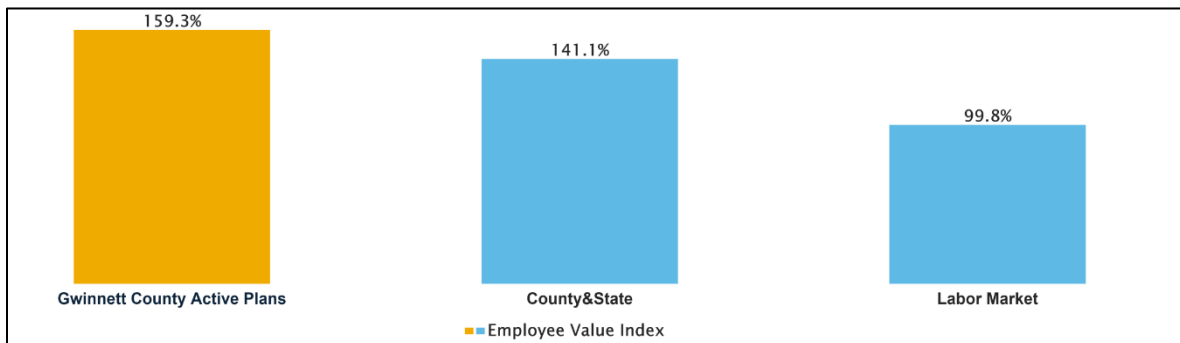
SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management and payroll. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

The Department's self-service portal is administered through SAP. The self-service portal allows active and retired employees to access their pay stubs and payroll information in addition to accessing, selecting, or making changes to their benefits plans.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division tracks data related to the competitiveness of their benefits packages when compared to surrounding employers in the area. The primary method utilized by the Division to collect and present data is through benchmarking studies and reports initiated by the County.

In 2021, the County initiated a Medical Benchmarking Report to compare Gwinnett County active employee medical benefits with that of other state and county organizations. The following graphic shows the results of the study when evaluating the “Employee Value Index” which focuses on employee costs and is a relative measure of how much value Gwinnett County employees receive for their health care plan contributions.



As demonstrated in the preceding graphic, the Employee Value Index for Gwinnett County health care plans for active employees is well above the Labor Market and almost 20 percent higher than other county and state plans.

In addition to performing benchmarking, the Division also works with vendors to administer surveys regarding benefit plans. For example, in May 2022, the Division administered a survey with the vendor Voya regarding their Defined Contribution 401(a) and Deferred Compensation 457(b) plans to participants in the plans. The goal of the survey was to utilize findings to measure levels of confidence among participants, enhance future education initiatives and/or service offerings and to help ensure that plan services meet participant savings needs. The following are examples of questions that were asked in the survey:

- Do you regularly visit your account online at the participant website- GCRetire.com?
- Do you find GCRetire.com easy to navigate?
- Are there educational seminar topics that you would be particularly interested in? (Select all that apply)
- In general, how confident are you that the steps you’re taking now (retirement planning, personal savings, etc.) will meet your future financial needs?

When surveys are administered by the Division with the help of the vendors, the Division plays a crucial role in helping to encourage employees to participate. As an example, for the Voya survey, the Benefits Division made several efforts to increase participation such as sending email invitations, following up with survey reminders to non-responders and creation and distribution of promotional posters with a QR code linking to the survey.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Division administers surveys with the assistance of vendors to assess employee's satisfaction and experience with benefit plans.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should utilize the data collected from vendor surveys such as the Voya survey to target specific populations of County employees who do not leverage available benefits to their fullest ability or advantage. Data from the survey will help the Division identify where to target their efforts and help to increase employee's satisfaction with benefit plans.

**Observation 2:** Employees are not able to make changes to their 401(a) or 457(b) plans following hiring.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider allowing employee changes of 401(a) and 457(b) contributions on an annual, or more frequent basis.

## 3.B.3 Department of Human Resources – HR Operations Division

The HR Operations Division (“Division”) serves all of the Gwinnett County departments by providing HR services to all departments. The types of services performed by the Division include recruitment, hiring, FMLA administration, training, promotions, and demotions.

The Division is made up of four Service Teams (“Teams”) who each serve about six to eight County departments. While some Teams assign specific departments to individual team members, others assign tasks as they come in to specific team members.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Recruitment
- Request to Fill Process
- Hiring
- Salary Analysis
- Block Training
- Employee Relations

### Recruitment

The four Teams support their assigned departments with recruitment and advertising assistance. Teams provide advertising services by advertising hiring events or other recruitment opportunities on different platforms such as Indeed. Similar advertising services are provided for job postings within all departments. Teams help advertise and upload job postings on the County website and NeoGov in addition to Indeed and other recruiting websites.

Some departments have a portion of their budget dedicated to recruitment and will host their own job fairs to allow candidates to meet department personnel and receive information for current job postings. Teams help departments with hosting job fairs and if requested, will attend job fairs to help departments with recruiting efforts. Also, if requested, Teams will attend job fairs hosted by nearby high schools, colleges, and universities to help their assigned departments with recruitment.

### Request to Fill Process

In 2011, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners approved Agenda Item 2011-0242 which authorized the establishment of a ninety (90) day minimum vacancy period following position vacancies in order to reduce personnel costs and promote efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The rationale behind the Agenda Item was to mitigate an \$18 million budget deficit when adopting the budget for the 2019 fiscal year.

To make an exception to the 90-day minimum vacancy period for a vacated position, departments must complete a waiver and provide a justification for why they wish to fill the position before the 90-day period. Eleven years after its passage, the Request to Fill process (“RTF”) is still utilized and is primarily the responsibility of the HR Operations Division.



Due to departments having the need to fill nearly all positions that are vacated before 90 days, the departments complete waivers and go through the RTF process for all positions once they are vacated even before a specific candidate has been identified to fill the position. As such, departments initiate the RTF process when they wish to fill a position after it has been vacated. The first step of the RTF process is for the “HR Liaison” (informal name given to Department professionals that serve as intermediaries between their specific department and HR to assist with HR actions and HR policy compliance) assigned within each department to complete a form documenting which position the department wishes to fill and providing an explanation for why it should be filled before the 90 days with an organizational chart attached showing the vacant position. The Liaison will then send the documentation to the assigned Team and the Team will enter the vacancy date and the date it will be ready to fill which is 90 days after the vacancy date, and then place a freeze on the vacant position in SAP to indicate it is pending approval for the waiver.

Next, the Teams will enter the vacant position information into NeoGov and create a requisition to indicate that the position is going through the RTF process. Depending on the levels of approval established by the specific department which has the vacancy, NeoGov will place the requisition through a workflow for a series of approvals from personnel in the specific department in addition to approvals from the HR Department. The requisition must receive approval from the Financial Services Department, HR Director and finally, the County Administrator. The HR Department cannot extend a final job offer to a candidate to fill a vacant position until the requisition receives the approvals previously listed.

Once a month, the HR Director (“Director”) and the County Administrator conduct an in-person meeting to discuss all RTFs and either approve, deny, or ask for more justification for the waiver. Physical copies of the waivers for each position are printed and signed by the Director and County Administrator. After the meeting, the Director and County Administrator electronically approve the positions in NeoGov which notifies Teams that they can move forward with the final job offer for candidates who have advanced to the final hiring stage.

Also, at this meeting, the Director and County Administrator will review memos to reallocate vacant positions as they must also go through the RTF approval process. To reallocate a position, the requesting department sends a memo to the Team detailing why they would like to reallocate the vacant position. While reallocations do not have to go through a workflow of approvals in NeoGov, they must receive final approval during the monthly meeting between the Director and County Administrator.

There are exceptions to the RTF process for certain departments. For example, public safety departments may complete a waiver that allows the departments to bypass the RTF process for one year after signature of the waiver by the County Administrator.

## Hiring

When a department has a position that needs posting, the hiring manager for the position will notify the appropriate Team by email. A Team member will then find a previous job posting with the same job title and make any changes requested by the hiring manager in terms of supplemental questions to ask applicants. Once the posting is tailored to the specific position vacant in the department, the Team sends it to the department in pdf form via email for their review before a final posting is uploaded. If the department would like to add additional specifications, they will inform the Team via email and the Team will update the job posting. If the department approves the job posting, the Team will post the position to the County website and NeoGov in addition to other recruiting sites as requested by the department.

Stages of hiring after job posting are performed exclusively in NeoGov. Once a job listing is posted, it is the function of the Teams to forward all eligible candidates that meet minimum requirements and preferred qualifications as specified by the department. The service teams are mandated to screen for applicants for all job postings at least once a week. If requested by a department, a team may screen for a posting more than once a week. NeoGov contains filters for minimum qualifications as defined by a job posting, in addition to manual filters that are set up and applied by Team members depending on the position posting. Once the appropriate filters are applied to the candidates, Teams are able to send the candidate profiles and information to the appropriate hiring manager for the position through NeoGov. NeoGov then generates an automated email notifying the hiring manager and the service team member that candidates have been screened and referred for the position.

Once qualified candidates have been screened and referred to the hiring manager, it is the responsibility of the department to contact the candidate for interviews and other contact leading up to a Conditional Job Offer (“CJO”). As a result, the Teams are not aware of the status of candidates’ applications. When candidates call the HR Department to inquire about the status of their application materials, Teams reach out to the departments to communicate the answer to applicants. Once a department has decided to extend a CJO to an applicant, the hiring manager completes a Personnel Action Form (“PA”) and sends it to the Team by email. The PA details the reasons why the department selected the candidate, as well as the determined salary, other candidates interviewed, and whether the candidate was internal to the department, or was external.

Next, Teams will call the candidate and extend the CJO and may negotiate between the candidate and the department if the candidate requests a higher salary or a change in the offer. If the candidate provides a counteroffer, the approval of the HR Department Director may be needed. If the candidate accepts the CJO, the Team will send a pre-employment email with a link for a background check along with other paperwork depending on the department that the position is in. If the candidate does not pass the background check, the candidate will no longer qualify for the position and will be notified of their results by the Teams. The Teams will also reach out to the department that extended the CJO and notify the department that the candidate did not pass and can no longer be hired. If the background check returns no issues, and the paperwork is returned by the candidate, Teams have the authority to extend a final job offer dependent upon whether the vacancy has been approved to fill before the 90-day period in the RTF meeting between the HR Director and County Administrator.

Once the position has been approved to fill and the candidate has filled out all CJO paperwork and completed a background check, Teams reach out to the requesting department and provides notification that the Team has extended a final job offer. Next, the Team will print the candidate’s application and use the previous PA completed by the department to complete a Personnel Action Processing Checklist which corresponds to a workflow process in SAP. Next, Teams will change the status of the vacant position to “filled” on the vacancy report log. Once the paperwork is completed, the packet is sent to the Records Management Section to check that the information on the forms has been entered correctly into SAP.

Candidates are scheduled for an HR orientation session typically before the candidate’s start date but depending on the department, the candidate may complete orientation after their start date. At orientation, the candidate will provide their documentation for I-9 and payroll information and will complete a new hire employment packet. The purpose of orientation is also to provide the candidate with information such as the County culture, time reporting, and enrollment in benefits.

## Salary Analysis

The Division may conduct salary analysis when a department wishes to raise a starting candidate's salary above the maximum threshold as defined by County class specifications and pay scales. The appropriate Team will conduct a salary analysis using SAP by pulling salary data from other County employees with similar job titles and specifications. During the analysis, Teams will compare the education backgrounds and years of experience between the candidate and other existing employees with a similar job role. The role of the Team is to bring inequities in salaries to their assigned department's attention to help correct inequities. Part of resolving inequities in salaries and job classifications is a class and compensation study, which the County has not completed since 2005.

When the salary a department is requesting exceeds a certain threshold, the salary must be approved by the HR Department Director. Once the salary exceeds an additional threshold, the County Administrator must approve the salary.

## Block Training

The Division conducts a total of seven block training sessions on the following topics:

- Block 1: "Performance Management/Corrective Action"
- Block 2: "Drug and Alcohol Policy for Supervisors"
- Block 3: "Family and Medical Leave Act ('FMLA'), Americans with Disabilities Act ('ADAAA'), and Worker's Compensation ('WC')"
- Block 4: "Unlawful Harassment"
- Block 5: "County Policies"
- Block 6: "Staffing Toolkit"
- Block 7: "Social Media Guidelines"

## Employee Relations

The Division is also responsible for employee relations issues. If an employee needs to file a complaint about the working conditions within their department, they will reach out to their department's assigned Team for assistance. Depending on the severity of the complaint, the Team may advise an employee to bring the complaint to the attention of the leadership and proceed through the chain of command within the employee's department. If the complaint is deemed as a serious allegation, the Team will conduct an inquiry into the complaint and the inquiry will lead to an investigation. If a complaint is escalated to the point where an investigation is needed, the Team Manager will lead the investigation and gather evidence related to the employee's allegation.

## Communications

The Division coordinates with HR Liaisons ("Liaisons") that help serve as HR points of contact for each department. Liaisons do not report directly to the HR Department but are housed and directly report within each residing department. There are one to two Liaisons for each department depending on how many employees are in the department. Typically, the Liaisons will have the title of an Administrative Support Associate ("ASA") or an Office Manager and HR functions that they perform will be secondary to their role in the department.

Liaisons serve an important role in communication between the Division and the departments they serve. Instead of having to reach out to their Service Team over email for assistance on HR matters, department personnel have Liaisons within their department to communicate with and ask for assistance regarding FMLA, time and pay, and other HR functions and policy. Liaisons primarily communicate with HR Department personnel through email.

### Strategic Initiatives

Due to a recent increase in workload and demand for HR services, a fourth Operations Service Team has been created to help ease the burden of the current three Teams. The fourth Operations Service Team is still being staffed.

### Systems and Applications

#### SAP

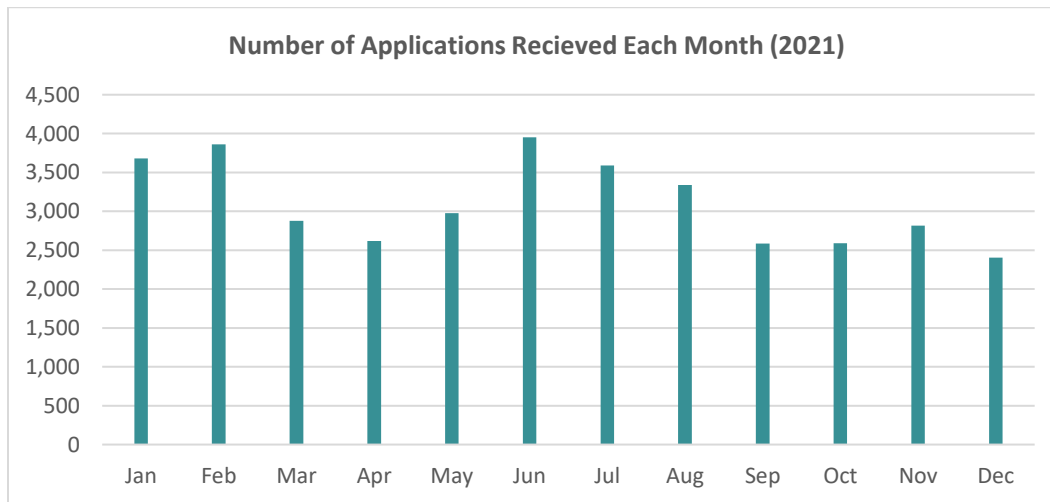
SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management and payroll. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

#### NeoGov

NeoGov is an online applicant tracking system for posting jobs, applicant screening, and job offer extensions. The Department is currently implementing NeoGov's onboarding module.

### Data and Performance Analysis

Relating to the hiring function, the Division tracks the number of applications received and requisitions completed by all of the Departments and Teams. For example, the following graph shows the change in the number of applications received each month in 2021:



Also, the Division tracks the number of vacant positions that exist each month in an Excel spreadsheet leading up to the RTF meetings between the Department Director and County Administrator. The Excel spreadsheet containing this data includes the date the position became vacant and the date that the position will be frozen until if it does not get approved in the RTF meeting to be filled before the 90 days. Tracking these data points allows for the Teams to help ensure that the positions are unfrozen in SAP once a position gets approved to be filled before the 90 days. Biweekly, each Team runs a position report to generate a tally of vacancies that have been approved to fill or not approved to fill each period. The Teams then compare the vacancy data with a report generated by the HRIS Section in the Training & Technical Services Division to help ensure that the vacancy counts match and are accurate.

The Division also tracks the types of block trainings offered to County employees on an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contains the employee's general information, whether they are a supervisor, and the dates of completion of the trainings.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** While some Service Teams assign team members specific departments, others assign tasks as they come in or each team member will self-assign tasks to be completed.

**Recommendation 1:** The Department should establish a consistent policy for assigning tasks to ensure an appropriate division of labor within Operations Service Team members. By implementing a consistent policy, Teams will have consistent practices and the possibility for Team members to miss assignments or have uneven workloads will be decreased.

**Observation 2:** The Request to Fill ("RTF") process is based on previous budget trends and is antiquated for current operations and hiring volumes. The RTF process is creating inefficiency in hiring processes as Teams cannot extend a final job offer until waivers are approved.

**Recommendation 2:** The Board of Commissioners should consider revising or eliminating the RTF process as the policy is not as relevant in the current environment.

**Observation 3:** The County has not performed a classification and compensation study since 2005.

**Recommendation 3:** To help ensure equity in salaries and job descriptions and classifications across the County, the County should consider conducting a classification and compensation study.

## 3.B.4 Department of Human Resources – Training & Technical Services Division

The Training & Technical Services Division (“Division”) is responsible for administering trainings, providing functional support for the County’s personnel, benefits, payroll systems, and several standalone applications for recruiting, learning, and performance management. The Division also performs recordkeeping and records management for the Department.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Training Management and Delivery
- System and Technology Support and Enhancement
- Data Analysis, Reporting, and Surveying
- Records Management and Data Entry
- Performance Appraisal

### Training Management and Delivery

The County provides a number of formal trainings throughout the County. Select Departments have a dedicated portion of their budgets to provide trainings at their discretion and with their own coordination efforts. Certain trainings are scheduled and conducted by the Training Section, and others are scheduled by the Training Section and performed by others in the Department or County. The following trainings are managed and delivered by the Section or other Department personnel:

- Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) Academy
- Internal Management Academy (“IMA”)
- Orientation
- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- 5 Choices Workshops
- Block Training
- HR Liaison Workshops

The following trainings are examples of trainings that are managed by the Training Section and are delivered by vendors or County personnel from other Departments:

- EXCEL Program
- Myers-Briggs
- New Supervisor Academy
- Stress Management for Managers
- Assertive Communication
- Avoiding Job Burnout

- Building & Empowering Top-Notch Teams
- LinkedIn Learning Courses

For each training course listed, the Training Section (“Section”) is responsible for creating and maintaining a schedule on a spreadsheet of when each course is being offered and how often the course will be offered throughout the year. Also, the Section manages enrollment for all training sessions. The Section coordinates with internal and external personnel who lead the training. If there is an outside vendor that provides the training, the Section coordinates with the vendor to schedule the time and location/forum of the training.

Trainings such as IMA are either delivered by HR Department personnel or by leadership from other County departments. Select Trainings such as IMA, LEAD, and EXCEL are only open to Executive Level employees or Managers who must complete a competitive application and selection process. All three courses provide an overview of what is expected from the County’s supervisory and management staff as outlined in the County’s policies and procedures. The courses also provide opportunities to refine and develop management and leadership skills.

The Section oversees orientation training sessions that are conducted every two weeks for all new hires, totaling approximately 24 sessions per year. The Section creates and distributes a schedule to HR employees to inform them of upcoming session dates and of who in the Department will be leading the sessions as they rotate throughout the Department. At orientation sessions, new hires are introduced to the benefits offered by the County and are provided with tutorials for how to enroll in benefits. Also, new hires are oriented to the Gwinnett County culture and values, along with County policies.

Additional special trainings facilitated by the Section with the help of the Human Resources and Information Systems Section (“HRIS Section”), are HR Liaison Workshops that make up the “HR Liaison Academy” (“Academy”). The Academy is designed to train Liaisons on HR policy to help ensure they are complying with HR policies and are able to effectively communicate policies to their respective departments. The Academy informs Liaisons on the HR policies and procedures manual and also allows for a question-and-answer session with the HRIS Section to inform them on how to navigate the HRIS systems. The Academy workshops feature different topics and are held monthly and are not required for Liaisons. Because workshops are not required, Liaisons have varying levels of knowledge regarding HR policies and procedures in addition to vary levels of proficiency with the HRIS systems and software’s used.

The Division does not currently utilize a Learning Management System (“LMS”), but rather uses multiple different platforms to manage and deliver training.

### System and Technology Support and Enhancement

The Human Resources Information Technology System Section, or HRIS Section (“Section”), is the Section responsible for system and technology support and enhancement. The main systems that the Section supports are SAP and NeoGov. Members of the Section serve as subject matter experts on the HRIS systems and are responsible for enhancements, coordinating with the Information Technology Services Department and vendors, providing support for HR Liaisons, and implementation assistance of any new HR systems.

The main function of the Section is to perform enhancements or add additional capabilities to existing systems in use such as NeoGov and SAP. Section staff serve as subject matter experts and assist departments in generating reports from HR applications. Relatedly, the Section assists departments with customizing the HRIS systems for their needs. The Section also coordinates with the Information Technology Services Department to build new features on existing systems and applications.

An example of a system enhancement is the new module in NeoGov that the Section is currently working on to move the onboarding process to flow through NeoGov rather than candidates having to email documents to be uploaded to SAP by an HR employee. Additionally, the Section is currently implementing Nakisa, a new HRIS system to be used for succession planning.

The Section also coordinates with new benefits vendors to assist with features on the self-service portal on SAP that employees utilize to select and access their benefits. The Section sets up secure file transfers from vendors regarding employee data and support biweekly files that allow for two-way communication. During open enrollment, the Section manages the technical functions by helping to ensure that employees can easily access the self-service portal and are able to enroll in benefits. Also related to benefits administration, the Section performs the following functions:

- Maintenance of all plans and cost structures within SAP
- Assistance with benefits reporting and census data
- System support for IRS 1094 and 1095 forms
- Employee data compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”)

As part of the Section’s support function for HR Liaisons, the Section is available to provide assistance and training to Liaisons regarding benefits, operations, payroll, and compensation. Also, the Section provides Liaisons with document manuals for internal training workshops.

Lastly, the Section serves as HRIS functional and technical experts. When the County migrates to a new HRIS, the Section will be responsible for assisting with implementation and migration related to HR functionality and data management. The County is currently considering migrating to a new HRIS as part of a larger ERP cloud migration, which will likely be a multi-year project for the Section and the HR Technical Coordinators if approved.

### Data Analysis, Reporting, and Surveying

Data analysis, reporting, and surveying are performed by the HRIS Section in addition to the HR Technical Coordinators. The HRIS Section and HR Technical Coordinators are responsible for data analysis and generating reports to depict trends and justify recommendations. Types of data that are routinely analyzed include position counts, vacancy rates, personnel budget trends, and salaries. For example, biweekly vacancy rate reports are generated and validated with the help of the Records Management Section and are sent to the County Administrator. Also, the HRIS Section and the HR Technical Coordinators annually survey other jurisdictions surrounding Gwinnett County for the purposes of salary analysis and comparison.



## Records Management and Data Entry

The Records Section (“Section”) is primarily responsible for maintaining all personnel records for County employees, physically and electronically. The Section uses SAP and FileNet to maintain electronic records. A large part of the Section’s responsibility includes verifying HR Operations Division data entry for completeness and accuracy. For example, once a candidate is processed for a CJO by an Operations Team, the Section goes behind the Team to check that all information filled out on the Personnel Action form is accurate.

In addition, the Section maintains physical files for all active employees. Each year, the Section conducts an audit to determine which employees with physical files have separated with the County. Then, the Section distributes the non-active employee files to the Support Services Department for storage.

## Performance Appraisal

The Records Section (“Section”) is responsible for data entry of performance appraisal results as the Department does not maintain an automated performance appraisal system. The Section maintains a performance review schedule for all employees, as annual performance appraisals are completed based on each employee’s anniversary date with the County (based on official start date with the County). HR Technicians under the Records Manager are responsible for entering performance appraisal scores into SAP and adjusting salaries accordingly.

The first step to entering performance appraisals is completed by HR Liaisons in each department who have access to a report on SAP which shows the due dates for all departmental employee annual performance reviews. The HR Liaisons are only responsible for entering appraisals for employees within their assigned department. The HR liaison contacts relevant department leaders to notify them of appraisals that are due to help ensure leaders will complete the performance appraisals before the due date. Despite Liaison’s efforts to have performance appraisals completed in time, many annual performance appraisals are completed after the due date. If appraisals are not completed on time, the Records Manager sends an email to HR Liaisons in each department with a list of whose performance appraisal is overdue. Once the appraisals are completed, the Liaison will enter the results into SAP and then scan the hard copy into FileNet to retain a copy of the paper form of the appraisal.

The HR Technicians are responsible for helping to ensure that the Liaisons have entered all appraisals into SAP and the HR Technicians adjust salaries accordingly. Each HR Technician is assigned the performance appraisals of six to eight departments to oversee. Liaisons first use SAP to generate a master Excel sheet report of all the of the performance appraisals that are due in a specific time period. Technicians review a list of payroll periods to help ensure that salary increases are adjusted to take effect by the next pay period. Next, Liaisons pull from that list the personnel numbers of the employees who have an appraisal due within the same timeframe and paste those personnel numbers into SAP. Once the personnel numbers are added into SAP, the system automatically populates a different spreadsheet which lists all of the performance appraisals over the current fiscal year as well as scores received. Populated scores signal that an HR Liaison has entered the appraisal into SAP. If an appraisal has not been entered, “N/A” will appear where the score should appear.

HR Technicians then go into the employee's personnel files in SAP to adjust their salaries based upon Board approved pay adjustments and the appraisal scores. HR Technicians manually calculate the percent increase from the employee's salary, add it to the current salary, then enter in the new salary within SAP. There is no secondary confirmation of calculations once salaries are adjusted. The HR Technicians will also adjust the date of the employee's next performance appraisal date by adding a year onto the current anniversary appraisal date.

In Gwinnett County, non-appointed employees are rated on a three-point scale. If any employee scores less than a "two" on their appraisal, the assigned Operations Service Team will reach out to the department the employee resides in to help ensure that the employee has been placed on a Performance Improvement Plan ("PIP"). It is the responsibility of the Department to place an employee on a PIP and the Operations Service Team will help guide the department through the process. If a non-appointed employee scores a "two" or higher on their appraisal, they will receive the Board approved percentage increase in their salary.

Appointed employees are rated on a five-point scale and if they receive a "three" or higher on their appraisal, they will receive the Board approved percentage increase in their salary. While the merit raises are divided between paychecks throughout the year for most Gwinnett County employees, public safety employees (Fire and EMS, Police, Sheriff, and Corrections) receive their merit raise in a lump-sum payment. Public Safety employees also receive a raise based on pay steps.

In November 2022, the County Internal Audit Division performed an internal audit of the performance appraisal process. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate departmental compliance with Human Resources Management policy guidelines and evaluate the effectiveness of management's control activities that provide reasonable assurance of compliance. As a result of the audit, the County Internal Audit Division provided the Department with multiple recommendations to improve the performance appraisal process and help ensure compliance with the Human Resources Management policies.

## Communications

Internal communications within the Division include weekly individual meetings for the Sections. Also, the Sections work together to achieve key functions. For example, the Training Section works with the HRIS Section to coordinate HR Liaison Workshops. Also, the HRIS Section provides support to all Sections for HRIS system-related matters.

Externally, the Division communicates frequently with Gwinnett County Departments. The Training Section responds to inquiries from Departments if they would like to request a training. The Training Section also coordinates with department personnel to recruit candidates for their trainings and to find leaders to lead training sessions. The HRIS Section assists Departments with HRIS system functions and will enhance an HRIS system if they need a new feature. Also, the HRIS Section communicates frequently with HR Liaisons to coordinate HR Liaison Workshops and assist them with understanding processes and procedures or how to use HRIS systems.

## Strategic Initiatives

Since the Pandemic, the Training Section has prioritized offering trainings virtually. In 2021, the Division implemented LinkedIn Learning, making extensive virtual training options available for County employees. Continuing to offer a wide variety of trainings in-person and virtually, and has allowed the Section to be more flexible and reach more participants and a greater range of participants from different departments that work non-traditional shifts. Also, more training sessions have been implemented that feature guest speakers within other departments or that are hosted by external organizations such as the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Providing more external trainings with a greater diversity of speakers has allowed for County employees to network with fellow County employees and those outside of their organization as well as gain new insights and perspectives on leadership.

The potential implementation of new HRIS systems and features within existing systems will guide the Division and the Department in the right direction. The HRIS Section is currently focusing on expanding capabilities of NeoGov to improve the recruitment and onboarding process. The NeoGov enhancement will help the recruitment and onboarding process to be less paper heavy and allow applicants to access all of their documents in one place online.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP (Personnel Benefits and Payroll)

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management, benefits administration, payroll, and employee self-service. Each County Department uses the following SAP modules:

- Administration
- Internal HR
- Training and Organizational Development
- Retirement
- General HRIS
- General Benefits
- Classification and Compensation
- Employee Relations
- Employment
- Risk Management

SAP is the central repository for employee personnel records. Information from the standalone applications for recruiting, learning, and performance management is added to the employee's record in SAP by all Divisions. The Training and IT Technology Division provides functional SAP support to the departments by providing testing and sign-off of system enhancements. Additional supports include patches, fixes, and maintenance packs.

The County implemented SAP in 2005 and is not current up with system upgrades. The County is currently running a different version of SAP's legacy ERP Central Component ("ECC") product and has not upgraded to SAP's latest version, SAP Business Suite 4 HANA. New versions of SAP ECC are not being released as customers are expected to upgrade to SAP Business Suite 4 HANA. Rather than upgrade to the latest version of SAP, the County has chosen to issue an RFP for a new ERP system to replace the current version of SAP. Staff from the Training and IT Technology team are involved in selecting and evaluating a new ERP software vendor.

### NeoGov (Recruiting)

NeoGov is an online applicant tracking system for posting jobs, applicant screening, and job offer extensions. Currently, the Division is implementing NeoGov's onboarding module, which will automate the employee onboarding process and eliminate the manual data collection of onboarding forms and data entry. Upon implementing the onboarding module, the Division will work with the Information Technology Services Department to implement an interface with SAP to create employee records based on candidate data in NeoGov.

### uPerform and LinkedIn Learning (Training Management and eLearning Content)

#### *uPerform*

uPerform is a content development and delivery tool designed to create, edit, distribute, and manage content, including documents, simulations, and eLearning courses. uPerform is a training and assessment tool the County uses to deliver and track human resource policy training and compliance. Training tracking data from uPerform is added to the employee's record in SAP via an automated interface.

#### *LinkedIn Learning*

LinkedIn Learning is an online learning solution used by the County to supplement in-person learning. Course content ranges from employee performance management to drug and alcohol training to Microsoft Office training. Upon completion of training, the employee's record is manually updated by Training Division personnel in SAP. The County is developing an automated interface to update employee records upon completion of LinkedIn Learning courses.

### Adobe Forms (Performance Management)

The County does not have an automated performance management system for employee performance reviews. Employee performance reviews are completed on standard Adobe forms and routed through email. The final performance review document is associated with the employee record in SAP.

### FileNet

FileNet is an enterprise content management system used for document management and workflow. The Department uses FileNet for storing electronic policy documents and forms. Based on fieldwork, the County plans to continue using FileNet to store employee documents and add an interface from FileNet to the new ERP system. This approach allows for document portability and does not tie the employee documents to the vendor's ERP system.

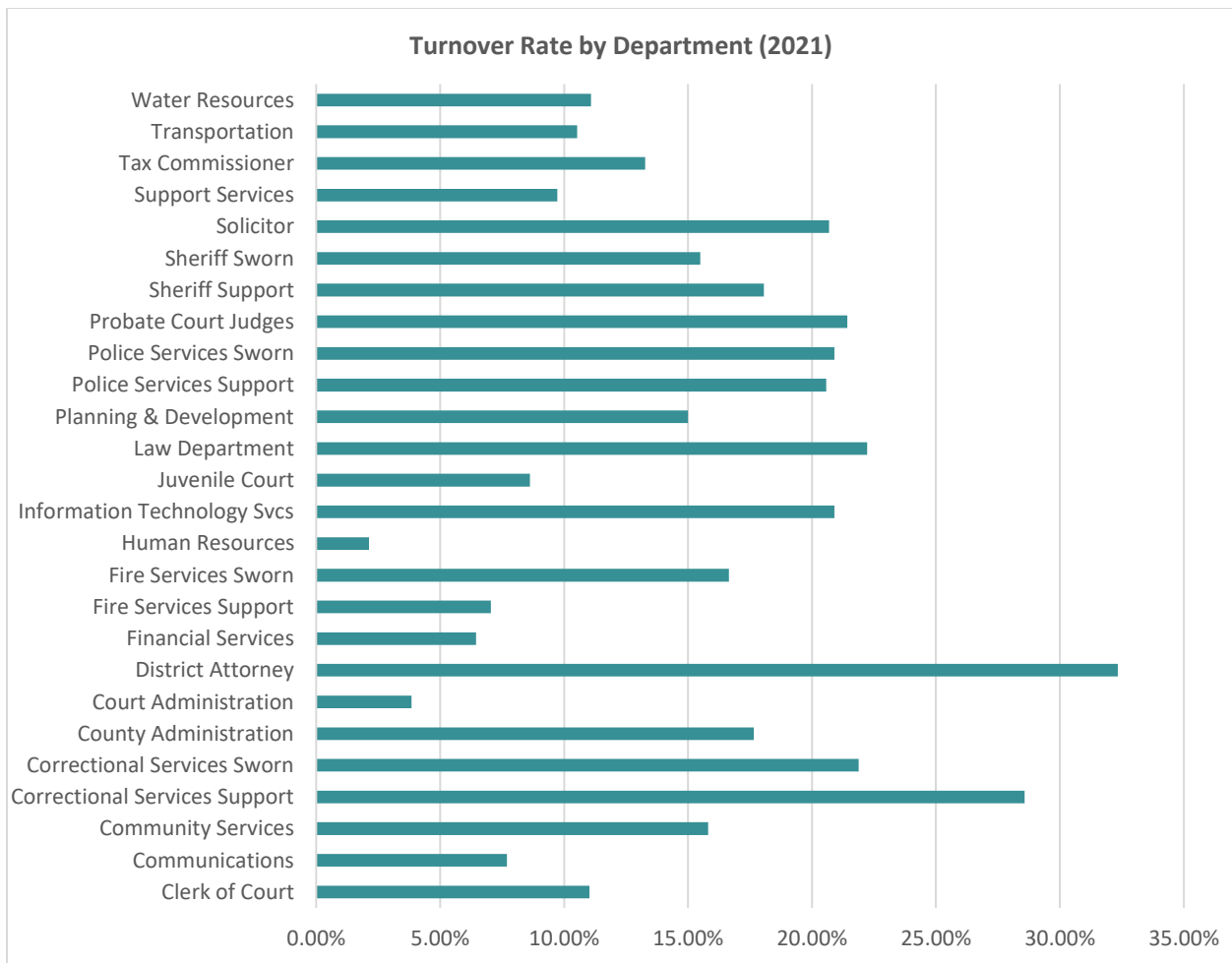
### Nakisa

Nakisa is used to create organization charts based on data from the SAP Human Capital Management ("HCM") system. Nakisa may be replaced in the future if sufficient organizational chart functionality exists in the new ERP system.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Data tracked by the Division include trainings offered, turnover rates, position counts, and annual enrollment in benefit plans. The Division does not currently utilize a Learning Management System (“LMS”) for tracking training data. For training, the Division tracks whether or not it is an external training, the type and name of the training, the start date of the course, and the names of the participants as well as which Departments they work in and their job titles. Additionally, the Division tracks the same types of information for the block trainings administered by HR Operations Service Teams.

HR Technical Coordinators are responsible for generating turnover reports as requested by the County Administrator. Turnover reports include all Gwinnett County Departments and track the authorized and filled positions, employee voluntary and involuntary turnovers, retirements, and vacant positions in each Department. From tracking these numbers, they then can calculate the turnover rate and vacancy rate percentages. The following graph shows the turnover rate percentages by Department in 2021:



As shown in the preceding graph, the organizations with the three highest turnover rates in 2021 (which is calculated by filled positions divided by voluntary turnovers), are the District Attorney, Correctional Services Support, and the Law Department.

Related to vacancy reports are position count reports. The Division tracks where all positions in the County are within the RTF process. The Division maintains a spreadsheet containing information for individual Departments such as the number of vacant positions that have been approved to fill, have recently become vacant and are frozen as they wait for the approval to fill, in addition to actual employee headcounts and authorized positions.

Additionally, the Division tracks and generates reports to summarize results of annual enrollment for active and retired County employees. Reports include information such as the total number of employees who enrolled in benefits compared with the percentage of employees who were eligible for enrollment.

For example, following chart represents the total count of active employees in 2021 who enrolled in the following medical benefits:

- Aetna HSA Gold and Silver Plans
- Kaiser HMO Gold and Silver Plans

*Table 1: 2022 Active Employee Medical Enrollment*

Date	Updated 2022 Enrollment via ESS	Updated 2022 Enrollment via On-Behalf Assistance	% of Eligible Employees
Wed, Oct-20-2021	641	0	12.74%
Thu, Oct-21-2021	428	0	8.51%
Fri, Oct-22-2021	357	1	7.11%
Sat, Oct-23-2021	96	0	1.91%
Sun, Oct-24-2021	133	0	2.64%
Mon, Oct-25-2021	458	2	9.14%
Tue, Oct-26-2021	569	0	11.31%
Wed, Oct-27-2021	540	2	10.77%
Thu, Oct-28-2021	616	3	12.30%
Fri, Oct-29-2021	752	0	14.94%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>4,590</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>91.38%</b>

As demonstrated by the preceding chart, 4,590 or approximately 91% of active employees who were eligible for medical benefits enrollment enrolled in medical benefits in 2021. Data representations such as noted in preceding chart provide the Department with information to gauge levels of interest in offered benefit plans. For instance, if less employees who are eligible enroll in benefits, the Department may investigate why employees are choosing other enrollment options.

**Observations and Recommendations**

**Observation 1:** Training courses that are specific to County leadership or management such as IMA are very competitive, and many interested candidates are not able to timely complete the course.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should consider expanding the IMA program or increasing class sizes to allow more participants to enroll. Because the course is so competitive, County leaders and managers may feel that they are not able to get the training they need to be a successful leader.

In addition, consideration should be given for the HR Department to create unique management trainings, or for individual departments to create internal management trainings to allow managers from departments to be able to take management courses outside of the management trainings currently offered.

**Observation 2:** Monthly HR Liaison Workshops are not mandatory. The HRIS Section experiences issues with HR Liaisons not having consistent training on HRIS systems and therefore are not consistently entering data correctly.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should require that HR Liaison Workshops become mandatory for all Liaisons to allow for consistency in practices. If Workshops are required, then all HR Liaisons will have the consistent training and knowledge, and the HRIS Section should experience less issues with data being entered incorrectly.

The Division should also obtain feedback regarding why HR Liaisons do not attend Academy Workshops. By collecting feedback from Liaisons, the Division can work to improve Workshops and gain more consistent attendance.

**Observation 3:** HR Liaisons have varying levels of knowledge and proficiency of HRIS systems and Department software's.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should ensure that all departments have dedicated liaisons and that those roles remain fairly consistent to help ensure that Liaisons have similar levels of knowledge of HR practices and systems used.

**Observation 4:** The County lacks an integrated Talent Management System for recruiting and onboarding, performance management, learning, and succession planning. Although NeoGov provides automated recruiting and onboarding solutions, the County does not have performance management, learning management, or succession planning systems.

The County's needs to attract and retain skilled labor is more important than ever. Automated processes and tools for recruiting, onboarding, performance reviews, succession planning, career development, and learning management tools are critical in today's Human Resource departments. Having fully integrated tools can help County employees do more with less by automating many of the commoditized tasks associated with these business functions and enhancing the candidate and employee experience.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should develop a plan to migrate to a single talent management system for recruiting and onboarding, performance management, learning, and succession planning. The system could be part of the County’s new ERP system, or a consolidated standalone platform integrated with the new ERP system, such as Cornerstone or NeoGov.

The benefits of an integrated Talent Management System include the following:

- More friendly user experience
- Performance development plans are automatically linked to training and tracked as part of an employee development plan
- Ability to identify high-performing employees and link them to hiring sources
- Deployment of compliance training via a single system for all employees
- Automated assignment of training upon hire, promotion, or transfer to positions that have mandatory training requirements
- Consolidated enterprise reporting

**Observation 5:** If the County decides to implement a new ERP solution, significant implementation and migration efforts will be the responsibility of the HRIS Section and HR Technical Coordinators and will likely occur over multiple years.

**Recommendation 5:** The County and Department should consider contracting a third-party vendor for temporary support for the HRIS Section and the HR Technical Coordinators related to the potential implementation of a new ERP solution.

**Observation 6:** The Department’s performance appraisal process is heavily manual as the Department does not use a performance appraisal system.

**Recommendation 6:** The Department should consider procuring an automated performance appraisal system to help standardize and manage the process, as well as reduce manual data entry.

**Observation 7:** The County’s current annual performance appraisal process consists of conducting employee appraisals based on the employee’s anniversary date. This results in performance appraisals being due and completed consistently throughout each year. The Division receives many appraisals after the due date and must continue following up with HR Liaisons to help ensure that reviews are completed timely.

**Recommendation 7:** The County should consider revising its current annual performance appraisal process of conducting annual appraisals on employee anniversary dates and move towards a defined time period each year for conducting annual performance appraisals for all County employees.

**Observation 8:** The County Internal Audit Division completed an audit of the performance appraisal process in November 2022 and suggested multiple recommendations to the Department to improve the process.

**Recommendation 8:** The County and Department should review the recent performance appraisal process internal audit and consider implementation of the recommendations as applicable.



**Observation 9:** HR Technicians completing the performance appraisal process are manually calculating percentage salary adjustments before entering adjusted salaries into SAP and do not have a secondary control to confirm that adjustments are entered correctly

**Recommendation 9:** The Division should consider enhancing SAP to allow for the system to automatically calculate a pay-for-performance increase in salary. The Division should also consider implementing a secondary control in the form of an HR employee checking behind HR Technicians to help ensure that salary adjustments are entered correctly.

**Observation 10:** The Department does not utilize a Learning Management System.

**Recommendation 10:** As the County is evaluating new ERP solutions, they should also make efforts towards securing an LMS solution.

## 3.B.5 Department of Human Resources – Fiscal & Administration Division

The Fiscal & Administration Division (“Division”) is responsible for administration of the HR office and front desk, facilitation of the Merit Board, operation of the Call Center, and oversight of vendor contracts, budgeting, payroll, vendor payments, and fiscal planning for the Department.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Facilitation of the Merit Board
- Operation of the Call Center
- Oversight of Vendor Contracts
- Payment of Vendors
- Payroll, Leave of Absence and Open Records Reporting
- Assistance with Budgeting and Fiscal Planning

### Facilitation of the Merit Board

The Merit Board was established in 1969 by the Gwinnett County Merit System Act. The Merit Board is comprised of five members, four that are selected by the district commissioners and one who is a classified employee of the County and is elected by vote of the County’s classified employees. The responsibilities of the Merit Board are as follows:

- To represent the interest of the public in the improvement of personnel administration and selection of qualified personnel
- To recommend to the Board of Commissioners for the Board's approval or rejection rules, regulations and plans including subsequent deletions and amendments for the administration of the Merit System Act
- After the Board of Commissioners' approval, to publish the content of the rules and their modifications for public distribution and to give immediate notice to all appointing authorities affected
- To act as an independent body to hear and determine appeals by merit system employees which involve involuntary terminations, suspensions, and involuntary demotions, by ruling on appeals and complaints respecting other official recommendations of the Executive Secretary

To file a grievance or appeal, depending on the nature of the appeal, an employee may initiate the grievance with their supervisor, the Executive Secretary of the Merit Board, or the HR Department Director. The proper official will then send a document containing the specific action and the Merit Rule(s) that were violated to the Merit Board for consideration. The Division is responsible for facilitating Merit Board hearings. The helps ensure that all of the meetings and hearings are scheduled and that all parties including attorneys are provided with the correct and required documents. The Division maintains grievance files for each grievance and also manages videos and any other pieces of evidence to be presented at a meeting or hearing.

## Operation of the Call Center

While all sections of the Department participate in assisting Call Center inquiries, the Division is primarily responsible for the administration of the Call Center. The Call Center operates every business day from 8am to 5pm and is operated through Cisco and Webex. Any person, whether they are internal or external to the County, can call the Call Center. Call Center users are mostly external except for when open enrollment occurs each year. Each year during open enrollment, the primary user group is County employees and retirees who have questions related to benefits.

Typically, there are about five to ten HR employees logged into the Call Center software at one time. Within the Division, there are four HR employees logged into the Call Center who are the first employees to field calls before they route them to other Divisions within the Department. If a County employee or a member of the public calls asking for assistance and are able have their question resolved by one of the four employees within the Division, they will not be routed to another Division. The most common calls are related to verification of employment, benefits enrollment, and application status. The Information Technology Services Department is in the process of implementing a new software to utilize for the Call Center.

## Oversight of Vendor Contracts

The Division is responsible for oversight of Department vendor contracts and documents relating to vendor contracts. All vendor contracts are forwarded to the Business Officer for review of the contract and payment structure. Additionally, all renewal letters for contracts are managed and stored by the Division. Any other supporting documentation for contracts is managed by the Division. For example, the Division processes change orders by uploading the supporting documentation into FileNet for the County Board of Commissioners' approval.

An additional aspect of the Division's oversight of vendor contracts includes reviewing and cross-checking lists of insurance claims. When County employees charge a service or visit to their insurance plan, all of the processing documentation on behalf of the vendor is forwarded to the Business Officer. The Business Officer then reviews the list of charges for each employee who had a visit, or some other service provided by their insurance, and they compare the list against a document of total charges listed. If the amount of list of the total charges does not match the list of individual employee charges, the Business Officer follows up with the employee or benefits vendor for additional information to understand the difference. The invoices of charges and other documentation are then forwarded to the Financial Services Department to process for payment.

## Payment of Vendors

The Division is responsible for helping to ensure that Department vendors are paid timely and accurately in compliance with their contract with the County. Vendor contracts are forwarded to the Business Officer for review of the conditions. The Business Officer keeps track of when vendor payments are due on a spreadsheet. Most vendors are on either a biweekly or monthly pay schedule depending on the contract with the Department.

The Division utilizes a module in SAP known as Supplier Relationship Management (“SRM”) to pay vendors. First, invoices from vendors are either forwarded to the Business Officer through email or the Business Officer can locate the invoice in SRM. Then, the Business Officer converts invoices into working spreadsheets to help ensure that all charges are correct, and that the charges equal the total payment requested by the vendor. Once the invoice is reviewed for accuracy, the Business Officer is able to route the invoice through FileNet to personnel within the Financial Services Department for final approval of payment.

### Payroll, Leave of Absence and Open Records Reporting

The Division is responsible for facilitating payroll and completing leave of absence reports in addition to open records reporting. The HR Department contracts two companies that are dedicated to payroll. However, the Division coordinates with the Financial Services Department to communicate employee leave of absences for payroll purposes.

Leave of Absence reporting is completed biweekly. If an employee goes on leave of absence or unpaid leave, the Department allows the employee to have the opportunity to pay for benefits ahead of time so that when they return, the payment will not be deducted from the employee’s paycheck. The Business Officer contacts employees to keep track of employees going on leave of absences and will send them letters to provide them with the option to pre-pay for benefits.

On the County website, there is an open records request portal which is managed by the Open Records Officer in the Law Department. The Division is responsible for helping ensure that any open records requests assigned to the HR Department are responded to within three days. Depending on the open records request, the Division may need to run a report for all actions completed in SAP or provide background check information or exit survey information. When documents are requested, Division personnel utilize FileNet to locate and provide documents. If an open records request is for documents that are only accessed by the Operations Service Teams, Division personnel will reach out to the Teams for assistance if they are not able to locate the documents that are being requested.

### Assistance with Budgeting and Fiscal Planning

The Division assists with the budget for the Department in addition to the business plan. The main parties involved in creation of the budget and business plan are the Deputy Directors and the Department Director. The presentation of the budget and business plan is the responsibility of the Department Director. Therefore, the Division supports the Deputy Directors and Department Director with the annual budget and business plan. The budget includes the Department’s mission and organizational chart, priorities, and accomplishments, in addition to appropriations summaries by fund. The business plan includes sections such as a recap of the previous year’s accomplishments and challenges, notable metrics or trends that are affecting the Department’s work, identified constraints and opportunities, and any operational budget changes and decision packages for the upcoming fiscal year.

### Communications

The Division maintains communication with the Financial Services Department for the purposes of payroll, and vendor payments. The Division makes contact with the Financial Services Department typically four times a week or on a daily basis. The HR Liaison(s) within the Finance Department help facilitate purchasing and the payment of vendors once invoices are processed and approved by the HR Department.

Additional communication within the Division revolves around operation of the Call Center. Because Division personnel are logged into the Call Center daily, the Call Center is a large part of their daily responsibilities depending on the time of year and demand for assistance.

## Strategic Initiatives

The County and therefore, the Division is currently preparing for a shift from the current Call Center software that they use to a new software. The Division currently uses Cisco and Webex to administer the Call Center and route calls to the correct Divisions. The new system is Five9 which is a Call Center software management of omnichannel customer interactions using voice, SMS, chat, email, and video. The Information Technology Services Department is assisting with implementation of the new system.

## Systems and Applications

### SAP

SAP is the core business system used to manage the County's financial, human resources, and procurement business processes and is the primary system used by the Department of Human Resources for personnel management and payroll. The County implemented SAP in 2005 and has an open procurement to replace the current version of SAP with a modern cloud-based ERP System.

### SAP SRM

SRM is a product of SAP that facilitates the procurement of goods via a web-based platform. SAP SRM supports the full procurement cycle starting from source and purchase to pay through complete procurement process with suppliers and effectively managing supplier to build long-term relationship. The Department uses SRM for processing purchase orders.

### FileNet

FileNet is an enterprise content management system used for document management and workflow. The Department uses FileNet for storing electronic policy documents and forms.

### Cisco Contact Center

Cisco Contact Center is used as part of the Call Center and delivers call treatment, omnichannel contact management, contact routing and network-to-desktop CTI over an IP infrastructure.

### Webex

Webex includes a Cloud Contact Center which is used as part of the Call Center and is a software solution that allows organizations to handle all inbound and outbound customer communications.

## Performance Data and Analysis

The Division tracks data relating to the operation of the Call Center. The Division tracks call duration and whether the inquiry was resolved. There is no data or analysis on the types of calls or reasons for the calls that could be assessed to better understand common call themes and needs.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Relating to the Call Center, the Division only tracks length of calls and whether the call was resolved. The Division does not track other data including the reason for the call.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should consider tracking more data points from the Call Center such as the types of call or the reason for the call. If the Division was able to categorize the most common reasons for why the public or employees contact the Call Center, they could direct their efforts towards developing more proactive self-service guides or information to inform callers of where to find the answers to their questions. Increasing proactive efforts for calls would allow for less calls and therefore less employees to have to devote time to answering calls.

## 3.B.6 Department of Human Resources – Technology Observations and Recommendations

The Mauldin & Jenkins and Prinzo Group team interviewed management and employees in each division of the Department of Human Resources to understand the current state of the Department regarding IT applications being used, issues related to technology and process automation, priorities, and any additional information to provide the comprehensive overview found in the preceding sections. Based on our fieldwork, we developed the following categories of observations, as well as a summary list of recommendations for the Department. These observations and recommendations reflect issues and opportunities that may be at either the division level or the Department level and should be considered by the Department and, as appropriate, the Information Technology Services Department for evaluation and implementation.

### Technology Summary Recommendations

#### Continued Support and Implementation

**Observation 1:** Implementing the new ERP system is a generational project that significantly impacts the County's current and future operations. Based on our fieldwork, we have the following observations related to the new ERP system implementation:

- **Customized Business Processes:** The current ERP system is heavily customized with non-standardized business processes. Cloud ERP systems do not allow software customizations and require customers to adhere to the software vendor's business processes.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Adhering to the software vendor's business processes requires collaboration across Departments and agreement on standard business processes. Currently, there is limited cross-departmental collaboration and a lack of common business processes.
- **Staffing:** The County is facing a staffing shortage in all areas. The new system will require commitments from the Departments' operational staff to participate in the project, which takes time away from their existing job responsibilities.
- **Data Conversion:** When moving to new ERP systems, organizations must consider the effort required to convert configuration and transaction data from the legacy system to the new systems. Given the age and customized level of SAP, the County could face complex data conversion issues.
- **Budget:** ERP system implementations are expensive. It is unclear if the County has a comprehensive budget addressing all potential expenses.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should develop a comprehensive plan and supporting documentation for the entire ERP implementation that includes strategies to address the following:

- Project Governance Structure
- Project Budget
- Project Management Office and Vendor Management
- Project Resource Plan, including staff allocation and backfill plan
- Procurement of system integration services and other consulting services

- Current state documentation, including business process documentation, system integrations, user's roles, and workflows
- Process mapping of future state business processes
- Data Conversion Strategy
- Organizational Change Management
- Project Timeline and Implementation Plan (Pilot, Phased Approach, Big Bang, etc.)

In addition, the County should conduct lessons-learned calls with similar public sector organizations that have implemented cloud ERP platforms.



## 3.B.7 Department of Human Resources – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** Due to work demands and lack of staffing, the Department Director is currently involved in many day-to-day operational tasks and not being able to consistently function at the strategic level.

**Recommendation 1:** The County and Department should consider the creation of a new position, an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director would be able to assume daily operating tasks currently performed by the Department Director and therefore allow the Department Director to be more strategic and proactive for the Department.

**Observation 2:** A county-wide classification and compensation study has not been conducted since 2005.

**Recommendation 2:** To help ensure equity of salaries and accuracy of job descriptions, along with market and internal structure alignment, the Department should consider contracting an outside vendor to perform a classification and compensation study.

**Observation 3:** Current policy does not allow for the change of 401(a) and 457(b) plans once an employee has completed the enrollment process after being newly hired.

**Recommendation 3:** The County should consider allowing employee changes of 401(a) and 457(b) contributions on an annual, or more frequent basis.

**Observation 4:** The EXCEL and IMA training academies are both very competitive for managers and leaders within the County.

**Recommendation 4:** The HR Department should consider offering additional managerial trainings that managers can take in lieu of the EXCEL and IMA trainings that are either internal to the HR Department or are offered by departments if managers are denied enrollment in the programs due to competitiveness.

**Observation 5:** HR Liaisons have inconsistent levels of training and knowledge regarding HR policies, procedures, and systems.

**Recommendation 5:** HR Liaisons should start tracking time to better understand how much of their time is dedicated to serving as HR Liaisons as opposed to other departmental responsibilities. That way, they can use this information to recognize the need to either have more liaisons or make Department staff fully dedicated to HR functions for the department. The County should ensure that all departments have dedicated liaisons and that those roles remain fairly consistent.

# 3.C Gwinnett County Public Library System

## The Library At A Glance

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1 Provide a variety of reading and educational services to the citizens of Gwinnett County such as the access to physical and electronic resources, age-specific programs, and free-to-use technology spaces called Learning Labs.
- 2 Serve as a resource for Gwinnett County citizens who require access to as computers, printers, and other multimedia resources.
- 3 Facilitate collaboration and innovation within the larger Gwinnett County community through access to additional resources, space, and social services.

**RECOMMENDED BUDGET (2021):**

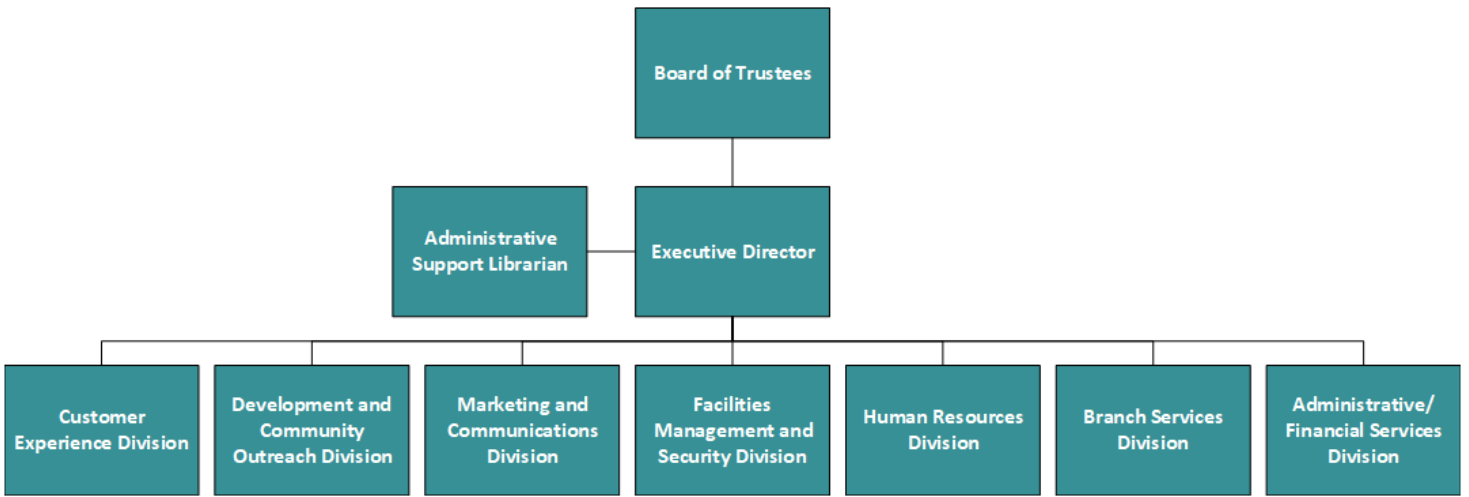
**\$21,278,027**

Operating Expenses

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

FTE	through October 2022	Public Library
	Total Filled Positions (Current)	296
Total Allocated Positions	302	
Total Filled Part-Time Positions	66	
Total Filled Full-Time Positions	230	
Total Open Positions	6	

## Organization Structure



## Commendations

### Learning Labs



The GCPL Learning Labs are a unique offering not commonly found in library systems. The Learning Labs provide a space for citizens within the County use technology and software such as 3-D printers, audio and video equipment, and audio and video editing software. These labs and all necessary materials are free to use and allow County residents the opportunity to learn how to use the equipment and then proficiently use it on their own.

### Timely and Relevant Community Programs



GCPL designs and offers programs that are timely and relevant for the community in which each branch serves as well as broader social issues and concerns. Branches are able to design their own programs based on the preferences and needs of the community that they serve. This includes programs such as the conversational English class and book clubs for individuals with disabilities.

### Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM”) Team



More than 40 personnel spread throughout the Department comprise the CISM Team, which helps first responders mitigate the emotional and physical impact of responding to emergencies. The Team helps peers identify mental health and other resources available to employees.

### New Start Entrepreneurship Program



Several of the GCPL programs are recognized nationally for their innovation and service to the community. One program is the New Start Entrepreneurship Program, a six-month program designed to assist formerly incarcerated individuals successfully prepare to start a small business.

### Partnerships with Community Schools



The GCPL system partners with many different community schools and organizations to provide a range of services to the County and its citizens. School partnerships, for example, allow for the library to design programs that align with the curriculum as well as promote additional resources and services the branches have to offer.

## Introduction

Governed by a Board of Trustees, the current Gwinnett County Public Library system was established in 1996 in compliance with the Official Code of Georgia (“OCGA”) § 20-5-40. While the Library is a component unit of the County, the Library and Board of Trustees possesses a certain level of autonomy to govern themselves in the use of funds and overall operations.

The primary responsibility of the Library is to provide library services to the citizens of Gwinnett County. These services include things such as material borrowing, research assistance, and program creation and coordination.

## Organization

The GCPL system is led by an Executive Director who reports to the Board of Trustees. The GCPL system is organized into seven divisions.

- Administrative Services Division
- Branch Services Division
- Customer Experience Division

- Development and Community Outreach Division
- Facilities Management and Security Division
- Human Resources Division
- Marketing and Communications Division

### *Governance*

The GCPL system is overseen by a Board of Trustees established in accordance with state requirements. The Board of Trustees (“Board”) consists of five appointed members including one Board Chair. The Board meets at least five times a year to workshop and discuss relevant topics surrounding the GCPL system. Each Gwinnett County Commissioner appoints a member to represent their district on the Board of Trustees, with terms concurrent with the Commissioner’s term.

The Library Board of Trustees is assigned specific responsibilities in the Official Code of Georgia (“OCGA”), which include:

- Employing a Director over the GCPL system
- Reviewing and approving budgets prepared by the Director and staff
- Attending all board meetings
- Establishing rules and regulations which govern the GCPL system
- Setting policies for the gifts of money and property
- Presenting financial and progress reports to governing officials and the public

Within the bylaws for the Board of Trustees, specific member position responsibilities are outlined. The Chair of the Board is responsible for appointing all committees and acts as ex-officio in all committees. The Vice-Chair of the Board presides in the absence of the Chair. The Secretary is responsible for recording all official actions of the Board, and keeping an attendance record. The Treasurer is responsible for monitoring the receipt and disbursement of funds, for organizing quarterly financial reports for the Board and for organizing an audit. The Board is staffed by GCPL employees.

### *Administrative/Financial Services Division*

The Administrative/Financial Services Division is led by a Director of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”) and is responsible for GCPL’s financial responsibilities. Reporting directly to the Director, the Business Manager is responsible for the day-to-day financial operations. Reporting to the Business Manager are: the Payroll Clerk, who is responsible for ensuring that payroll is processed and is accurate; an Accounts Payable Clerk, who is responsible for all invoices, all accounts payable reconciliation, and all procurement; and a Staff Accountant who is responsible for maintaining the fixed asset and associated depreciation schedules, bank account reconciliation, handling the petty cash account, and developing and analyzing financial information.

### *Branch Services Division*

The Branch Services Division is responsible for the staffing of the 15 GCPL branches around the County, including Learning Lab staffing. Under the direction of the Director of Branch Services, each branch is led by a Branch Manager, who is supported by one to two Supervising Librarians. All branches have Assistant and Associate Librarians and vary on the number of full and part-time Librarian positions. All branches have a Librarian who is designated as the Early Education Learning Associate. Branches with

Learning Labs include one to two Learning Lab Specialists, with the Learning Lab Supervisor housed at one of the branches.

### *Customer Experience Division*

The Customer Experience Division (“Division”) encompasses external customer-facing system-level programs and services within the GCPL system, material acquisition, and staff support for IT and continuing education. The Sections include Youth Services, Adult Services, Staff Engagement, the IT Department, the Materials Department, and the Customer Contact Center (“CCC”).

The Division is led by a Director of Customer Experience. There are six Managers that report directly to the Director and are responsible for each of the following subdivisions within the Customer Experience Division: Youth Services, Adult Services, Staff Engagement, IT Department, Materials Department, Customer Contact Center.

### *Youth Services*

Youth Services is responsible for the creation and implementation of youth and teen programs outside of the branches. These programs are designed for children between the ages of newborn and 18. The majority of the Youth Services programs occur outside of the branches in other areas of the community. The Youth Services Community Partnership Manager is responsible for strengthening the partnerships that headquarters-based programs have with community partners and other local organizations.

Youth Services is led by a Youth Services Manager who oversees one Youth Services Community Partnership Manager, one Teen Librarian, and three Youth Services Specialists.

### *Adult Services*

Adult Services is responsible for the creation and implementation of programs that cater to adults within the County. These programs include highlighted author visits and discussions as well as round table discussion events regarding specific topics. Adult Services is led by an Adult Services Manager who oversees two Adult Services Specialists.

### *Staff Engagement*

Staff Engagement is responsible for new hire training and the continuing training of staff. This includes phishing and safe computer use training. Staff Engagement is also responsible for managing all conference travel and accommodations. Staff Engagement is led by a Staff Engagement Manager who oversees one Staff Engagement Associate.

### *IT Department*

The IT Department is responsible for network administration and support, monitoring all firewalls and antivirus software. The IT Department supports both the staff computers, including both physical and software support, as well as supporting all public-facing computers, tablets, and other devices. The IT Department is led by an IT Operations Manager and includes three IT Operations Specialists, one Lead IT Operations Specialist, one IT Systems Administrator, and two IT Systems Specialists.

### *Materials Department*

The Materials Department is responsible for acquiring and cataloging all electronic and physical materials and maintaining various online resource applications. The Materials Department consists of a Technical Services Manager, one Cataloging Librarian, three Collection Development Librarians, three Materials Assistants, one Materials Specialist Assistant, and one Materials Associate.

### *Customer Contact Center*

The Customer Contact Center is responsible for taking customer questions regarding the GCPL system by phone, email, internet chat message, or text message. The Customer Contact Center is also responsible for managing the Mailbox Books program, which delivers books to homebound customers. The Customer Contact Center is led by a Customer Contact Center Manager. There are four full-time and one part-time Customer Contact Center Associates that report directly to the Customer Contact Center Manager.

### *Development and Community Outreach Division*

The Development and Community Outreach Division is responsible for partnership development, community outreach and engagement, fundraising for the Library Foundation and staffing the Foundation Board, and volunteer tracking and program management. The Development and Community Outreach Division is led by a Director of Development and Community Partnerships, who is supported by a Volunteer Coordinator.

### *Facilities Management and Security Division*

The Facilities Management and Security Division serves as a liaison between the GCPL system and the County for construction management, janitorial services, and facility maintenance for maintenance and repairs that are still under warranty or cannot be performed by Division staff. The Division is also responsible for all courier services between the branches and the contracting of security guards for branches that provide open access hours, which are unstaffed hours that libraries are made available to cardholders.

The Division is led by the Director of Facilities Management and Security, and includes one Facilities Maintenance Technician who is responsible for maintenance at the branches such as plumbing issues, HVAC issues, furniture assembly, etc. The Division also includes two full-time Courier Drivers and one part-time Courier Driver, who are responsible for transporting requested books and other materials between branches.

### *Human Resources Division*

The Human Resources Division is responsible for recruitment and hiring benefits management, and employee relations. The Division is led by the Director of Human Resources who is supported by a Human Resources Generalist.

### *Marketing and Communications Division*

The Marketing and Communications Division is responsible for the marketing and branding of the GCPL system and programs that are run by the GCPL system. The Division manages all social media and advertising for the GCPL system and works with the branches in order to highlight various programs and outreach initiatives. The Division is run by the Director of Marketing and Communication, who is supported by a Marketing Coordinator and a Marketing Communications Specialist.

## **Strategic Priorities**

GCPL developed a strategic plan in 2019, which outlined four goals for the Library, with each goal tied to several key strategies for success:

### *Goal 1: Community Awareness and Partnerships*

GCPL wants to ensure that it is seen as a trusted stakeholder and partner in the communities, and serves as a hub for community interaction and resources. GCPL prides itself on providing a variety of services

to the communities served by each branch, as well as the County overall. Branch-level services and programming are tailored to the needs of the local community, while still tying into the system-wide strategic goals and initiatives. GCPL is working to improve awareness of the programs and resources it offers, and to build community trust of GCPL.

GCPL is also working to build partnerships at both the branch and system level, to leverage these partners to provide services and resources through the libraries, rather than having multiple organizations provide the same or similar resources throughout the community. Initiatives include partners hosting events in branches with space, branches hosting programs with local subject matter experts to increase community engagement and awareness, or system-wide initiatives and activities. GCPL wants to continue using partners and their resources to increase the impact of the library system as cost-effectively as possible. GCPL works to expand engagement with community organizations to increase awareness and outreach, establish partnerships that are robust and active and diverse, and address key challenges and needs within the community.

#### *Goal 2: Diversity in Programs and Services*

GCPL is working to ensure that the programs and services provided through the branches, as well as at the system-level, reflect the diversity in both population and needs of the community they serve. This includes more educational programming, such as conversational English classes or cooking on a budget, as well as cultural programming, such as social justice discussions.

GCPL staff are encouraged to innovate and think creatively about the opportunities that may be available to connect with their community. GCPL also strives for continuous improvement, regularly evaluating the programs offered and community feedback to develop future programming and resources.

#### *Goal 3: Facilities and Infrastructure*

GCPL's goal is to ensure the most effective use of space available within the branches, and to ensure that the staff and visitors have the needed technology that reflects the broader technological environment.

GCPL has also invested time and energy into identifying opportunities for increased efficiencies and visitor accessibility over the past few years. The branches have moved from a stationary circulation desk to mobile kiosks, so librarians can assist visitors throughout the branch, rather than having visitors queue up at a central desk location. The physical collection has also shifted away from the card catalog filing system and introduced a shelving model similar to a bookstore, with books organized and labeled by category instead of number-based organization.

#### *Goal 4: Funding and Resources*

GCPL wants to maximize its use of funding by providing a variety of resources and services to visitors at low or no cost. This goal includes identifying a diverse funding pool, including grants and non-governmental funding to allow for expansion of current programming and introduction of new programming that reflects the needs and wants of the community.

#### *Strategic Plan and Goal Commentary*

While GCPL conducted a large-scale needs assessment as part of its strategic planning initiative, it does not regularly conduct quantitative updates, nor does it formally or consistently use data collected by partner organizations and governments to ensure GCPL is leveraging updated information about community needs and currently available resources.

Additionally, because there are staff in both the branches and headquarters working towards many of these strategic goals in similar ways, there can be challenges in ensuring there is no duplication of services between multiple units, as well as ensuring that there is not competition embedded in how GCPL messages its objectives and how it measures and tracks division and/or branch success towards those objectives. Senior leadership communicates expectations for “one system, one goal” but the actionable guidance does not always specifically address metric tracking, reporting, and ownership expectations.

GCPL works to plan strategically and proactively, but feels limited in its ability to be forward-thinking due to the current budget process. Because GCPL’s primary funding comes from Gwinnett County and is adopted and funded on an annual basis, GCPL is hesitant to commit to long-range planning and initiatives, as there is no guarantee that there will be adequate funding to maintain the staffing and resource levels needed for success.

### Leadership and Management

GCPL has a hierarchical structure, which relies on middle management and leadership to manage front-line staff and communicate issues or successes up to more senior leadership. Several front-line and middle management staff noted that senior leadership is not consistently visible within their work areas, although most staff described senior leadership as generally supportive and transparent when there were opportunities for direct interaction and organic discussion.

In the last several years, leadership introduced regular virtual Q&A sessions, where staff can submit questions to be read and answered on virtual departmental calls. These calls are currently held monthly; leadership also utilizes these calls to provide information and updates to all staff. Some staff note that these calls and other communication updates from senior leadership feel reactive and expressed a desire for more proactive transparency and communication, rather than waiting for a question to be posed before sharing information.

There is a perception that the branches are the most important function and unit of the organization, and that many decisions are driven by prioritizing the needs of the branches and the impact that potential strategies, initiatives, or changes, may have on the branches before considering headquarters staff. Some staff noted that leadership may not be fully evaluating how decisions impact headquarters staff, nor proactively communicating those changes with them to appropriately adjust processes or provide their input. This perception also impacts the communication between many of the non-branch services and the branches.

Board membership terms align with Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners’ terms. As such, turnover is somewhat staggered among GCPL Board members, but there is the potential for several members to change simultaneously. GCPL Board training has historically been focused on general overview of the OCGA requirements, the local by-laws, and general roles and responsibilities of the Board, with additional information and context gained through the regular board meetings.

### Technology

The GCPL system maintains a dedicated information technology unit (the IT Department) and operates independently of the County’s Department of Information Technology and primarily provides network services and desktop support services.



## Strategic Initiatives

The IT Department's current initiatives include Network Security, Cyber Security Training, and Cloud Migration.

### *Network Security*

The IT Department is working on initiatives to secure GCPL networks by adding local firewalls and creating segmented networks for the branches. In addition, security measures such as anti-virus and programs to scrub computers have been implemented to further secure computers in branches used by the public.

### *Cybersecurity Training*

To combat the increase in ransomware phishing attacks targeting state and local governments, the Division is conducting training on safe computer use. The training includes sending fake phishing emails and issuing additional training to employees who click on the links within the emails. The IT Department uses outside trainers to engage the employees in training and tracks the training through Google Sheets.

### *Cloud Migration*

Due to issues with the cooling system in the server room and to build a modern application architecture, the IT Department is migrating applications to the cloud. The cloud migration is based on leveraging cloud-based products for major applications, such as the Library Management System and supporting apps, Microsoft Office, and HR and Payroll system provided by ADP. In addition, the IT Department qualifies for a Google education account, including Google Vault, which provides online backup for Gmail messages and Google Drive files. The only apps that remain on-premise are apps used for digital content creation, such as the applications used by the learning labs for 3D printing.

## System and Applications

Based on the application inventory, the GCPL IT Department uses and supports approximately 179 software tools and applications. The applications consist of the following categories:

- Office productivity applications used on PCs and Macs for word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation
- Enterprise applications used to manage core business functions
- Media and other creative applications used in the learning lab
- Operating systems, databases, and other support and related applications and utilities
- Infrastructure management applications to manage the GCPL's network, phone system, physical and network security, and HVAC

Key systems are detailed below.

### *Polaris*

Polaris ILS is the Library Management System ("LMS") developed by Innovate, a software company that builds software for library management. The Libraries use Polaris ILS to track library inventory, orders, bills, and patrons who borrowed items from the library.

### *BiblioCore and BiblioApps*

BiblioCore and BiblioApps are software applications developed by BiblioCommons, a software company that builds software for library services. BiblioCore is the online library catalog that integrates with Polaris. BiblioApps is the library app used by the public to discover content and borrow items.

### ADP Workforce Now

ADP Workforce Now is the human resource management software developed by ADP. The Department uses ADP Workforce Now for personnel management and payroll.

### Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is the financial management software developed by Microsoft. The Department uses Microsoft Dynamics for financial management and accounting. Currently, the Department is in the process of transitioning from Microsoft Dynamics to Blackbaud.

### LibAnswers, LibCal, and LibGuides

LibAnswers, LibCal, and LibGuides are software applications developed by SpringShare, a software company that builds online solutions for libraries. LibAnswers is an online tool to answer questions from patrons and the public. LibCal is an online calendar tool for managing calendars, equipment, and space bookings. LibGuides is an online content management system for developing and presenting topical information.

### Beanstack

Beanstack is an online software tool to promote and participate in early literacy programs for school children. Beanstack allows program participants to track the books or minutes read and log program participation activities.

## Customer Service

GCPL considers all Gwinnett County residents their customers, and strives to identify programming and services that can reach a variety of populations within the County. The Department prides itself on customer service and flexibility in working with County residents and other customers. Many staff are passionate about their work and regularly shared with the M&J team how important it is to them to be able to provide a meaningful service to County residents.

Internal service divisions, such as IT, Administrative Services, and Human Resources, also spoke of the commitment to providing quality service and support to GCPL staff.

GCPL takes a lot of pride in being a customer service-oriented organization, infusing consideration of customer service throughout all levels of operations, maintenance, and internal functions. All staff receive customer service training as part of their initial onboarding and orientation and there is regularly continuing professional education training that provides additional support for working with unique branch visitors, such as the homeless or those with mental health needs. Several branches also have social work interns, to work directly with visitors to connect them with needed resources available through the County or community partner programs.

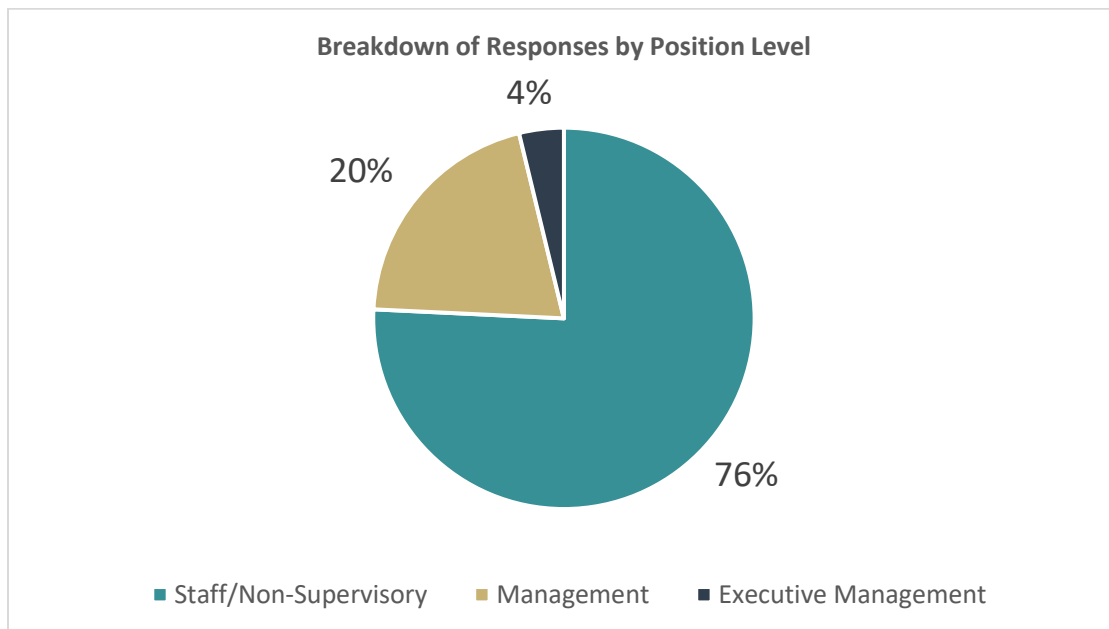
However, what the Department's customer service strategy currently lacks is consistent assessment of customer needs, and ensuring that programs and initiatives are designed to meet those needs, and are not duplicating services or resources that may be provided by other organizations. Many GCPL staff feel that the services provided are additive, providing additional access points or expanding resource impact throughout the County, but there is no formal quantitative data to support either this assessment or this impact. GCPL conducted a community needs assessment as part of its strategic planning process, but ongoing efforts are more informal. Community feedback about programs and services tends to be more

informal and anecdotal, often resulting in strong qualitative data, but minimal quantitative data other than registration or attendance figures.

## Survey

As part of the Operational Performance Assessment of each Department, Mauldin & Jenkins conducted a survey to provide a mechanism for Department employees to provide open and honest feedback related to Department and County operations, service delivery, organization, and culture. The survey was anonymous and individual responses have been kept confidential by Mauldin & Jenkins. The survey was conducted electronically allowing only single responses from unique email addresses. In addition, hard copies of the survey were provided to employees whose access to a computer is limited.

133 responses were received, representing an approximate response rate of 43.6%. Generally, a response rate of more than 20% is considered a positive response rate. The following chart shows the breakdown of responses by position level:



As shown in the pie chart, the majority of respondents were non-supervisory staff.

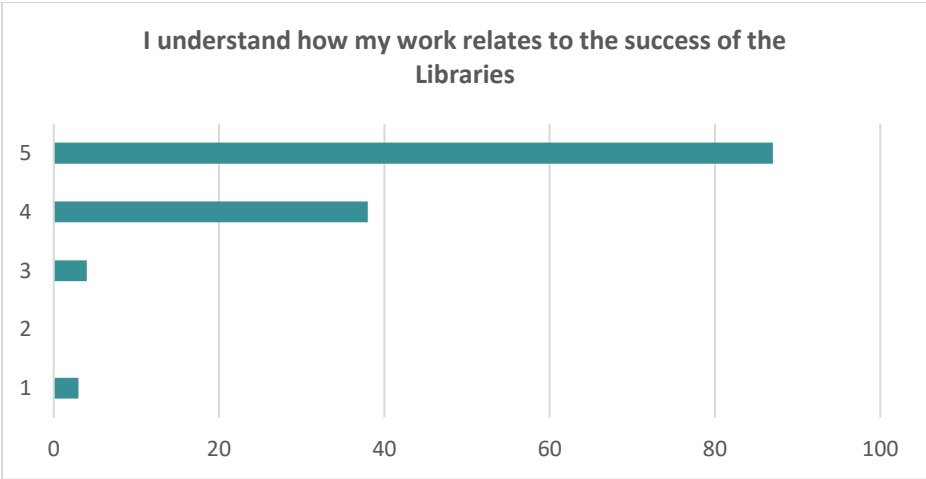
The table below shows the average score for each survey statement based on the following scale:

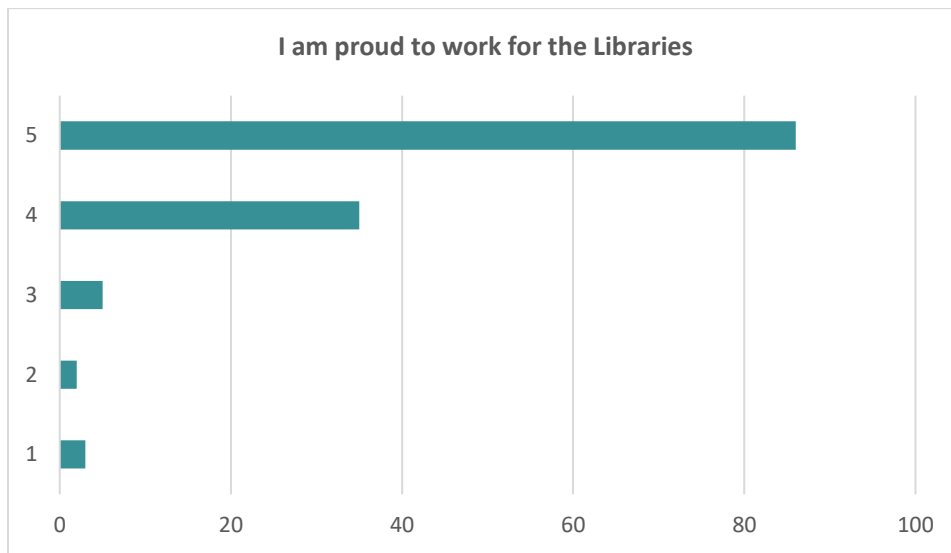
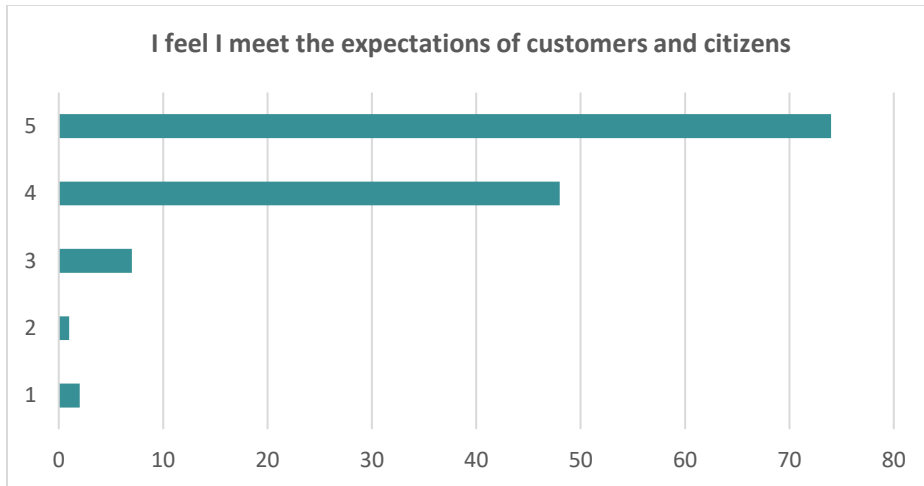
- 1 = strongly disagree**
- 2 = disagree**
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = agree**
- 5 = strongly agree**

Survey Statement	Average Score
I understand how my work relates to the success of the Libraries	4.6
I clearly understand what is expected of me in my role	4.4
I am provided with the tools, equipment, and technology necessary to do my job well	4.0

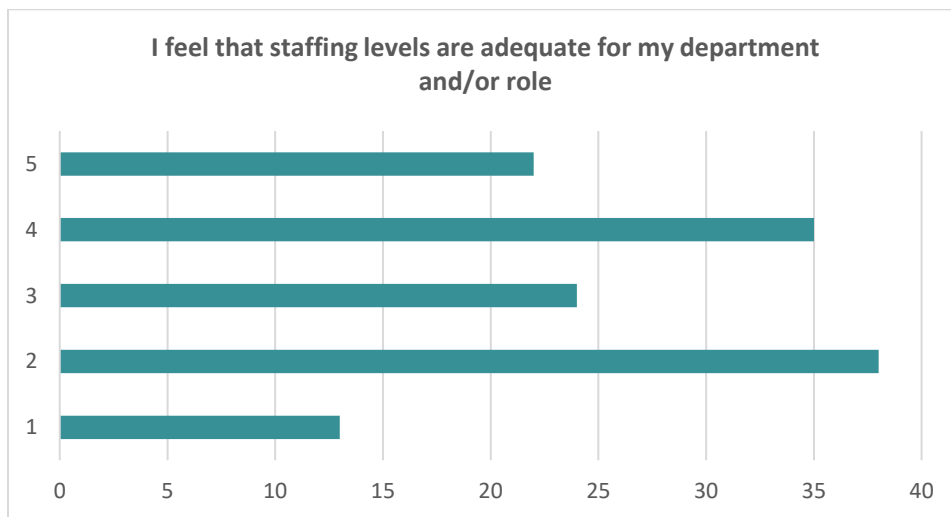
Survey Statement	Average Score
My workload is appropriate for my role	3.6
I feel I meet the expectations of customers and citizens	4.4
I feel that staffing levels are adequate for my department and/or role	3.1
I am provided opportunities within my role to use my talent and experience	4.2
I receive praise and appreciation when I do a good job	3.8
I receive guidance and support for improving my performance	3.9
I have opportunities to advance within the Libraries	3.3
My direct supervisor encourages my professional development	4.1
Management (Board of Trustees Chair, Executive Director, and my Department Director) consistently demonstrates that quality customer service is a priority	4.2
I trust Management (Board of Trustees Chair, Executive Director, and my Department Director) to make decisions that are in the best interest of the County	3.8
Management (Board of Trustees Chair, Executive Director, and my Department Director) clearly communicates decisions and changes in a timely manner	3.5
I am proud to work for the Libraries	4.5
I would recommend the Libraries as a good place to work	4.0

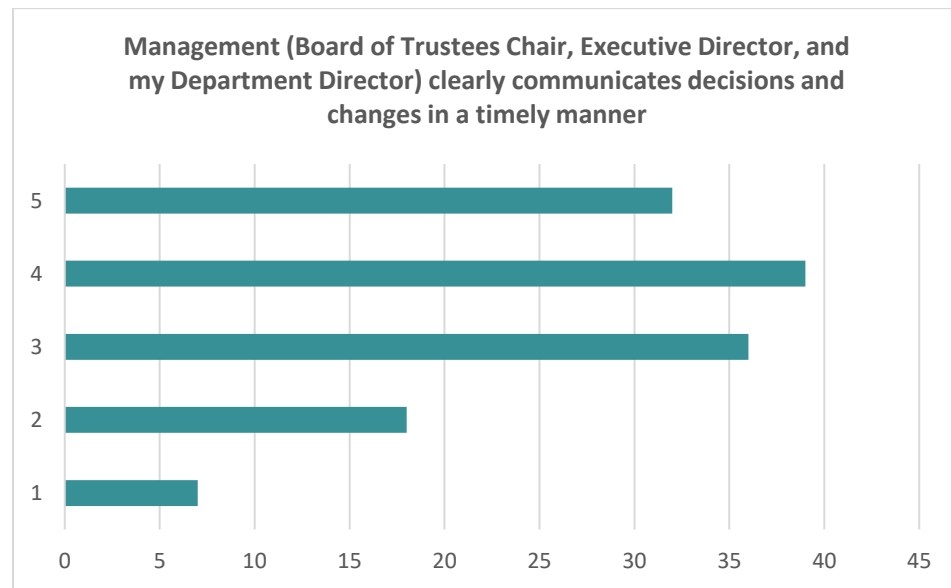
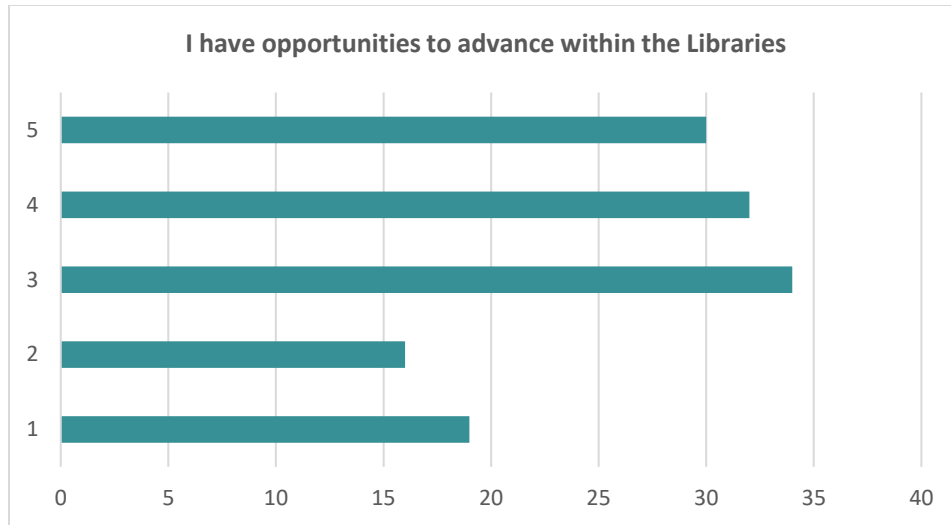
The average score for all the survey statements is 4.0. The lowest score is 3.1 and the highest score is 4.6. The highest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





The lowest three scores are shown in the following graphs:





In addition to the statements above, the survey also asked open-ended questions. Common response themes from these open-ended questions are shown below:

- Respondents emphasized that the greatest strength of the Library is the multitude of services that are provided to the community free of charge. Respondents relayed that the services and resources provided to the community are invaluable, and conveyed the importance of having multiple access points throughout the County
- Respondents indicated that they wished to see a stronger emphasis on providing a greater collection of multi-lingual services and resources to the community. Respondents feel that GCPL should prioritize diversifying the collection through additional materials in more languages. This sentiment was also shared related to prioritizing staff who speak languages reflected in the community they serve

- Respondents voiced a desire for more transparency with communications from leadership. Some respondents indicated that the reasons behind decisions that are being made are not fully available to staff. Respondents also expressed the desire for leadership to become more visible within the branches
- Respondents indicated that the GCPL system should stop charging fines for items that are returned late. Respondents feel that this is counterproductive to the goal of helping the community and that some individuals who are experiencing financial issues may not be able to pay these fines and may see the fines as a barrier to receiving additional services and support through GCPL.

## 3.C.1 Gwinnett County Public Library – Administrative Services Division

The Administrative Services Division (“Division”) is responsible for financial functions of the GCPL system. The Division manages payroll activities, reconciliation for all bank accounts and daily deposits, and accounts payable management.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Accounts Payable
- Payroll Processing
- Revenue Recognition
- Purchasing Card Reconciliation
- Reporting

### Accounts Payable

Regular and/or recurring invoices typically come directly to Administrative Services from vendors. Others may be routed to Administrative Services through other end-user divisions with approval noted. If an invoice comes directly to Administrative Services from the vendor, the Accounting Specialist forwards the invoice to the appropriate end-user division for review and approval. Once all required approvals have been documented, the Accounting Specialist is responsible for reviewing these invoices and entering and coding the AP request. Checks are printed every other week.

Currently, all documentation to support the check run is filed physically. Once GCPL transitions to Blackbaud it will have the ability to store supporting documentation electronically within the system.

### Payroll Processing

The Division uses ADP for human capital management, including leave management and payroll processing. GCPL pays employees biweekly, with a one-week delay between the pay period end and pay disbursement. The Payroll Clerk works with Branch Managers and Division Directors to verify that all employees have entered their time and leave utilization and that each employee’s time record has been reviewed and approved. All pay is made via direct deposit. Leave must be submitted into the system by staff before being reviewed and approved for processing. All payroll information and supporting documentation is filed physically by printing a report from ADP. The Business Services Manager reviews payroll information for completeness and accuracy.

The Payroll Clerk also reviews any employee information changes or new hire entries before processing payroll. The Payroll Clerk reviews the entry of information by HR or the employee to verify all fields contain complete information. The Payroll Clerk also verifies that any new or modified bank accounts are active and able to receive direct deposits.

### Revenue Recognition

Visitors to branches use kiosks to make payments for copier charges, fine payments, and other transactions. Branch staff also collect payment for passport applications. Each GCPL branch goes to the bank at least once a week to deposit collected funds. Branch staff are required to submit the deposit



ticket and a physical reporting tape to the Accounting Specialist to document the amount deposited in the bank. The Accounting Specialist verifies the deposit slip matches the amounts recorded in the payments systems (Polaris, Smart Money Manager, and Square) as applicable, for the payments made by library visitors. If there are discrepancies, the Accounting Specialist contacts the depositing employee to assist with reconciliation. If the deposit slip matches the reports, the Accounting Specialist makes journal entries to record the deposits. The Staff Accountant is responsible for verifying that the journal entry was entered for the correct branch and that the journal entry matches the deposit amount reported by the bank.

### Purchasing Card Reconciliation

There are 50 purchasing cards (“p-cards”) issued within the GCPL system, although approximately 30 are in regular active use. Each Branch Manager is provided a p-card and each division is provided a p-card. Card limits depend on the cardholder’s location and responsibilities, with the average limits of \$500 for single transactions, daily limits of \$1,500, and monthly limits of \$2,000 for most users. Cardholders are required to send the Staff Accountant a reconciliation form and receipts for each purchase. The Staff Accountant is responsible for reviewing the completeness and accuracy of the documentation provided by the cardholder. If the cardholder cannot produce a receipt, they must complete a Missing Receipt Affidavit. Once the Staff Accountant has received all of the necessary documentation, the Staff Accountant is responsible for coding the p-card charges to the correct division, branch, and object code, as appropriate.

### Reporting

The Division prepares and submits a variety of financial reports. The month-end closing and reporting process includes running reports from a variety of systems that capture financial information, including Polaris, SMM, and Square, to ensure that the system-reported deposits match the financial system records. Staff note that in the current financial system, this process can be time-consuming with the manual compilation and review of system data.

For grants management, the Staff Accountant is responsible for reviewing and understanding the financial reporting requirements of the awarding agency, and coordinating with the head of the implementing division to prepare and submit financial reports based on grantor requirements.

Gwinnett County funds most of the capital renovation and construction projects for the branches, including the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment (“FF&E”) for use in new or renovated spaces. For FF&E, GCPL typically makes the purchase and then requests reimbursement from the County, preparing reimbursement requests that document the expenditures within their financial system as well as supporting documentation. GCPL is not consistently provided detailed budgets for FF&E, and notes this process can take several conversations with Gwinnett County Support Services to understand what is eligible for invoice, and what documentation is required to support the reimbursement request. GCPL has tried to develop templates, but have found that they are not aiding in the process.

### Communications

Administrative Services regularly communicates with other GCPL Divisions, typically through more informal means and one-on-one discussions.

Internally, the Business Manager holds weekly meetings with the division staff to discuss workload, issues, and challenges. The CFO holds weekly meetings with the business manager to stay updated on Division successes, needs, and challenges.

### Strategic Initiatives

The Division is working to enhance and standardize its processes and procedures. The Division is transitioning to Blackbaud for its financial system, which will allow them to move towards a paperless environment, and improve workflow and communication within the system, rather than manual processes and tracking. The Division hopes that the transition to Blackbaud will increase the time that staff have available for reporting and real-time analysis.

The Division is also working to assess its current policies and procedures and compare them with current practices to enhance standardization of practices and to provide consistent expectations and requirements for other divisions. This evaluation will also be used as a gap assessment to determine where there are not practices or procedures developed, and to create efficiencies where the new financial system and processes will allow.

To align with the GCPL system emphasis on customer service, the Division continues to evaluate where it can provide more autonomy to other divisions allowing for enhanced real-time materials ordering. The Division recently updated its practices to allow Branch Managers the authority to place supply and material orders up to \$500, rather than providing requests to headquarters for less frequent large-scale supply and material orders. This allows each branch to order needed supplies and materials more on demand and has reduced the need for headquarters storage space and courier deliveries.

### Systems and Applications

The Administrative Services Division uses multiple systems to carry out day to day tasks and complete periodic reporting.

ADP Workforce Now is GCPL's human capital management ("HCM") system that the Payroll Clerk uses to complete bi-weekly payroll reports and checks before payroll is processed.

The branches utilize several systems to receive and record payments. Administrative Services has access to these systems to run reports to verify the completeness and accuracy of branch deposits and associated journal entries.

The GCPL system is currently in the process of implementing Blackbaud as its new financial management system called Blackbaud. GCPL hopes to leverage the transition to document current processes and identify efficiencies in data capture and data sharing.

### Data and Performance Analysis

Administrative Services does not currently capture or utilize much performance or workload data.

GCPL conducts regular Energage surveys, which capture data about employee perceptions and insights into their work environment and culture. GCPL may want to leverage these survey results to determine other end-user perceptions about Administrative Division customer service as well as Administrative Division perceptions about workload and ability to perform. GCPL can utilize this data to identify if workload metrics or other data could help document current workload levels and assist in identifying efficiencies for more effective functions or customer service.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** GCPL capital projects are funded by Gwinnett County, with GCPL paying for FF&E purchases then requesting reimbursement from Gwinnett County. There is not a specific County process, nor operating guidance, on what has been approved for purchase, the budget for purchase, nor the format and process for GCPL to request reimbursement and provide supporting documentation. The lack of guidance and support puts GCPL at risk of purchasing FF&E that may not be reimbursed by Gwinnett County.

**Recommendation 1:** Gwinnett County Support Services should collaborate with GCPL to develop clear communications and processes for GCPL capital project reimbursement. This should include a financial meeting at the beginning of each project, so that Support Services can provide the budget and timeline for the FF&E portion of the project, and clarify any additional expectations around prior approval or supporting documentation. The County should also identify a point of contact to provide technical assistance and support to GCPL who is authorized to make decisions when needed.

## 3.C.2 Gwinnett County Public Library – Branch Services Division

The Branch Services Division is led by a Branch Services Director who oversees operations at all 15 GCPL Branches. The Branches are responsible for providing library services including materials access, learning lab and regular computer equipment access, programs and classes, and other services.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Customer Service
- Learning Labs
- Passport Services
- Early Education Engagement
- Programming
- Partnerships

### Customer Service

Branch staff are responsible for a variety of duties that are driven by customer support and engagement. The branches have been physically modified over the past few years to enhance customer service and staff accessibility. Branch operations are organized into two separate areas: the library floor where staff interact with customers and the library “back of house” where the library staff perform tasks such as program planning and material organizing.

#### *Library Floor Interactions and Support*

Customer service is a primary tenet of branch operation within the GCPL system. Librarians working within the branches interact with customers on a daily basis in a variety of ways. The GCPL system has recently changed the way employees interact with customers within the branches. In the past, a centralized reference desk was where customers could come to ask questions, check out items, and pay library fees for late return of items. Now, librarians working on the floor are provided mobile kiosks that are able to move around the library with the librarian. There are separate kiosks for payment of fines or other fees for copier or printer use. The mobile kiosks remove the librarians from financial interactions or cash management and improves librarian accessibility and enhances customer service by allowing librarians to meet customers where they are, rather than asking them to return to a central location.

The branches have also introduced self-service checkout, where customers can check out materials using their library card number and a pin or password. Customers are able to use their library cards to sign into the station and scan the RFID codes on each item in order to check them out. Fine payment can also be performed at an unmanned fine payment station. Fine payment stations offer a secure way for customers to pay their fines in cash or card without having to go to a reference desk or wait for a librarian to be available to assist them.

The staff working in the “front of the house” provide a variety of services to the customers. This includes answering questions, providing information about available resources, and assisting customers in accessing various services within the branches such as study rooms, quiet rooms, and meeting rooms.

“Book-a-Librarian” appointments also allow customers to receive help from librarians or Learning Lab Associates for a variety of library assistance such as research assistance, resume assistance, library catalog assistance, learning lab introductions and tutorials, and other services or questions. Librarians can be booked by using a Google Form on the GCPL website. Appointments are typically two hours long and are free to all customers of the library.

Visitors to GCPL branches speak a variety of different languages. Staff have access to the AT&T Language Line to assist in communicating with visitors, but also note that Google Translate is also used to allow more access while out in the library. Some branches also consist of staff that speak languages prevalent in the local community. Currently there is not a specific hiring effort nor a pay incentive for staff who also speak non-English languages.

Staff are provided education on resources and services within the community for individuals that are experiencing housing issues. Social Work Interns are also available at certain branches within the GCPL system. The Interns utilize their educational background and training and exposure to local community resources to assist customers with finding services for individuals who are experiencing difficult times. The Social Work Interns are managed by the Supervisory Librarians within the branches where they are placed.

#### *Library Back of House Operations*

The back of house at the library branches is home to the operations that customers do not directly see. This includes various administrative tasks, cataloging books and items returned to the library, and processing and collecting holds on items to be picked up.

In the back of the library, library staff are provided workspaces that can be used to plan programs. In many of the branches, with the exception of supervisory staff and the Early Education Learning Associate, workspaces are not assigned to any specific staff and can be used by all librarians. Each workspace can be accessed by each librarian. Librarians are also provided storage space and personal lockers to hold program planning materials and personal items. Branches also have varying amenities in an employee break room or break area, which may include a sink, refrigerator, microwave and other small amenities.

Materials that are physically returned to the library are placed in return bins by customers. Librarians scan each item to check it back into the collection, and review the record to determine if the material must be returned to another branch, processed as a hold for another customer, or if the materials can be reshelfed at that location. Shelving is performed each day by matching the returned item with its correct shelf and placing it for the customer to check out. Volunteers in the branches perform a significant amount of the shelving.

When a customer requests an item to be held for them to pick up at their branch, a Polaris notification is generated and branch staff pull the item from the shelves and place a printed hold notice in the item. If an individual requests an item that is at a different branch than their main branch, the item is transferred free of charge to the individual’s main branch by GCPL Couriers. Library staff place the requested materials in containers labeled for each of the other branches. Couriers drop off and pick up items for other branches that are requested by citizens around the County.

Librarians can also review their branches collection to identify items that may no longer be appropriate for the collection due to outdated information (e.g., tax reference books that are several years old) or deteriorated physical condition. If the issue is content-related, the librarian can submit a helpdesk ticket

for Materials Development to review and evaluate to proceed. Librarians can update the material's record in Polaris to "discard" and then dispose of the item, as allowed in policy.

### Learning Labs

Learning Labs are spaces within eight of the 15 branches that allow customers access to various technologies. The branches that currently maintain Learning Labs are Centerville, Duluth, Five Forks, Hamilton Mill, Duluth, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, and Suwanee. Each branch has a slightly different set of programs and technologies available based on the space and funding available to support the Learning Lab. Learning Labs are designed to allow customers to have access for free creation or workspace to produce or develop content or goods. Learning Labs may include equipment such as audio and video equipment, 3-D printers, Cricut machines used for paper and vinyl design cutting, sewing machines, large-format printers, laser cutters, and engravers. The Learning Labs also may include a variety of sound mixing, video and photo editing, and other kinds of software for customers to use free of charge. Learning Labs are staffed by Learning Lab Specialists ("Specialists"). The Specialists are knowledgeable on the systems and hardware within the Learning Labs and are able to assist customers with usage.

In order for a customer to use the Learning Labs, they must request an appointment online by using the LibCal appointment booking system. Using LibCal, customers are able to request to reserve the Learning Lab rooms in half-hour increments up to two hours. Customers must provide the date and time requested, the branch and specific lab they want to use, and a general description of the reason they wish to use the lab. The Specialists review each booking request and determine the availability of the space and equipment. Based on the availability, the Specialists either approve the reservation or reach out to identify if other dates and times would also work for the requestor. The Learning Lab equipment and most materials are free to use. However, the Specialist may assess a fee if equipment is broken or damaged beyond repair, or if a customer needs a large quantity of filament used in the 3-D printer.

Customers are also able to use the Book-A-Librarian appointments to schedule time with a Specialist to provide an overview of how Learning Lab equipment can be used.

### Passport Services

The GCPL system offers passport application processing services to customers. Passport services are currently offered at the Buford, Collins Hill, Grayson, Mountain Park, and Peachtree Corners branches. Within these branches, a separate space is provided for the passport services including a desk and area to take a passport photograph. Most full-time staff members in these branches are required to be Passport Acceptance agent certified in order to accurately assist customer questions regarding the process. Each branch that has these passport services has a Passport Services Associate whose primary responsibility is assisting customers with passport applications. This individual must be Passport Acceptance agent certified and knowledgeable about the process of completing a passport application. Passport Acceptance agent certifications must be renewed yearly.

At the end of each day, a staff member delivers the completed passport applications to the post office for mailing. In addition to the Federal passport application fee, the GCPL system charges \$35 per passport applicant and \$15 dollars per passport photo taken.

Staff may also assist customers by providing information about the required documentation needed to apply for a passport, and assisting in reviewing their documentation before their passport appointment.

Questions are also asked over the phone/email/chat to the Customer Contact Center. Two individuals in the Customer Contact Center are Passport Acceptance agent certified to answer questions as well.

### Early Education Engagement

Each branch within the GCPL system coordinates early education programs and initiatives for pre-kindergarten children in order to prepare children for kindergarten. Each branch has an Early Education Learning Associate (“EELA”) that is responsible for creating and coordinating these programs for their assigned branch.

Early education programs are designed to prepare children to enter kindergarten with the necessary skills for success. EELAs offer reading times for different age groups, such as babies, toddlers, and pre-kindergarten story times. Each story time focuses on specific skills and learning standards appropriate for the target audience age, such as alphabet recognition, and pre-reading skills. GCPL also offers a program called “Kindergarten, Here We Come!” which encourages children to read 1000 books before their first day of kindergarten. The number of books a child reads can be tracked by using the BeanStack data tracking system. This system hosts child-specific accounts that are used to record each book read. Children may earn badges and track progress towards reading challenges.

Many early education programs also extend to the parents. Story times and other programs often include follow-up packets which provide information for parents on how to continue working with their children at home on the skills and topics that are introduced in the early education programs.

EELAs are also assigned to other traditional branch services tasks, such as mobile kiosk staffing, circulation assistance, and other operational duties.

### Programming

Each GCPL branch is responsible for creating programs that will attract the specific community and customers of the area in which the branch is located. General themes and goals for programming are set at the system level, with some flexibility for branches to develop programming within those parameters that are relevant to their community demographics and interests. It is the responsibility of the branches to review the system goals and design programs that will appeal to their community. Some branches use staff meetings or brainstorming sessions to develop program ideas for the year, but the specifics of the process are decided at the branch level.

Many branches use specific holidays, cultural awareness events such as Native American Heritage Month, and other largely recognized events to help schedule thematic programming. Programs that have a holiday theme must adhere to the specific allowed holidays. All programs, including holiday themed programs, must be approved by the Branch Manager. Staff must submit a Programming Proposal Form (“PPF”) to their Branch Manager in order for a program to be considered. Branch Managers review the form to determine whether to approve or deny the program. Branch Manager communications about program review decisions vary based on individual manager styles.

Programs can be delivered either in person or virtually using either Zoom or Google Classroom. Most programs do not require any registration, but for programs that do require registration, interested residents can sign up virtually. Staff state that programs that are consistently and regularly scheduled tend to be the most successful. Customers can find out about each program by going to the GCPL website and viewing the calendar. On GCPL’s website, programs can be filtered by age range, topic,

branch location, and date. One program per branch is also promoted in the monthly newsletter published by GCPL.

### Partnerships

The GCPL branches leverage community partnerships in order to create specific programs and broaden resource awareness for the community and provide parallels to the school curriculum within the programs. Partnerships include entities such as the Latin American Association, the Atlanta Community Food Bank, Goodwill, the Gwinnett Coalition, and many others. Partnerships are usually chosen based on the specific needs of the community around the branch. Partners may include social service organizations that provide consistent service offerings as well as local religious organizations that provide blessing bags or non-perishable food items for residents. Blessing bags may include items such as toiletries, hygiene items, small clothing items, and other necessities. Also, the EELA in each branch partners with organizations such as the Gwinnett Building Babies' Brains Initiative to assist in the early education programs held at the branches.

Branches are able to partner with any organization in the community that is approved by the Branch Manager. To ensure no duplication of partner outreach or requests for support, GCPL maintains an Excel workbook listing partners that currently collaborate with the Adult Services and the Youth Services Divisions. If a branch wishes to partner with one of these organizations or individuals, the branch must first consult with either the Adult Services or Youth Services Division in order to receive permission to partner with them, or to allow the Adult or Youth Services Division to assist in coordinating with the partner.

### Communications

There are multiple regular communication channels maintained for branch staff, including the monthly Leadership Q&A Forum.

The Branch Services Division Director hosts monthly meetings with Branch Managers, and Supervisory Librarians are also included in these meetings on a rotating basis, so that all Supervisory Librarians can gain an understanding of the topics being discussed and what branch management is working on. As needed, the Supervisory Librarians and Branch Managers pass along information to other branch staff.

Supervisory Librarians also have annual skip meetings, where they "skip" over the Branch Manager to each meet directly with the Branch Services Division Director.

Both the EELAs and the Learning Lab Team each hold quarterly meetings to discuss their specific subject matters. The Learning Lab Specialists also utilize Microsoft Teams for real-time discussion, quick questions, and/or assistance as needed.

Branch Managers hold quarterly one-on-one meetings with each staff member in their branch, to assess performance and progress, and to set goals for the next quarter.

Communication between the branches and the other divisions are perceived as less intentional and proactive. Non-leadership branch staff note that there is a disconnect with headquarters, and that communications with other divisions feels reactive and forced at times.

Staff feel that programming originating from the branches and/or headquarters feels haphazard and not as strategic as it could be, as both the branches and headquarters are independently developing



programming and schedules and then checking to ensure there is minimal duplication or overlap, rather than collaborative and proactive discussion and development.

As each Branch Manager has some autonomy in how they manage their branch, there are also differences in process and communication within each branch, which can cause frustration for staff as Branch Managers and Supervisory Librarians may change branches every few years.

For communications with the public, branches have several methods for outreach and resource promotion. Branch staff work closely with the Marketing Section to develop flyers, social media postings, newsletter articles, and blog posts to promote resources and programs. Branch staff noted that word-of-mouth from program attendees also represents a source of recommendations and referrals.

Branches can also utilize Communico, a library calendar platform, to identify and notify residents who may have registered for similar programs in the past. This system collects contact information about residents who register for a program or event.

Branch staff leverage partnerships for promotion, including attending community meetings and other partner events to increase awareness of GCPL and its resources and programs. Because GCPL does not allow much promotion of partner events at the branches, staff noted that not all partners are willing to post flyers or actively promote GCPL programs.

## Strategic Initiatives

As the branches are the face of GCPL system, branch strategic goals and initiatives are directly aligned with most of the GCPL Strategic Goals.

Branches want to be viewed as a “no wrong door” resource for the communities they serve. While the branches are not the provider of all resources a community may need, they seek to develop partnerships and relationships to be able to assist a resident or visitor in identifying the partner or resource who can help meet those needs. To assist with this, several of the branches are leveraging social work interns, who may be either graduate and undergraduate college students who become familiar with the community around the library and the available resources, and then meet with residents to understand their needs and aid them in obtaining resources or support.

The branches also work to provide enhanced and expanded access to residents. Several branches are offering what the GCPL system names “Open Access”, a service offered in collaboration with the Facilities Maintenance and Security Division. Residents with library cards may access select branches during several hours before and after the branches are staffed, to allow for self-service checkout, use of computers and printer/copier/scanners.

In addition to the strategic plan objectives, Branch Services has placed an emphasis on identifying, recruiting, and retaining a diverse branch staff. Many of the branch staff come from non-library backgrounds, bringing unique and diverse skill sets and perspectives to the branches. Unfortunately, the diversity of background and skills also means that many staff may have broader options for employment outside of other libraries, and GCPL wages are not competitive with the private sector.

To try and encourage career pathways and retention within GCPL, the Branch Services Division Director, in collaboration with the Customer Experience Division Director, hosts Leadership Academies, which are nine-month training and leadership development programs. At the conclusion of the Leadership

Academy, each attendee writes a white paper to fully develop an idea or initiative that they believe would benefit GCPL. When feasible, leadership works to progress these ideas through committees, task forces, or other teams to assess the viability of idea implementation throughout the system.

The needs of the customer are the priority for branches. Staff note that the emphasis on customer service can create challenges in working strategically to achieve some of the Library's other goals and objectives. Many of the customer requests for assistance can be time-consuming, and may require knowledge of a variety of resources, softwares, or subject matters. With current staffing levels, employees noted that it can be challenging to both meet all customer needs as well as maintain all the operational duties as well as outreach, promotion, and programming development. All branches are currently utilizing volunteers for reading buddies, shelving assistance, and other tasks to allow branch staff to spend more time focusing on customer service and other operational needs.

Programming is highly valued and there are expectations for each branch to develop and produce regular, quality, programming. While there are system-level goals and recommendations around programming content and themes, the autonomy of branches can create inconsistencies in each branch's approach for program development, budget, and time management needed to produce quality programming. Many of the most popular programs are either location-specific due to older facilities not having the proper infrastructure or meeting space, or may be higher cost, such as some of the culinary programs. Staff feel that there is some competition to develop programming and to frequently offer something different, so more unique or specialized programs may not be offered on the regular schedule needed to build the support and return attendees needed for increased community engagement and buy-in.

The branches have developed high quality programs that are often regionally and nationally recognized, and leverage both GCPL resources and community partnerships. The New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator is a program that is frequently highlighted for meeting a need through strategic partnership and community engagement. The New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator runs for six months and provides formerly incarcerated individuals business coursework and support in developing the tools and tactics necessary to run a small business. This program also provides participants with one-on-one support from local successful entrepreneurs and business experts. Program attendees complete online and in-person curriculum, are assigned a one-on-one mentor, and create a business plan that can be used to generate funding and support for their ideas.

The branches are expected to build strong community partnerships, but note that the customer service focus and in-branch needs often create conflicting priorities for staff who both need to be available in the branches for customers and programs as well as proactively engage with community partners and other local organizations.

## Systems and Applications

The branches use a variety of systems and applications to support their daily operations. Some of the primary systems are described below.

### Lib Answers, LibCal, and LibGuides

LibAnswers, LibCal, and LibGuides are software applications developed by SpringShare, a software company that builds online solutions for libraries. LibAnswers is an online tool to answer questions from patrons and the public. LibCal is an online calendar tool for managing calendars, equipment, and space

bookings. LibGuides is an online content management system for developing and presenting topical information.

### BiblioCore and BiblioApps

BiblioCore and BiblioApps are software applications developed by BiblioCommons, a software company that builds software for library services. BiblioCore is the online library catalog that integrates with Polaris. BiblioApps is the library app used by the public to discover content and borrow items.

### Polaris

Polaris ILS is the Library Management System (“LMS”) developed by Innovate, a software company that builds software for library management. Polaris is the primary collection management tool, tracking library inventory, orders, bills, patron holds, and patrons who borrowed items from the library.

### Beanstack

Beanstack is an online software tool to promote and participate in early literacy programs for school children. Using Beanstack, program participants can track the books or minutes read and log program participation activities.

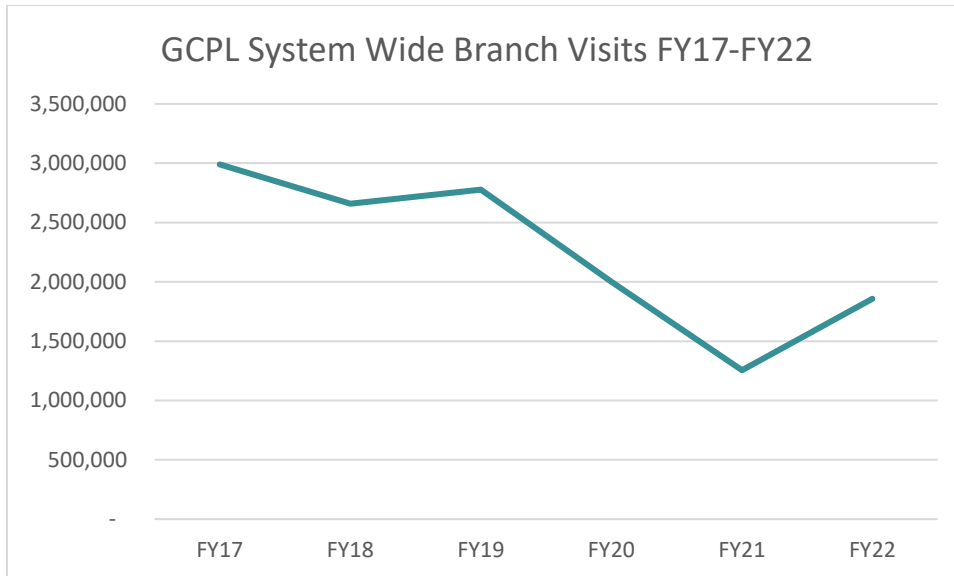
### Square

Square is a transactional software and hardware that allows for the user to take credit card payment for services. The GCPL system uses square to take payment for passport services completed at the branches that provide passport services.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Georgia Public Library Service (“GPLS”) requires libraries in Georgia to track specific data points for annual submission to the GPLS. The GCPL branches track certain metrics and headquarters compiles the information, along with some system-level data, into the GPLS required annual report. Metrics include the branch visitation, items checked in and out at the branch, total number of programs per age group, program attendance, number of computer sessions, number of Wi-Fi sessions, and a variety of other branch-specific data points.

One of the data metrics reported annually is branch visits. The following table shows the system-level aggregated branch visits for FY2017 to FY2022. The GCPL system reporting year is July 1 – June 30.

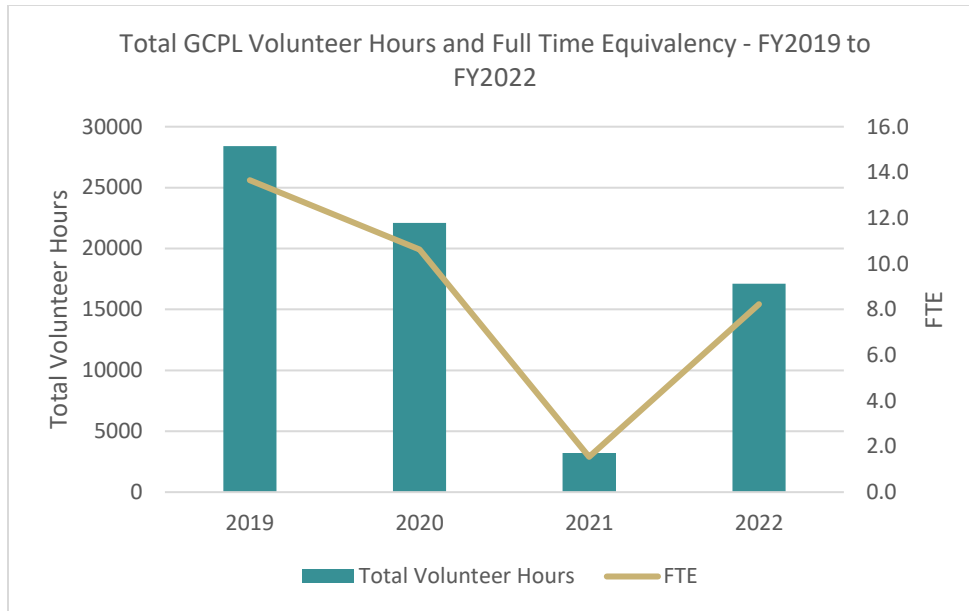


In 2022, branch visits had returned to nearly pre-pandemic visitation levels.

Total program attendance is also tracked, which provides some insight into the overall success of a branch's programs for the year. The current data collection only contemplates total attendance, and does not consider any additional detail around attendee type, return attendance at a recurring program, or other detailed attendance data. There is also minimal consistent analysis and use of the data in helping identify which program types, or schedules, may be most effective and valued by customers. GCPL does not regularly conduct formal program feedback surveys for attendees. Many of the branches have anecdotal data from attendees, and librarians who host regularly scheduled programs generally know their return attendees, but this is not formally evaluated on a regular basis.

All the branches use volunteers to assist with certain branch functions, such as materials shelving and program administration support. Branches track the hours provided by volunteers as well as the total count of active volunteers.

The following table illustrates the total number of volunteer hours provided annually across GCPL as well as the number of Full-Time Employees (“FTEs”) that would be needed to perform the duties performed by volunteers.



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Staff feel that there is a conflict in communications regarding leadership expectations. Staff feel that leadership places an emphasis on customer service without understanding the tradeoffs in programming and community outreach that additional hands-on time in the branches would require. Additionally, reporting on certain metrics that are tracked by both branch and headquarters staff may be counted in either location due to unclear guidance about ownership and reporting of metrics, which may result in inconsistent data capture and reporting. Staff believe that current communications and expectations create competition between the branches and headquarters, with a larger perception that branch services are GCPL’s priority.

**Recommendation 1:** GCPL Leadership should evaluate the potential for conflicting branch services staff priorities and update messaging and expectations to better reflect the current working environment and customer needs. Leadership should establish a hierarchy of functional prioritization, and work to assess which functions are not being performed consistently to determine if workload can be reallocated, or if functions can be automated or modified to improve efficiency.

Leadership should also collaborate with branch and public-facing headquarters to establish guidelines and guidance on data capture and reporting ownership, to ensure consistent and accurate collection of numbers reported to GCPL.

**Observation 2:** Branch Managers currently have some autonomy as to how they run their branch. Processes and procedures between branches differ which causes confusion for employees and supervisory level staff who transfer between branches often.

**Recommendation 2:** The Branch Services Division should consider creating more specific operational procedures regarding things such as communications and program planning review to ensure some consistency between branches, and potentially make the transition from branch to branch easier for those who may be transfer branches.

**Observation 3:** Staff feel that GCPL leadership are not often visible in the branches and do not provide opportunities for informal or organic interaction with non-managerial or supervisory staff.

**Recommendation 3:** GCPL Leadership should consider more branch visits, both formal and informal. This should include opportunities for informal and organic interactions with non-managerial or supervisory branch staff.

**Observation 4:** Current programming data collection is high-level, with no formal or consistent collection on detailed program attendee information, or information about which programs attract new customers or see strong repeat attendance. GCPL does not currently collect program feedback in a formal or consistent method.

Additionally, there is not consistent data analysis or evaluation to determine if currently collected data could be more comprehensively analyzed for use in program design, scheduling, or strong-performing thematic identification.

**Recommendation 4:** The Branch Services Division should work with IT to determine if there was a way that the current registration or program tracking systems could better track repeat registration or if there is a way to update branch tracking methods to include identification of repeat program attendees.

The Division should also perform a more detailed evaluation of available data to determine if broader themes or trends, either at the branch level or across all branches, can be identified in the data and leverage in goal setting and program planning efforts for future years.

## 3.C.3 Gwinnett County Public Library – Customer Experience Division

The Customer Experience Division (“Division”) represents a combination of system-level customer-facing divisions, as well as divisions designed to support the branches and other GCPL staff. The division includes youth and adult programs as well as events for staff engagement such as new hire training, continuing education for librarians, or all-staff events such as GCPL Staff Day. Customer Experience also includes technical support services and is responsible for acquiring all collection materials for the GCPL system. Lastly, Customer Experience includes the Customer Contact Center which provides phone, email, and web-based assistance to the community regarding many aspects of the GCPL system.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Youth Services
- Adult Services
- Staff Engagement
- IT Support
- Materials Acquisition
- Customer Contact Center

### Youth Services

The purpose of Youth Services is to provide non-branch-based programs to children and teens.

Youth Services designs programs within the community that are geared toward children and teens. Programs are designed to reinforce the current Gwinnett County Schools Academic Knowledge and Skills (“AKS”) Standards and build on classroom instruction. Each program is designed, as applicable, to reenforce the child’s current classroom curriculum and skills development. The “Branch Out!” program is an example of this partnership with the schools. This program allows for elementary school age children who opt into the program the ability to access all of the library resources at all 15 branches by using their student ID as a library card. Another program is “Kindergarten, Here We Come” which encourages kids to read 1000 books before their first day of kindergarten, and they can keep track of their reading through Beanstack. Beanstack is an online program that allows children, with the help of their parents, to create an account and record the books they have read to complete challenges and gain commendation for their work. This service is available year-round as well to track reading. Children who finish this challenge receive a certificate of completion and may receive a congratulatory post on the GCPL social media platforms.

Youth Services also plans and organizes various events throughout the year which parents and children can attend. Events are commonly held at County and city parks and library branches as well as through both synchronous and asynchronous online content. These events provide activities for children and their parents to participate in that may be specifically designed around various holidays or themes, such as Native American Heritage Month.

Youth Services uses a “Library On the Move” van year-round to host programs throughout the County and bring books and supplies to areas that may not have close access to a library. The community is

primarily able to use the van to check out books and obtain library cards. Books that are checked out at the van are able to be returned to any GCPL branch. The van was purchased using a federal community development block grant.

Youth Services is also responsible for planning and preparing for the Summer Reading Program that is implemented through the branches. Youth Services collects materials and prizes and sends to the branches. Youth Services also develops supplemental programming to be hosted at the branches that correspond with the Summer Reading Program theme.

Youth Services also maintains a central inventory of materials and supplies that the branches can utilize for hosting their own programs. This includes story time props, themed materials kits, die cut machines, and code-a-pillars and cubetto coding toys.

Within the Youth Services Section, the Youth Services Community Partnerships Manager is responsible for coordinating with local schools to promote the services and programs available through the libraries and to identify additional opportunities for partnership and collaboration. The Community Partnerships Manager may also promote and assist in implementing non-youth services that may be relevant, such as community conversations and the New Start Entrepreneurship Program.

### Adult Services

Adult Services designs and implements programs that are geared to the adult population of the community. Programming may include author visits and discussions and panel discussions about various events happening in and around the County, as well as programs and discussions that are culturally relevant and topical.

Adult Services organizes programs for a variety of groups within the County. For the active senior population, Adult Services organizes programs relating to quality-of-life improvements such as financial literacy and health and nutrition. These programs are aimed at giving the active seniors talks from individuals who are knowledgeable in these areas. Multi-cultural events are held in order to provide programs that are specifically relevant to different communities. These events are catered to specific communities by bringing in individuals from groups such as the Latin American Association to speak to the communities. These events partially rely on the branches in the community specific areas to perform outreach advertising the events.

Adult Services organizes programs for people with disabilities and their families/caregivers such as life skills classes and book clubs. Adult Services partners with organizations such as Live Healthy Gwinnett and the Georgia Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to promote services and programs for these individuals.

Programs involving author talks and discussions are held to provide opportunities for customers to come and hear the author discuss their book and answer questions regarding the book. These visits are often booked months in advance and may be coordinated with the author's larger speaking tours. The authors are brought in based on current interest and, in some cases, around cultural awareness months; i.e., Native American History and Black History Month. Authors are found through relationships with various organizations such as the Georgia Center for the Book and the Decatur Book Festival.

Adult Services also works to provide opportunities for small businesses around the County. Adult Services works with organizations such as the Gwinnett Chamber, the Service Corps of Retired Executives ("SCORE"), and the Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs Business Center ("ACE") to provide



programs and services to small businesses, minority businesses, and women's businesses around the County. These programs include things such as talks about growing your small business and various speaker visits from businesses around the County.

### Staff Engagement

Staff Engagement is responsible for all new hire staff training and ongoing training for staff. Staff Engagement is also responsible for keeping track of all necessary librarian credentials for on-staff librarians. The Georgia State Board for the Certification Of Librarians requires that Librarians renew their certification every two years. This renewal requires 10 hours of continued education to be completed within the two-year period. Certification and training hours are tracked using Google Sheets.

New hire training is done up to five times a year and consists of a week-long general training that uses Google Classroom and in person lessons to train new-hires on interacting with customers and general responsibilities within the branches. New hires are also brought on the floor of a branch during the week to participate in on-the-job training. Once the week-long training for new hires is completed, surveys are sent to the individuals to record things they learned and things they thought they did not learn.

Year-round current staff training is organized using Google Classroom. These trainings are mainly pre-recorded for easier staff access, but periodic live trainings are also held. Training surrounding topics that do not explicitly involve the library are also held periodically. These trainings revolve around topics such as empathy and caring for the homeless population that use the GCPL services, de-escalation of tense interactions, as well as harassment and GCPL policy compliance training.

Staff Engagement also performs safe computer use training. This includes training on how to avoid phishing attacks and what type of information should not be shared through email. Currently, phishing training is being done with a system called KnowB4.

Staff Engagement also helps manage all conference travel accommodations. Staff Engagement also assists in providing Gwinnett Remembrance Programs for staff. These programs discuss themes of race and equity issues within the County, both historical and current.

### IT Support

The responsibilities of the IT Department are organized into two primary functional areas; network support and management, and local PC support. The network support side of the IT Department is responsible for managing the GCPL internal network. This consists of firewall implementation, antivirus program administration, network/cloud backups, and controlling network switches and access points. Firewalls have been added locally in every library branch. The current backup system is almost completely cloud-based. The Google Classroom system used by the GCPL system includes a secure vault for record retention. The IT Department is currently looking for ways to further segment the current network to minimize the level of potential access by unauthorized third parties.

The IT Department is also responsible for providing support to all local PCs within each branch and at Headquarters. The IT Department responds to support requests that end-users submit through SherpaDesk, a help desk ticketing system. This system allows library staff to place support request tickets and receive the support from the IT Department. The IT Department provides support with installing necessary software to the over 1000 installed desktops, laptops, and tablets that the GCPL

system uses. The IT Department also assists in issues regarding the Polaris Integrated Library System (“ILS”).

### Materials Acquisition

Materials Acquisition is responsible for acquiring all physical and electronic resources for the GCPL branches and maintaining the contract with Galileo. Galileo is an online service that allows customers to access a large catalog of academic journals and other research resources.

While most of the physical materials are currently shipped directly to the branches, some materials must be received and processed at Headquarters before being shipped to the branches by couriers. The materials that are processed at Headquarters usually require additional preparation for circulation, such as RFID tagging and reinforcement of spine of children’s materials or some paperback materials. Before COVID, the GCPL system had approximately 4.5 million items circulated annually, with one million physical items in inventory. Currently, there are approximately 3.5 million items being circulated per year.

All material decisions and ordering start with Collection Development. Each of the three Collection Development Librarians are responsible for a specific component of the GCPL collection: one responsible for Adult Fiction, one responsible for Adult Non-Fiction, and one responsible for Children’s materials. Each Librarian proactively researches items and trends to make sure that materials being purchased by the library are materials that the customers will enjoy and want to use. To assist in tracking demand, the Collection Development Librarians can also make materials “available” to residents in the ILS in advance of the publication date, to help document and understand demand, and to allow for updates in orders based on that demand.

Once the purchased items are received by the collection development team, the items are processed and, as needed, inputted into the ILS catalog. In most cases, materials come to the libraries from the publisher and/or vendor pre-processed with the necessary book covers and RFID tracking labels already inside, but in certain cases, the Materials team is responsible for preparing the materials to enter circulation. Children’s books typically require an extra strong laminate or spine reinforcement. Each item is cataloged into the ILS system and given various system tags in order for the customer to easily search for materials based on categories or themes, such as historical fiction or adult non-fiction. Examples of tags may include descriptors such as the genre (history, fantasy, science fiction, etc.) or the book’s theme (animals, books to films, growing up, etc.) Some tags may be pre-populated by the distributor when the item is purchased, and others may have to be manually added by the Collection Development Librarians. For books in foreign languages, Materials may utilize staff who speak those languages to assist in accurately tagging the items.

Some physical items that are purchased may be assigned to a specific branch upon arrival. Electronic items are not assigned to a specific branch. The GCPL system also has a floating collection that includes physical items that are not assigned to a specific branch. Once one of these floating items is requested by a customer, that item is then transferred to the requesting customer’s designated branch via Courier. Once a floating item is returned to a branch, if it has not been requested by another customer, then it may become part of the circulation of the branch where it was returned.

Materials Acquisition is also responsible for removing books from circulation and discarding them if the contents of the book are deemed unsuitable for the library, or if the physical condition of the material does not support additional circulation. Branch staff review to determine if the content is outdated or

otherwise inappropriate for maintenance in the active collection. For items that are being discarded due to wear and tear, branch staff have some authority for disposal decisions. For items that may be requested for removal due to content, branch staff must submit a discard request through the SherpaDesk system. Materials Acquisitions evaluates each discard request. If the request for discard is approved, the branch is allowed to then record the discard in the catalog and then dispose of it.

### Customer Contact Center

The Customer Contact Center (“CCC”) takes calls, emails, and texts from customers requesting information or assistance the customer needs regarding the GCPL system.

The CCC is based out of the Lilburn Library Branch, although all staff also have telework days. CCC staff are available during the same hours that the branches are open, with each staff taking one evening shift of 6:00 – 8:00 PM. The part-time Specialist works during the weekends and the full-time Specialists rotate working weekends alongside the part-time Specialist.

CCC Specialists typically come into the Lilburn Branch twice a week and then work from home the other days. The CCC’s assigned workspace is the same open space that the Lilburn branch staff occupy. There is no divider or sound-proofing material that separates the two sections, which can create challenges during busy periods, as Specialists may struggle to hear callers, and background noise impacts caller’s abilities to hear the Specialists.

Each full-time Specialist and the Manager have equipment for both home and office use, cutting down on the transport of equipment between the two workstations. The part-time Specialist is primarily a telework employee, but may come into the Lilburn Branch to work.

Requests that come into the CCC cover a wide range of topics. The CCC answers questions regarding various programs being run at each branch, directions to the branches and the hours of operation or requests for information about availability of certain materials or request information about charged fines and fees. The most common requests that come into the CCC revolve around individual account services and the passport services. Specialists are able to access each library cardholder’s account to review current fines on the account and have discretion in waiving certain fines based upon the individual’s circumstances.

Since the implementation of passport services within the GCPL system, the CCC has been receiving a large volume of related questions. Currently, two specialists within the CCC are Passport Acceptance agent certified.

CCC Specialists answer questions by researching specific things on the GCPL website as well as using the online GCPL calendar to answer questions regarding programs. For customers that do not speak English, the CCC has a Spanish-specific language line as well as the AT&T Language Line which provides access to more than 30 language interpreters to assist in helping residents.

The CCC is also responsible for managing the Mailbox Books program. This program provides County residents that are not physically able to go to the library and pick up books. Individuals can request this service from the CCC. The CCC then discusses what specific books or book genre the individual is interested in and then the books will be mailed to the individual. Once the individual is finished with the books, they can use the postage-paid envelopes to return the books to GCPL. GCPL pays for the postage on all of these packages.

Training for CCC Specialists is majority on-the-job training in addition to the initial GCPL new hire training. Archived chat messages are used to train Specialists on different question types and the correct responses to the questions.

## Communications

The disparate nature of the functional responsibilities of the sections within Customer Experience Division means that each division has its own communications structure and style. The Division utilizes the Leadership Q&A Forums for information sharing and broader discussions.

The CCC relies on the GCPL event calendar to keep informed of upcoming events and activities that may lead to resident requests for additional information. CCC also utilizes a group to share information about emerging situations, such as power loss at a branch or internet/phone outages.

Many of the Customer Experience sections solicit opportunities for branch services staff to provide feedback. Materials Department regularly creates opportunities for branches to formally and informally share requests, insights, or other information about their branch community's themes and trends in requested and circulated materials. Staff Engagement requests feedback from new hires after training to understand the efficacy of the training process. There is also an annual survey disseminated to supervisors to assess the training provided to new hires, as well as ad hoc surveys to collect feedback for specific audiences who received more niche or customized training.

Customer Experience sections also work to make information proactively available when possible, leveraging Google Classroom for training-related information and available asynchronous trainings. Several divisions also utilize shared documents and spreadsheets for real-time data tracking and access, such as the partnership relationship management spreadsheet that identifies the relationships with partners that different branches and headquarters divisions may have developed. There are also documents that help track the training hours each librarian has completed towards the biennial renewal of Georgia librarian certification requirements.

Youth Services requests specific feedback about the Summer Reading Program, to ensure that the program engaged participants and implementation recommendations and materials allowed the branches to successfully implement the Summer Reading Program without too significant an administrative burden.

For residents and customers, the Division provides a variety of methods of communication. For Adult and Youth programming, there are opportunities for informal qualitative feedback after the programs. The Materials Section also receives and reviews requests for new or additional materials, as well as receives and provides initial review of material removal requests.

Several Division staff note that there is a disconnect between branch staff communications and communications that reach other divisions within headquarters. Staff feel that branch communications take priority over communications with other divisions, and that staff may hear information informally before official communications are shared.

## Strategic Initiatives

Given the diversity of the units within the Customer Service Division, there is also diversity in the strategic initiatives implemented within this Division, although all are focused on enhancing the quality of services and resources that customers receive.

There are some challenges in managing direction and ensuring there is no duplication of services or conflicting programming or partnership utilization, as many of the sections within Customer Service provide the same or similar services as those provided within the branches.

### *Youth Services*

Youth Services recently created a position specifically dedicated to Community Partnerships that can also support Branch Services and Adult Services programs. This position is currently focusing on programming and partnership with the public schools, including engagement of counselors, academic positions, media centers, and others. The Community Partnerships Manager is currently collaborating with Gwinnett County Public Schools to implement the Library of Congress' Teaching with Primary Sources program; GCPL is the first public library system to receive the Library of Congress grant to implement this program.

Youth Services also works to supplement and support programs offered through the schools. Currently, nine Gwinnett County Public Schools offer a dual language immersion program. Seven branches close to these schools offer dual language immersion programs to extend the information learned in the classroom and provide additional opportunities for language-sharing and immersion.

Youth Services also utilizes Google Classroom to offer remote and hybrid programming to engage youth where they are, in case physical library access isn't always possible. Virtual offerings are designed for multiple age groups, and may include virtual escape rooms, Good Night Gwinnett weekly evening story time recordings, and "Spill It!" a podcast for young adult literature.

The Mobile Library is predominantly a Youth Services offering, but also allows for remote library card signup, program promotion and registration, senior center events, and other community outreach to provide more access to and information about GCPL resources and programs.

### *Staff Engagement*

Staff Engagement is working to ensure that all branch and public-facing staff receive training on interacting with a diverse customer base, and includes training on de-escalating tense or confrontational interactions, as well as training on interacting with customers with mental health needs, or those who may be experiencing homelessness.

Staff Engagement is working to develop a training calendar that allows for more role-based and interactive training throughout the year, including refresher content and continuing education training. Staff Engagement also supports several system-level initiatives, such as the Gwinnett Remembrance project, which is run by the Adult Services Section. Staff Engagement is also currently supporting a traveling exhibition on Charles Hale, a local African American man who was lynched by a mob in Lawrenceville in 1911, coordinating online information display and the transportation of the physical exhibition.

### *IT*

As a predominantly internal service department, IT is focused on ensuring infrastructure and IT functions are accessible and user-friendly. IT works to support and maintain a variety of laptops, tablets, and other equipment used by both staff and visitors. IT is also working to enhance and improve network security, to ensure staff and visitors can access needed resources easily and securely. IT is also working to transition GCPL towards more cloud-based systems and storage.

The Division is working on initiatives to secure Department networks by adding local firewalls and creating segmented networks for the branches. In addition, security measures such as anti-virus and programs to scrub computers have been implemented to further secure computers in branches used by the public.

To combat the increase in ransomware phishing attacks targeting state and local governments, the Division is conducting training on safe computer use. The training includes sending fake phishing emails and issuing additional training to employees who click on the links within the emails. The Division uses outside trainers to engage the employees in training and tracks the training through Google Sheets.

Due to issues with the cooling system in the server room and to build a modern application architecture, the Division is migrating applications to the cloud. The cloud migration is based on leveraging cloud-based products for major applications, such as the Library Management System and supporting apps, Microsoft Office, and ADP (HR and Payroll). In addition, the Division qualifies for a Google education account, including Google Vault, which provides online backup for Gmail messages and Google Drive files. The only apps that remain on-premise are apps used for digital content creation, such as the applications used by the learning labs for 3D printing.

### *Materials*

The Materials Department works to find balance in providing a diverse collection as well as meeting all customer needs on a limited materials budget. The Materials Department can utilize resident inter-library loan requests, resident requests for new or additional material, and current hold request lists to assist in evaluating demand for specific titles or types of materials. The adult non-fiction collection is also focused on expanding the depth and breadth of resources in key topical areas, such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”), and African American culture and history.

The Materials Department also orders material in a variety of languages based on County and community-specific languages spoken. These materials are also cataloged using the language of the material, to ensure that residents can search for materials in the native language of the material.

The branches also utilize a shelving system that is similar to how bookstores shelve books to improve resident ability to self-select books based on interest, instead of the outdated card catalog shelving system.

To try and reduce time between receipt and availability of resources, the Collection Development Librarians also work to have fully processed materials sent directly to the branches for circulation, rather than sending everything to headquarters to then be sent to each branch via courier.

### *Customer Contact*

As the branches shift toward the open access hours and increased customer availability, the CCC is reviewing options for how to match this level of availability and service, either through expanded hours or alternative service means.

The CCC is also working to better classify and quantify the types of requests that they’re receiving, to assess whether analysis of this information can improve on-demand customer service and access to information on the GCPL website.

### Adult Services

Adult Services strives to develop a calendar of events that are timely and relevant, and often are not provided through the branches. Adult Services also performs outreach at senior centers, to provide support and services to residents who may not be able to access services and resources within the branches.

Adult Services also works to create and expand some larger community partnerships, such as working with Gwinnett Cares and the Gwinnett Coalition.

Adult Services focuses specifically on additional multi-cultural outreach and programming, as well as programming to support small business and entrepreneurship.

## Systems and Applications

### Lib Answers, LibCal, and LibGuides

LibAnswers, LibCal, and LibGuides are software applications developed by SpringShare, a software company that builds online solutions for libraries. LibAnswers is an online tool to answer questions from patrons and the public. LibCal is an online calendar tool for managing calendars, equipment, and space bookings. LibGuides is an online content management system for developing and presenting topical information.

### Beanstack

Beanstack is an online software tool to promote and participate in early literacy programs for school children. Using Beanstack, program participants can track the books or minutes read and log program participation activities.

### Cisco

Cisco is a call center and voicemail software which allows calls to be taken, prioritized, managed by a team of call takers. The CCC staff uses Cisco to manage daily calls.

### SherpaDesk

SherpaDesk is a maintenance ticket system that allows staff to request maintenance with library items or technology items.

### Google Classroom

Google Classroom is used by the Staff Engagement Division to hold synchronous and asynchronous online training sessions with staff.

### Partnership Management

Adult Services utilizes a shareable document for tracking all the partners they work with in order to allow for the branches to view it and see which potential partners have already worked with the Adult Services Division. Youth Services currently does not utilize a document of this type.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Adult Services and Youth Services keeps track of event and program attendance. Similar to branch programming, neither section tracks more detailed attendee information, such as demographics, home branch, or return attendance. For some programs, Youth Services sends out post-program surveys to

attendees in order to gauge how the attendees enjoyed the program and whether they were able to follow-up and reenforce the skills and lessons learned in the program.

Both Adult Services and Youth Services partners with a variety of organizations and individuals to make these programs possible and promote the programs around the County. GCPL does not have a customer relationship management system and currently utilizes several documents to track partnership utilization and primary GCPL partner – whether it is Adult Services, Youth Services, a branch, or Community Development. Branch staff have access to the Google-hosted documents and are asked to review before engaging with a new partner or making new requests of an existing partner to ensure that GCPL isn't sharing inconsistent messaging or overutilizing a partner or organization.

Staff Engagement is responsible for developing and coordinating the majority of in-house employee training, but staff are also responsible for tracking their certification hours and registering for training opportunities or identifying conferences. Additionally, Staff Engagement utilizes Energage to send out workforce surveys to gauge employee attitudes on things such as perceived respect in the workplace and overall satisfaction with their job. This data is collected and then used for annual GCPL Insights Executive Summary report.

The IT SherpaDesk Help Desk Ticketing System is the primary data source for IT performance analysis. Based on the three years of data provided by the Division, approximately 5,600 help desk tickets are created annually. The top five types of tickets are categorized as follows: (1) computers, (2) materials, (3) procedures (auto-tickets), (4) ILS – Polaris and Biblicommons, and (5) telephone/voicemail.

The CCC can utilize Cisco to track detailed call information, such as number of calls received, average call length and hold period. CCC also tracks information about the number of texts, webchats, and emails received. Each Specialist also manually assigns each request to a specific reason for the communication in a daily tracking sheet. There is not a consistent method for analysis and evaluation of this data. This data can be used for CCC Specialist training and to produce "Frequently Asked Questions" marketing posts that are posted on the social media pages.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Customer Experience Division strives to be efficient and effective with its available budget and staff levels. To assist in this effort, it evaluates duties and functions that could potentially be transferred to the branches, such as direct shipping of collection material for cataloguing. Currently there is not a formal evaluation of the estimated impact of both divisions involved in the transfer of responsibilities, which may exacerbate issues in other divisions.

**Recommendation 1:** GCPL should develop more formal evaluation processes before making significant changes to processes, workflows, or duty assignments that may impact multiple sections or units. These processes should include collecting input from all impacted units or sections, and assessing the workload, timeline, and cost impacts of process improvement changes.

**Observation 2:** All GCPL new hires currently receive a one-week training that covers branch and GCPL headquarters operations, with an emphasis on branch services. This emphasis on branch services functions and responsibilities may exacerbate staff perception that Branch Services is the most important and prioritized division, with other divisions expected to support whatever is best for Branch Services. This often results in less relevant training for non-branch staff.



**Recommendation 2:** Customer Experience should collaborate with HR to determine if separate onboardings should be established for non-branch staff, or if the new hire training could be shortened or modified for non-public facing and/or non-branch staff.

**Observation 3:** Collection development does not formally or consistently collect information from branches about requested or desired materials, instead relying on institutional knowledge, industry trends, and ILS information.

**Recommendation 3:** GCPL should develop collection development committees for each of the three collection types, to collect more real-time insight about changes in community interest and demand for materials. GCPL should also consider developing collection development committees for the acquisition of non-English materials. These committees should include representatives from a number of branches, and should consider opportunities for input from community members or other relevant partners.

**Observation 4:** The current space assigned to the CCC may be inadequate for the Section's need and may cause issues with their ability to communicate with customers during high-volume periods.

**Recommendation 4:** The Customer Experience Division should work with Facilities Management and Security to evaluate the current space and perform a needs assessment for the CCC. Based on the results of this assessment, Facilities Management and Security may need to work with Gwinnett County Support Services to determine if the needed modifications could be accomplished in the current space, or if a larger space planning project may be necessary.

**Observation 5:** GCPL does not have a formal, comprehensive customer relationship management tracking system or spreadsheet. This may result in multiple divisions approaching a partner simultaneously, or create the potential for inconsistent messaging to partners.

**Recommendation 5:** GCPL should assess the costs of a customer relationship management ("CRM") system, or create a comprehensive partnership tracking database that captures information on all current and recent partnerships and requests.

## 3.C.4 Gwinnett County Public Library – Development and Community Outreach Division

The Development and Community Outreach Division (“Division”) is responsible for the management of the Library Foundation, developing partnerships with various organizations and community members, and coordinating and tracking the work of the over 150 yearly active GCPL volunteers.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Volunteer Coordination
- Library Foundation Management
- Partnership Development

### Volunteer Coordination

Within the GCPL system, there is a system-wide Volunteer Coordinator who is responsible for all branch level volunteer coordinators, creating volunteer specific policies and trainings, and collecting data from each branch-level volunteer coordinator regarding volunteer hours worked.

In addition to a waiver and child safety video that all volunteers must view, all volunteers that are 18 or older are required to have a background check as part of the initial volunteer application and review process. These background checks are performed by a third-party company. Volunteer applicants complete the requested information using a link to the third-party’s website. The third-party sends notifications of any results to the system-wide Volunteer Coordinator, who reviews the results with the HR Director to determine if a volunteer should be rejected. If a volunteer fails to re-volunteer 90 days after their last day volunteering, they are considered inactive and must complete a new background check before volunteering again. There are no additional background checks or affidavits required for volunteers that maintain an active status.

The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator may leverage volunteers for system-wide events and programming. These include events such as food distribution, the Career Online High School Program, the New Start Entrepreneurship program, and the Human Library program, which is a program that allows library customers to talk with volunteers about their personal and professional experiences. The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator leverages the relationship with Volunteer Gwinnett, along with other community organizations and resources, to identify interested volunteers for these events.

Each branch within the GCPL system uses volunteers to support various functions. Each branch has at least one internal Librarian designated as the branch-level volunteer coordinator that is responsible for assessing the volunteer needs of the branch, interviewing and training the volunteers, and managing the active volunteers.

Volunteers assist in various tasks within the branches. Tasks include, but are not limited to, material shelving, homework help for students, assisting with children’s programming, and assisting in Learning Labs. The volunteers sign in and sign out on a physical log at each branch and then the sheet is reviewed and approved by the branch-level volunteer coordinator. The branch-level volunteer coordinator

reports all volunteer hours on a GCPL system-wide volunteer hours tracking spreadsheet. The system-level Volunteer Coordinator also reports these hours through Volunteer Gwinnett.

Rejection or termination of volunteers within the GCPL system is decided by each Branch Manager and the system-wide Volunteer Coordinator. The most common reasons an individual would not be able to volunteer is if there is not enough space or if the individual had previously signed up to volunteer and was a no-show three times.

### Library Foundation Management

The Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) fund established by the GCPL system to assist in encouraging organizations or individuals in the community to donate to the library system in order to fund programs and services. The Library Foundation is governed by a 23-person board that consists of 22 Foundation Board Members and one Foundation Chair. It is the responsibility of the Director of Community Outreach and Development to proactively recruit organizations and individuals to donate to the Library Foundation.

The Foundation also hosts an annual Library Foundation Gala to highlight the accomplishments of the system and the impacts of the services that GCPL provides.

Funds that are donated to the GCPL system through the Library Foundation are processed by the Director of Administrative Services. GCPL utilizes Bloomerang for donor management and fundraising tracking. All funds are recorded by the Director of Community Outreach and Development, who then sends all funds to Administrative Services with information about whether funds are for the Foundation or the general GCPL account. The Library Foundation maintains a separate bank account and accounting records. Every month, the Administrative Services Division sends the Director of Community Outreach and Development an account report for the Main GCPL account and the Library Foundation. The Director of Community Outreach and Development reviews the account reports to ensure that all funds have been accurately accounted for in the appropriate account.

### Partnership Development

The Director of Community Outreach and Development is responsible for creating community partnerships to work alongside the library system in various capacities. Partnership development is performed year-round through various events and community campaigns in order to educate the community on what the library system has to offer and promote opportunities for partnerships and volunteering.

GCPL hosts a number of events and fundraisers to help promote the services and resources provided. Events such as the annual Library Foundation Gala allow community members and organizations to learn more about the resources and services that the library system makes available throughout the County, as well as sharing the impact and value of these services. GCPL also utilizes other events, such as the various Speaker Series that bring community leaders and highlighted authors in to speak; the Read the Green Golf Invitational; and Books, Brews, and BBQ to reach different segments of the community population. These events aim to bring corporate professionals from around the community together to educate them on library services.

### Communications

The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator is working to improve communications with the branch-level volunteer coordinators through monthly email newsletters, a shared drive with forms and information,

as well as developing a Google Classroom to provide more training and support to the branch-level volunteer coordinators. The Division is also looking to reintroduce the annual branch volunteer coordinator meeting, which was discontinued during the pandemic. These annual meetings are used to discuss program design and work to identify progress in increasing volunteer count and hours, as well as discuss challenges in the current program and determine if there are efficiencies or changes that could enhance the program or improve volunteer retention.

The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator also often actively promotes many Gwinnett County volunteering opportunities to active volunteers within the GCPL system, as well as promoting the availability of County resources, such as the warming stations, to the branches and volunteers as an additional resource available to those in need.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Community Outreach Division primarily focuses on community awareness and partnership development. This includes partnerships that provide resources and support for GCPL programs and branches, as well as utilizing partnerships to promote and increase awareness of GCPL resources and programs. Community Outreach is sensitive to identifying and meeting the needs of underserved populations within Gwinnett County, and hopes to leverage community partnerships and expanded resources to expand the availability of services in multiple locations throughout the County.

The Division is also working to create volunteer and engagement opportunities that align with the interest of community members who want to volunteer. The expansion of volunteering beyond shelving to include mentoring, homework help, reading buddies, learning labs, and volunteers for food distribution and meal distribution programs all work to provide opportunities within Gwinnett for interested residents.

The Division, along with the branches, has also found opportunities for passive volunteering or community engagement, such as community or religious groups providing food and blessing bags of hygiene items for branch staff to provide to those in need.

GCPL is interested in more strategic and intentional collaborations with Gwinnett County, but struggles in understanding the County's expectations about the best ways to continue to partner with the County.

## Systems and Applications

The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator uses excel to track various volunteer counts and hours. Additionally, citizens can sign up to volunteer using a Google Form that is set up to send citizen information to the Volunteer Coordinator once it is received.

### Bloomerang

Community Outreach utilizes Bloomerang to track donors and fundraising efforts.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Volunteer data is tracked by the branch-level volunteer coordinators who then submit total data to the system-wide Volunteer Coordinator. The system-wide Volunteer Coordinator keeps track of all volunteer counts and volunteer hours in order to send in a report to the County that includes all volunteers, their hours, the events held where volunteers are used, and the amount of Social Work Interns for the year. This data is tracked on an Excel spreadsheet. Currently, the GCPL system is averaging 170 volunteers a month.

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** GCPL volunteers are required to go through a background check before being able to volunteer with the GCPL system, but there is no current interim background check or annual affidavit that volunteers have had no criminal charges in the past year. The lack of recertification or certification of maintenance of status may increase risk and liability for the branches, as volunteers interact with visitors.

**Recommendation 1:** GCPL should consider implementing an annual volunteer affidavit certifying that there have been no criminal charges or investigations during the last year. GCPL should consider conducting a new background check every three to five years when volunteers are consistently active.

## 3.C.5 Gwinnett County Public Library – Facilities Management and Security Division

The Facilities Management and Security Division (“Division”) is responsible for working with the County Support Services Department to perform maintenance and janitorial tasks, managing capital projects within the GCPL system alongside the County Facility Construction Division, organizing security for the library branches that offer open-access hours, and managing the courier drivers that transport physical items between the branches.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Facilities Maintenance
- Capital Project Management
- Security
- Couriers

### Facilities Maintenance

As all GCPL buildings are owned and maintained by Gwinnett County, maintenance efforts are collaborative between the County and GCPL. GCPL maintains a staff Maintenance Technician who provides initial maintenance and repair services such as plumbing repairs, HVAC system repairs, furniture assembly, and general repair maintenance. The Maintenance Technician can also liaise with the Gwinnett County Support Services Department for services and repairs that may be under warranty or require additional assistance or contractor support. Requests for Gwinnett County maintenance are submitted by the Maintenance Technician using the Lucity software whenever necessary. This occurs when the Maintenance Technician is not able to perform the task. Branches are able to submit requests for maintenance to the Maintenance Technician by using the SherpaDesk helpdesk ticketing system.

GCPL vehicles can obtain gas at the County’s gas facilities. All GCPL vehicle maintenance and repair is the sole responsibility of GCPL; there is not access to Gwinnett County Support Services Fleet Division.

Janitorial services are performed by a Gwinnett County janitorial contractor. Regular cleaning of Headquarters and the branches occur nightly, and branch or maintenance staff can also submit janitorial request tickets through Lucity or use a listserv of branch managers, Division staff, and Gwinnett County Support Services staff.

### Capital Project Management

All GCPL facility construction and major building renovations are funded and overseen by the Gwinnett County Support Services Facility Construction Division. The Director of Facility Management and Security (“Director”) is responsible for acting as a liaison between the GCPL system and the County Support Services Department for capital projects. The Director is involved for the entire process of all capital projects from initial project design and needs development, through construction and final walk-through and punchlist completion. The Director is involved in the review and decision-making around various requests for information, change orders, etc. The Director has access to eBuilder, the County’s project management software, for project details and progress updates. The level of the Director’s

involvement in project management and oversight varies based on the assigned Gwinnett County project manager.

For the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment (“FF&E”), GCPL typically makes the purchase and then requests reimbursement from the County.

### Building Security

GCPL utilizes a contracted security firm for branch oversight during open-access hours. Open-access hours are times during the day in which the library staff is not present at the library, but library customers are still able to access the library by scanning their library card at the door. This service allows customers who may not be able to come to the library to checkout materials or use basic equipment, such as printers and copiers, during regular business hours. Branches that provide open-access hours include Duluth, Lawrenceville, Norcross, and Suwanee. Open-access hours are from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM Monday through Thursday. On Fridays and Saturdays, hours are 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Sundays have the same evening open access hours as Friday and Saturday, but the morning open-access hours are from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Each branch that offers open-access has a contracted security guard that monitors the branch during the open access hours. Customers use the self-checkout stations to check out materials within the library.

### Couriers

GCPL uses couriers driving box trucks to transport books, laptops, training materials, program materials, and other materials and supplies between branches throughout the day. There are currently three couriers; two full-time couriers that transport items on the weekdays and one part-time courier that transports items on the weekends. Couriers visit each branch at least once daily.

Materials are transferred between branches based upon the holds that are placed on the materials. If materials have been requested for hold by a customer online at one branch, but the material is currently at another branch, the couriers are tasked with bringing that book to the branch designated by the requesting customer. Each branch has plastic bins that are placed by the loading dock that are assigned to each other branch in the GCPL system. Materials are placed in each bin according to the branch it is being requested from. Couriers pick up each bin from each branch throughout the day and deliver the bin to the requesting branch. Couriers may also be used to transport computer equipment, as well as other materials and supplies used to host programs.

### Communications

The Division utilizes the SherpaDesk helpdesk ticketing system to receive information from branches about maintenance and repair needs. For maintenance and repair needs that require coordination with Gwinnett County Support Services, Division staff utilize the Lucity ticketing system to submit requests to the County.

For capital construction and capital maintenance projects, communications with the County tends to vary based on the Support Services Facility Construction staff assigned to the project, and their desired involvement of the Division.

Annually, the Division Director conducts a walk-through of each branch with the Branch Manager and the Branch Services Division Director to review and assess the branch’s current state and discuss any upcoming maintenance or repair needs or concerns.

The Division also maintains a listserv email group of all of the Branch Managers, as well as County Support Services contacts to discuss issues or concerns related to issues or concerns with the performance of the janitorial contractors.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division works to identify, understand, and track all current maintenance and repair needs, as well as trying to create a longer-term timeline for capital maintenance and construction or renovation needs. The County is currently behind in getting projects started according to the agreed-upon five-year plan, which can create challenges for the Division in supporting branches and equipment that were scheduled for renovation or placement already. This additional work takes time and funding that had not originally been budgeted, which can impact budget forecasting and annual expenses and extending buildings, equipment and other components past their scheduled life can increase risk and liability.

The Division also works to best leverage all available resources to minimize the cost of major renovations and repairs, including the availability of Georgia Public Library System matching funds to support these costs. This strategy requires coordination with the County, which can be inconsistent and delayed.

The Division also wants to move towards a more proactive maintenance and asset management program, rather than assessing the quickest and lowest cost options for repair and replacement. While the Division has implemented several strategies internally, the reliance on the County for annual funding, as well as project management and funding for all capital construction and maintenance projects, means that internal efforts are limited without County communications and support.

## Systems and Applications

### SherpaDesk

SherpaDesk is a maintenance ticket system that allows staff to request maintenance or repair needs. This information can be exported and provided to Gwinnett County Support Services.

### Lucity

Facilities Maintenance and Security have access to utilize Lucity, Gwinnett County Support Services asset management system, to submit tickets to request maintenance and repair on equipment or assets that may either be under warranty, or within the services that Gwinnett County supports.

### e-Builder

e-Builder is Gwinnett County Support Services' capital construction management software used for project manager. The Facilities Maintenance and Security Division Director has access to the system to review project progress.

## Data and Performance Analysis

Maintenance orders are currently tracked using SherpaDesk. Branches are able to input maintenance tickets through this system which are then managed by the Maintenance Technician.

Capital projects and their progress are tracked by the Director of Facilities Management and Security. The Director of Facilities Management and Security serves as a liaison on all the capital projects on this list to the County Support Services Department.



## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** Communications with the County Support Services Department are perceived to be inconsistent, which results in inconsistent methods and timelines for communications about the progress of GCPL capital projects.

**Recommendation 1:** Gwinnett County Support Services needs to develop a formal communications protocol for use when overseeing GCPL capital projects, to ensure consistent notification and participation of GCPL contacts.

**Observation 2:** The County is currently behind on getting approved projects within the GCPL system started. This creates challenges for the Facility Maintenance and Security Division and may result in increased repair and maintenance costs. As GCPL has access to potential match funds, delays in timeline and project funding may result in loss of non-County funding and could potentially increase County costs.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider prioritizing projects within the GCPL system that are at risk of depreciating beyond schedule and causing failure. The County should hold more frequent meetings to discuss the status of approved projects, and to discuss what access to match or support funds that GCPL may be able to provide to reduce County costs.

## 3.C.6 Gwinnett County Public Library – Human Resources Division

The Human Resources Division (“HR”) is responsible for recruiting new applicants to the GCPL system and the hiring process that occurs once an individual applies for a position. The Division is also responsible for benefits management, Family Medical Leave Act claims, and Workers Compensation claims.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Hiring and Recruiting
- Benefits Administration
- General Personnel Administration

HR Division functions do not include any oversight of staff training. The Staff Engagement Division is currently responsible for all staff training.

### Hiring and Recruiting

The Human Resources Division is responsible for the recruiting and hiring of staff within the GCPL system. Recruiting needs are relayed to the HR team by the hiring division. Recruiting is performed by posting positions on various websites, including Indeed, Handshake, and the Georgia Public Library Services website. HR is responsible for posting the job descriptions on the aforementioned websites. The Marketing and Communications Division also promotes job advertisements and videos on the various social media platforms in order to recruit and raise awareness of open positions.

The hiring process for new applicants begins with an application review and a preliminary interview. All applications for branch staff positions are reviewed by the Branch Services Director to identify who to include in interview scheduling. If an applicant passes the Branch Services preliminary review, the Branch Services Director sends the applicant information to HR who then schedules a preliminary interview. There is also a branch hiring committee, comprised of staff from several branches who serve multi-year terms on the hiring committee. The branch hiring committee interviews all branch candidates for competency and fit.

Non-branch applicants are reviewed and screened by the HR staff before coordinating with the hiring division to determine potential interviewees.

If an applicant is selected for hire, they are given a job offer. If the candidate accepts the offer, the HR Generalist creates an employee account in Kronos, the GCPL Human Capital Management (“HCM”) system. Once the hired individual has inputted necessary information into the Kronos system, the HR Generalist reviews to ensure that the information is inputted correctly and verifies that the employee has the appropriate supporting documentation. HR participates in the orientations hosted by Staff Engagement. This orientation allows for the HR Generalist to review benefit options for the employee and discuss benefit systems access.

HR is not currently using its HCM for hiring and recruitment tracking; much of the hiring process is tracked using manually maintained spreadsheets.

## Benefits Administration

Once the HR Director has approved the benefits, the HR Generalist is responsible for manually entering the information into ADP. Currently, the HR Division has a vacancy for the HR Benefits Coordinator position, resulting in the HR Generalist and the HR Director taking on the responsibilities of this position.

The HR Division is currently responsible for benefits management and reconciliation. In addition to medical insurance and retirement benefits offered by the State of Georgia, Employees have the opportunity to sign up for dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Once an employee selects their benefit options, either during their initial hiring enrollment period, or during annual open enrollment, the HR Director runs a report of all benefit changes and reviews and confirms that all the changes are complete and that the employee is eligible for the selected benefits or updated benefits. If an employee's benefits payment was not withheld from their paycheck due to late enrollment, the HR Division is responsible for calculating how much was missed and for notifying the employee that this amount will need to be withheld from future paychecks. HR also notifies the Payroll Clerk of the amount and timeline for withholding additional benefits payments so that the additional withholding can be verified during payroll processing. If the amount owed is a large amount, payments may be broken up over multiple paychecks.

GCPL employees are members of the State Health Benefit Plan ("SHBP"), so the HR Division must also ensure that entries match between ADP and the SHBP systems and that the amount withheld from employee payroll is accurate for the amount owed and paid to SHBP. Currently, HR must reconcile withholding amounts to the invoices received by SHBP to ensure appropriate withholding amounts. The Division is working to transfer a portion of this reconciliation process to the Administrative Services Division.

## General Personnel Administration

The HR Division is responsible for other general personnel administration duties, such as administering Family Medical Leave Act claims ("FMLA"), workers compensation claims, disability leave, employee relations, and separations and exit interviews.

For FMLA and other disability-related leave, HR is responsible for all administration and management. The HR Division has a spreadsheet which tracks all individual claims and the length or schedule of the individual's approved absence. The employee as well as the employee's supervisor both have access to this spreadsheet to understand current leave utilization and available leave. HR performs basic eligibility determination for FMLA using time of employment and request information.

Employee relations are handled by the HR Division. The HR Director works with the Branch Managers or other managerial staff at Headquarters to resolve internal employee issues. Employees are also able to schedule a meeting with the HR Director to discuss any problems.

Separations are also managed by the HR Division. The HR Division is notified of separations through personnel change announcement from the supervisor of the separating individual, an email sent to leadership of the GCPL system, or by the individual directly. When an employee separates from GCPL, the HR Generalist enters the separation into the ADP to calculate any leave payout and schedule final payment. The HR Generalist is also responsible for terminating benefits on the SHBP and retirement websites. When appropriate, exit interviews are held with the separating employee.

## Communications

Most communications between HR and other end-user divisions are conducted via email, or sometimes through more informal interactions. There are not currently any forms or specific defined processes for communicating information related to HR matters such as separation, grievances, or leave or benefits-related communications. Much of the communications feels reactive and dependent on end-user divisions to initiate communications based on need, rather than strategic and proactive information-sharing, reminders, or collaborations.

## Strategic Initiatives

GCPL's Human Resources function serves more as transactional HR support, rather than strategic HR collaboration. Recruiting, hiring, and retention strategies are set by and implemented through end-user divisions rather than through HR. As such, many of this Division's strategic initiatives are designed for making the transactions more streamlined and efficient.

The Division also doesn't have any staff specifically dedicated to more rote tasks or duties, such as data entry or information gathering and verification. Staff are performing tasks below their skill set and experience and are unable to spend time on more strategic tasks or proactive assessment of opportunities for improvement.

GCPL recently transitioned its payroll to ADP and has introduced an annual, rather than anniversary-based, performance review process. Both of these transitions were initiated to improve the efficiency of information-sharing and access.

## Systems and Applications

### ADP Workforce Now

ADP Workforce Now is a human resource management software developed by ADP. The Department uses ADP Workforce Now for personnel management.

### Hiring Management

HR uses platforms such as Indeed and Handshake to advertise job openings within the GCPL system.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The HR Division tracks many data points internally on excel spreadsheets. The data tracked includes all FMLA claims and current recipients, and all terminations within the GCPL system. The FMLA data is used to keep track of approved leave hours and leave utilization over the approved leave period.

Terminations are tracked to make sure that the required post-termination steps are taken. The HR Division also tracks Librarian certification data on an excel spreadsheet.

The recent transition from Kronos to ADP has resulted in HR having to identify how to pull data that was historically available in Kronos. HR is still learning how to best utilize ADP for data aggregation and analysis.

GCPL conducts regular Energage surveys, which capture data about employee perceptions and insights into their work environment and culture. GCPL may want to leverage these survey results to determine other end-user perceptions about HR Division customer service as well as HR Division perceptions about workload and ability to perform. GCPL can utilize this data to identify if workload metrics or other data could help document current workload levels and assist in identifying efficiencies for more effective

functions or customer service. Information about staff perspective on culture and environment may be used to help develop additional HR initiatives and feedback opportunities.

### Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** GCPL has not defined specific communication protocols, forms, or templates for HR-related transactions such as hiring, separation, employee grievances, or long-term and/or medical leave utilization. This results in information being communicated to HR in a variety of ways and may result in additional communication to collect all of the needed information to review and process action requests.

**Recommendation 1:** HR should consider developing and implementing more specific processes and templates for key HR transactions. Once developed, HR should develop training on implementing these templates, which should be supported and enforced by leadership.

**Observation 2:** Due to the vacant HR Benefits Coordinator position, the HR Director and HR Generalist are splitting these duties in addition to their regular functions. Even with the transition from Kronos to ADP, many of the HR processes are still manual and fully managed internally.

GCPL has also not conducted a workflow or functional analysis to capture all the updated processes and workflows based on the implementation of ADP.

**Recommendation 2:** GCPL should conduct an HR functional assessment to better understand the key functions and workflows and how the Division utilizes ADP. GCPL should evaluate if the use of additional modules could reduce the manual components of current functions. GCPL may want to consider understanding the costs and benefits of using third-party benefits administration for worker's compensation claims, FMLA leave, and other medical leave administration.

Once GCPL has conducted a functional assessment, it should assess whether to reclassify the open position to better meet the needs of the Division and GCPL.

## 3.C.7 Gwinnett County Public Library – Marketing and Communications Division

The Marketing and Communications Division is responsible for managing the GCPL website and developing and posting social media content. The Division is also responsible for promoting all GCPL programs and providing advertising materials for all library branch specific events and programs.

### Key Functions

Key Divisional functions include the following:

- Content Development
- Content Promotion
- Program Advertising

### Content Development

The Division is responsible for developing advertising and marketing content for the GCPL system. This includes videos, social media posts, blog posts, signage, website content, the monthly newsletter, and maintaining GCPL brand standards.

The Division uses photos and videos that are submitted by the branches and other divisions to create posts and videos for the various platforms that are utilized by the Division. Programs are chosen based on the potential interest of the program and by the request of the branches. The Division Director meets with each Branch Manager to discuss the marketing needs of each branch. The branches and other divisions send in photos and program descriptions for programs they wish to be highlighted in order to advertise the program. Individuals are allowed to step out when photos are being taken or ask the individual taking the photo to not include them in the picture, but there are currently no release waivers being signed for group photos at programs.

Video content is used to advertise the GCPL system and the programs and services that are offered. Videos are taken at GCPL programs and at the branches, and then edited before being posted on the GCPL YouTube account or on various other social media platforms. Editing is currently being performed with Adobe Premiere. The Division also creates multi-lingual videos and posts such as videos in Spanish in order to reach Spanish speakers within the community.

The monthly newsletter is a way for residents to learn about activities throughout the GCPL system. The newsletter features three topics, three featured books, six featured programs, two articles about various book clubs within the GCPL system, various informative pieces about multicultural topics, and a section regarding the Library Foundation. Each month the newsletter is organized around a different theme. Marketing maintains a Google spreadsheet for branches to submit information about programs or general information for inclusion in the monthly newsletter. The Marketing Communications Specialist then picks items from the spreadsheet and includes them in the newsletter based on their similarities to the monthly theme. The monthly newsletter is created and distributed using a service called Constant Contact. Constant Contact is a service that allows emails to be mass-sent to individuals on an email list. Constant Contact also allows the Division to view email data such as how many people opened the email, clicked on a link in the email, etc.

## Content Promotion

The Division is responsible for managing the content that is posted to the GCPL website and GCPL social media accounts. This includes any promotional material, blog posts, and making sure the website and social media content stays consistent with the GCPL branding.

The Division uses the website to highlight system-wide and branch-level programs, GCPL initiatives and outreach programs, and provide blog posts to customers. Blog posts promote about different events, cultural months, and GCPL services for the community. Each blog post contains at least one image and a short description of the event or the service.

The GCPL system uses a variety of social media platforms to promote library services and programs. Platforms include Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The Division manages these social media accounts and schedules all content postings. Division staff monitor any comments on GCPL posts, and may answer questions to provide additional information, or delete inappropriate comments. The Division's goal is to schedule three to four posts per platform per day. Posts are scheduled for posting based on anticipated maximum engagement periods. Posts are managed by using SproutSocial, a social media management system that allows the Division to monitor all social media accounts and view data regarding the posts that the Division creates.

## Program Advertising

The Division is responsible for creating signage for use in the branches and for other programming. Using brand standards, the Marketing Project Coordinator creates these signs with pictures either taken by GCPL staff or using online stock photos licensed from iStock. Signage and flyers are sent to the branches via email to print and disseminate. Branches are also provided templates by the Marketing Division to create signs to post around the branch for their own programs.

Signs and social media posts are designed to reach the target audience of each program. The Division creates signs for the branches, Adult Services, and Youth Services which follow a specifically designed brand. These signs are then placed throughout the branches to promote programs.

## Communications

The Division uses email to regularly communicate with Youth Services, Adult Services, and the branches in order to understand, coordinate, and schedule the advertising needs of each. This is conducted through email.

The Division sends out monthly E-Newsletters. These newsletters contain articles about events and initiatives going on throughout the library system. The Division uses Constant Contact, a digital email and marketing platform, to disseminate the newsletter. The E-Newsletter is organized each month around a different theme and typically contains three topics, three featured books, six featured programs, two articles about book clubs within the GCPL system, informative pieces about thematically relevant multicultural topics, and a section for the Library Foundation. Branches can request that certain programs be highlighted on the E-Newsletter by uploading them to a spreadsheet that is accessible by the Division.

The Division also uses various social media platforms to spread awareness about GCPL services and promote branch programs and GCPL initiatives. The Division uses YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to advertise these items. Social media accounts are managed through Sprout Social, a

social media management platform. SproutSocial allows the Division to view engagement data and understand post impact.

The Division maintains the calendar of events on the website. The Division uses Communico, a digital management platform, to post program or event descriptions along with a photo for each item on the calendar. Each calendar event is required to have one associated photo to encourage engagement. These photos can either come from the branches or other divisions, or the photos can come from iStock, a stock photo system.

## Strategic Initiatives

The Division prioritizes raising community awareness of and engagement with the services and programs that the GCPL system offers. In order to reach more people, the Division plans to increase the daily flow of social media posts in order to maintain current content and improve individual post engagement. The Division is also working on ways to increase the regular blog posting on the GCPL website that would highlight different services and programs. The Division also continues to produce content that is more accessible to citizens who speak other languages other than English. Currently, the Division is working on more YouTube content that is completely in Spanish.

The Division currently must produce on-demand signage for branches based on upcoming programs and events. There is not a consistent schedule or planning, which can result in last-minute requests and staff having to rearrange workload to accommodate requests. The Division is currently working on a way to provide the branches with sign templates that would allow the branches to create their own marketing for programs while at the same time ensuring a cohesive utilization of GCPL brand standards.

The Division struggles to work with Gwinnett County on co-located or co-sponsored programs, as Gwinnett County has inconsistent messaging and expectations about co-branding and how to integrate both brands. Division staff noted several instances of having developed co-branded materials with Gwinnett County staff, only to have the material completely changed, and the GCPL brand minimized, during an internal Gwinnett County review process.

## Systems and Applications

### Picture and Video Editing Software

The Division uses a variety of editing software such as Adobe premier access pro and Canva, which is a design tool that is used to create and edit custom graphics.

### Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a system that manages all social media and creates data and reports based on the account associated with the system. The Division uses this system to manage their various social media accounts and pull engagement data to improve posting.

### Constant Contact

Constant Contact is an email marketing system that allows the user to easily design and distribute emails to mass recipients. The Division uses this system to design and send out the monthly E-Newsletter.

### I-Stock

I-Stock is an online system that allows users to access stock photos for marketing purposes.



## Communico

Communico is a system that assists in event organization for the GCPL system. Communico allows the Division to design and post program information onto the GCPL website calendar. When individuals sign up for certain events requiring sign up, Communico allows for the Division to communicate with them details about the program or event.

## Data and Performance Analysis

The Division is currently using Sprout Social to track engagements and clicks on the social media pages. This allows for the Division to gauge which posts and style of posts receive the most engagement and can help the Division design more posts that will garner more attention.

The Division is not consistently tracking or analyzing website visitation or engagement data. There is minimal consistent insight into data metrics that GCPL could utilize to develop a more strategic marketing and outreach strategy that capitalizes on its current visitation and marketing strategies.

Potential datapoints for use in understanding current visitation include:

- Organic search visitation
- Direct visitation
- Referral visitation
- Social visitation
- Email/Newsletter visitation
- Landing page bounce rates
- Individual page bounce rates
- Session duration
- Content changes

## Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The monthly E-Newsletter only allows for one program or activity from each branch a month to be considered for the newsletter. This may create conflicts in branches having to prioritize and select a single program to promote.

**Recommendation 1:** The Division should consider expanding the E-Newsletter as to provide more opportunities for branches to highlight their programs, or offering opportunities for more detailed, local newsletters. This added marketing for the branches could allow more people to view the programs at their specific branch and potentially increase attendance at these programs.

**Observation 2:** The Division is currently not tracking website engagement data or analyzing the data to understand the impact of blogs, frequently asked questions pages, or other site content.

**Recommendation 2:** The Division should consider website functionality testing to better understand the website's audience and the audience's user habits. This information should be leveraged in combination for more consistently collected and analyzed website user data to develop a more comprehensive website update and strategic marketing plan.

The development of a website update and marketing plan should be utilized to streamline certain operations, such as templates and programming promotion plans that can be administered by branch

staff. Marketing Division staff should be utilized for more strategic and enterprise-wide efforts. Once initial changes are made, the Division should assess its staffing needs to determine if additional interns, part-time or full-time staff would best support the Division's needs.

### 3.C.8 Gwinnett County Public Library – Department-level Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were not specific to a single division or may be applicable to multiple divisions. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following department-level observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist at the Department level, rather than within the specific divisions. These recommendations should be considered for department-wide evaluation and implementation.

**Observation 1:** While GCPL conducted a large-scale needs assessment as part of its strategic planning initiative, it does not regularly conduct quantitative updates, nor does it formally or consistently use data collected by partner organizations and governments to ensure GCPL is leveraging updated information about community needs and currently available resources.

Some of GCPL's strategic goals are broad, and may be contributing to mission creep and overextension of staff and resources into services that may be available in the County. Additionally, with staff in both the individual branches and Headquarters working towards a similar strategic goal, it is difficult to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that the shared objectives are relevant to each branch and division equally.

**Recommendation 1:** GCPL should consider conducting more periodic needs assessments. This could allow for the GCPL system to set goals and standards that are more comprehensive to the relevant needs of the communities that the branches and divisions serve. GCPL may need to refine and redefine its mission and how it applies to each division within GCPL to minimize the potential for duplicated or conflicting in-house programs and services.

GCPL may also need to develop a more formal process for evaluating proposals for new programs, services, or resources. Where GCPL may be duplicating services, or only serving as a geographic expansion of service delivery, it may need to consider offering space for access to existing partners, or creating a more formal and robust referral process to assist in meeting resident needs.

**Observation 2:** GCPL works to be forward thinking and strategic in regard to future plans but is currently hindered in doing so because of the current budget process. GCPL's primary funding source is the County. This budget is adopted on an annual basis, but there is no guarantee that the funding GCPL has requested will be received from the County. This hinders GCPL's ability to adequately plan for future periods.

**Recommendation 2:** The County and GCPL should collaborate to determine if new methods of funding, or developing guaranteed funding minimums should be established. Alternative formulas could include property tax formula calculations, per capita funding formulas, or other methods that can be utilized for long-term cashflow projections.

In order to set a more formal funding arrangement, the County and the GCPL Board of Trustees may need to better formalize the arrangement for funding, and what each entity is responsible for. The current lack of formal agreement contributes to some of the confusion around responsibilities of each entity, and leaves staff feeling like they are receiving the worst of each potential option with limited benefits.

GCPL should also develop more formal procedures for assessing when statewide contracts or piggybacking procurement opportunities may be available and provide them with cost-savings.

**Observation 3:** Gwinnett County is a very diverse county with citizens who do not speak English. Public-facing sections of GCPL have inconsistent availability of bilingual staff, and often rely on paid translation services to assist in serving those customers.

**Recommendation 3:** GCPL should assess whether basic foreign language skills or key phrases education could assist in improving customer service. Potential solutions could include customized foundational classes or subscriptions to language learning software. GCPL should consider pay stipends to improve recruiting and retention of bilingual staff.

**Observation 4:** The GCPL Board of Trustees receives training that covers the general requirements and responsibilities of the Board. There is currently no training that orients Board members to the current operating state, strategic priorities, or other contextual information that would provide a stronger foundation for Board service and opportunities for outreach and impact.

**Recommendation 4:** GCPL should consider developing additional training for new board members that provides more context and operational insight about library operations and the role of the Board.

**Observation 5:** Cybersecurity will remain a priority as criminal organizations target state and local governments with ransomware attacks. Cybersecurity skills are in high demand, making it extremely difficult to attract and keep highly skilled cybersecurity professionals. GCPL has taken several initial steps to mitigate the risk of a ransomware attack.

**Recommendation 5:** GCPL should consider conducting a third-party security assessment or contracting with an organization to provide a fractional Chief Information Security Officer (“CISO”). The Georgia Technology Authority (“GTA”) provides a cost-effective CISO as a service. The service offers certified CISO professionals part-time (one or more days a week, a year at a time). These professionals can assist in planning, setting up policies and procedures, etc., and can be a cost-effective way to solve the talent problem.

**Observation 6:** GCPL staff perceive the relationship with Gwinnett County as competitive or adversarial. GCPL staff also note inconsistent messaging from different County staff and different County departments, and feel that there is no comprehensive strategy or approach unifying the County’s interactions with GCPL.

Staff acknowledge that there are services that are provided by both GCPL and Gwinnett County, but note that some of these services were provided by GCPL first, or that GCPL’s service provision expands the geographic footprint and access to services that may only be provided at a single location, or only intermittently through County departments.

**Recommendation 6:** Both Gwinnett County and GCPL need to conduct more formal planning and program launch processes, to ensure that program logistics and needs are developed. This program evaluation should include a needs evaluation, and should evaluate the availability and effectiveness of existing resources.

GCPL needs to more specifically define program or project success, and should ensure that baseline data is collected and measured, and more detailed participation data is collected and evaluated, to ensure

that program outputs or outcomes are assessed and utilized in determining whether to continue programs and services.

**Observation 7:** GCPL collects and reports on a large volume data, but some of the data lacks context, or isn't detailed enough to serve as performance evaluation metrics. Additionally, GCPL does not consistently collect feedback from the communities where many of the programs and activities occur. While GCPL collects and provides anecdotal information about service impacts, there is not consistent demonstration to support the need for the programs, or the potential impacts of program expansion or growth.

**Recommendation 7:** GCPL should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments. The County may want to consider conducting process evaluations, to ensure that the methods and approaches are appropriate for the communities being served.

For programs where both GCPL and Gwinnett County, or other community partners, are providing the same or similar services, there should be regular review of these data to determine if there are lessons to be learned, or if it may be more effective to end one program and support the expansion of another program.

## 4. Enterprise-wide Observations and Recommendations

In the course of our fieldwork, we identified several themes and trends that were represented in multiple County departments, or require resolution at the County-level, rather than individual department-level. We aggregated these themes and trends to develop the following enterprise-wide observations and recommendations. These recommendations reflect issues or opportunities that may exist either at the enterprise-level and would all County departments, or may exist in multiple departments, requiring more holistic solutions. These recommendations should be considered for County-wide evaluation and implementation.

### Previously Identified Observations and Recommendations

**Observation 1:** The Planning and Development Department created a Process and Technology Manager position, responsible for coordinating with all Departmental divisions to ensure efficient use of systems and to develop strategies and workflow processes that leverage workflow and system capabilities across all divisions. The Process and Technology Manager also works to ensure consistent and useful data collection, as well as looks for opportunities to improve the customer experience and access to information.

**Recommendation 1:** The County should consider replicating the Process and Technology Manager position in other departments throughout the County. When replicating this position, each department should ensure that there is adequate subject matter expertise for each process to ensure that the work of the Process and Technology Manager is efficient and appropriate for the subject matter and key functions of each department.

**Observation 2:** The County does not currently have a formal way to track contracts that are being sent for review and approval by other relevant County departments, such as the Finance and Law Departments. The County also requires physical wet signatures, so most of the contract routing and review is of physical documents. The requirement and resulting physical documentation increases the risk of a lost document, and may leave end-user departments unaware of where a contract is in the review and approval process.

**Recommendation 2:** The County should consider adopting secured digital signatures for contract execution. The County should also consider developing a workflow or application that allows for electronic routing and transfer of contracts and other legal documents for review and approval by relevant County departments. The workflow should include transparency about assigned tasks and owners, contract status, remaining steps, and should consider time-out or escalation rules that ensure timely review and response for all documents.

**Observation 3:** The current process for identifying performance and scorecard metrics for each department is not consistently aligned with the key functions and strategic initiatives of each department. Additionally, the County initiative does not consider the time needed for end-user departments to track and manage data effectively. This may result in inaccurate or inconsistent use of data, as well as emphasis on data points that do not effectively convey the accomplishments of the department.

**Recommendation 3:** The County needs to develop a County-level process and policy for effective data collection and validation, as well as develop consistent expectations for data points and performance metrics that align with departmental strategic initiatives and priorities. The County will also need to consider the time required for employees to track, validate, and assess these data points.

**Observation 4:** The County allows each end-user department, and in some departments, individual divisions to develop and implement their own telework policies. The decentralization of policy development may not always be consistent with a position’s ability to work from home and may instead reflect departmental/divisional leadership’s personal preferences.

**Recommendation 4:** The County should consider providing clarity and/or direction to Department Directors on expectations of consistent application to employees of similar jobs, customer service expectations, availability to technology equipment and/or systems, and other considerations.

**Observation 5:** Many departments are involved in functions and initiatives that may have impacts on other departments. Often these initiatives may be overlapping, or create the potential for conflicting or inconsistent messaging throughout the County.

**Recommendation 5:** The County needs to take an active leadership role in identifying and coordinating a variety of initiatives that will require buy-in and engagement from a variety of stakeholders and County departments. The County will also need to appoint appropriate leadership teams and responsible departments to ensure effective implementation. Where relevant, the County may need to consider external stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities.

**Observation 6:** There was consistent concern expressed from staff across multiple departments that employees receive low performance evaluation ratings (e.g., a rating of “1”) if they use more than 48 hours of sick leave. One department provided a Department Policy dated 01/01/2019, which is still in effect, that provided confirmation of the above policy mandating low performance evaluation scores for attendance if non-exempt employee use more than 48 hours of sick leave during the evaluation period.

The correlation between use of sick leave and performance disincentivizes staff to use sick leave, which may result in increased exposure to communicable illness in the workplace. Additionally, for certain positions and functions, working while ill may increase the risk for the County with an increased potential for injury to employees or citizens as well as increased risk for damage to County assets.

**Recommendation 6:** Human Resources, in consultation with the Law Department, should provide clear policy guidance to all County departments on the appropriateness of linking low performance evaluation scores to the amount of sick leave utilized.

**Observation 7:** Leadership across multiple departments expressed concern with the support from the Human Resources Department for the multiple types of personnel actions, including the time it takes the County to hire new staff. Multiple supervisors gave examples of losing quality candidates very interested in working for the County who accepted other job offers due to the delay in the County hiring process. One explanation provided for the delay in hiring approvals is the expanded time period required when conducting background and employment history evaluations on potential new-hires as Human Resources receives hard-copy/paper responses from previous employers.

**Recommendation 7:** Human Resources should collaborate with the Law Department to evaluate alternate ways or opportunities to conduct background and/or employment history evaluations and verifications, including whether the hiring manager may conduct an assessment of an applicant’s work history telephonically, and the associated documentation requirements. If a technology solution is viable, Human Resources should collaborate with Information Technology Services on systems to build or purchase, evaluative cost information, and technology recommendations.

**Observation 8:** Internal service departments have developed processes and practices for performing routine tasks; maintaining consistency; remaining compliant with local, state, and federal regulations; utilizing systems; and providing proactive services. These processes and practices are not consistently implemented, or adhered to by end-user departments, resulting in reduced effectiveness of these efforts.

**Recommendation 8:** County leadership should clearly define and enforce expectations for end-user departments to comply with internal service department-developed processes and practices. Compliance expectations should include an escalation process for internal service departments to identify to County leadership persistent disregard for established processes and practices.

**Observation 9:** The County Human Resources Department maintains a finite list of job titles that can be used County-wide, with no opportunities for working job or position titles. This can make hiring challenging, as the titles may not indicate what the role's responsibilities will be within that department. It may also result in inconsistent use of titles and tiers within divisions or among departments, resulting in the same title may reflect different levels of education, experience, and seniority in different departments.

**Recommendation 9:** Human Resources should determine the requirements for modifications to the current or future ERP to allow for the utilization of working job/position titles. Further, Human Resources should collaborate with end-user/customer departments to determine HR solutions regarding specific needs for working titles and related policy modifications in order to provide opportunities for Departments to create and/or modify working titles, including the design of multiple, discrete working levels within the same job code by implementing working titles and expanded salary administration opportunities (e.g., using the working titles Trades Technician IIIA and Trades Technician IIIB, both working titles assigned to Class Code #7427 assigned to pay grade #B23(3), and allow for salary modifications as employees advance through the discrete levels of work assignments).

**Observation 10:** The County has seen significant growth in the past 10 to 20 years, and this growth has also increased the number and type of services that the County is expected and able to provide. This County growth has not been matched by growth in staffing across the departments, resulting in increased workload for many departments and divisions without increased staffing or resources to support this workload.

**Recommendation 10:** The County should work to develop staffing level metrics that are tied to workload indicators. The County should also consider resource metrics, such as workspace and equipment needs that align with the County's growth. These metrics should be based on data points that can be consistently collected and validated, and should be reviewed at a minimum of annually to ensure that the County is making the appropriate staffing and resources available to meet the needs of its citizens, employees, and stakeholders.

**Observation 11:** Several jobs within the County benefit from having staff who speak multiple languages. The County does not currently offer any pay incentive for employees who leverage this additional skill in their day-to-day roles.

**Recommendation 11:** The County should consider offering a small pay bump, either through an annual stipend or a pay increase, for employees whose language skills are a value-added skill for their specific function and responsibilities.



**Observation 12:** As County departments are developing succession plans and workload assessments, there is inconsistent consideration of the changes in generations, and the values and interests of the emerging workforce. Departments and division are often envisioning that new hires will be comparable replacements for tenured staff with institutional knowledge.

**Recommendation 12:** The County should seek to better understand generational differences in hiring and ensure that generational considerations are included in workload analysis and factor into position assessments. The County should also consider budgeting to allow new hires to shadow tenured employees before retirement or separation, to allow for transfer of institutional knowledge and insights.

## 5. Conclusion

We commend the leadership of Gwinnett County for commencing this Operational and Performance Assessment as this process has been in-depth and brought to light the positive accomplishments of the in-scope departments, and the opportunities for improvement needed to achieve operational excellence.

The in-scope departments are operating efficiently in many ways, but also have many opportunities to improve. The County now has an understanding (for the in-scope departments) of its current state, and a roadmap to continuously improve into the future. Now the real challenge is here – implementing the report’s recommendations and systematically enhancing the in-scope departments’ operations, and performance.

## 6. Strategic Roadmap

The following pages detail the more than 100 recommendations for the in-scope departments. The recommendations are categorized by applicable owner (enterprise-wide or single department), are assigned a prioritization level for implementation, and include a typical timeframe for implementation. The detailed report should be read in its entirety to better understand the context for the identified observations and recommendations. The County has the ultimate responsibility to determine the prioritization level and timeline for implementation of any of the recommendations in this report.

The County should dedicate resources and engage external specialists where needed to assist with implementation.

“The most dangerous phrase in our language is: *‘we have always done it this way’.*” – Grace Hopper

Category	Division	Recommendation	Priority/Sense of Urgency: 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Suggested Time for Implementation: 1 = <90 days 2 = 91-180 days 3 = 180+ days	Financial Impact: 1 = Sustained 2 = One-time 3 = None
People	Financial Services - Accounting Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should review its staffing structure in order to address high levels of turnover. The Division should consider implementing additional promotional steps above or below the Financial Analyst II level in order to provide staff with a growth path. The Division should also consider incentivizing CPA licensure through monthly stipends or other forms of compensation.	2	2	1
Process	Financial Services - Accounting Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions, such as journal entries, to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management.	2	3	2
Process	Financial Services - Accounting Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> County leadership should determine to what degree fixed asset inventory management is a priority and provide guidance to the Accounting Division and end-user departments regarding expectations around fixed asset inventory. If a high degree of accuracy in fixed asset inventory is a priority, the Division should consider determining a singular asset management system all end-user departments are expected to submit data through and should consider establishing a section for staff solely dedicated to fixed asset inventory management.	2	3	1
Process	Financial Services - Accounting Division	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Division should prioritize documenting policies and procedures for regular Divisional activities, including reconciliation and report preparation, to ensure continuation of Divisional services regardless of staff turnover.	2	2	3
Process	Financial Services - Budget Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should ensure the budget preparation schedule and process is developed in coordination with and receives approval from Department and County leadership. If leadership identifies desired changes to procedures, those changes should be communicated during the schedule and process development. Otherwise, changes to procedure should be held until the start of the next year's budget preparation cycle to avoid unnecessary delays or rushes.	2	3	3

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Process	Financial Services - Budget Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should consider a full functional audit of current manual processes related to budget preparation and management to determine whether all processes are necessary and whether processes can be automated. As the County contemplates a new ERP, the Division should consider how the new system can be utilized to make processes more efficient and less prone to human error.	2	3	2
Process	Financial Services - Budget Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> As the Department contemplates the new ERP solution, the Division should review the system’s capabilities to provide forecasting tools and standardization. The Division should also consider discussing with leadership the possibility of end-user departments conducting some level of forecasting with any data and insight not readily available to the Budget Division.	2	3	3
Technology	Financial Services - Budget Division	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Budget Division staff is involved in evaluating the budget functionality of the new ERP system and plans to implement the budget module of the new system. In the meantime, the Division should consider working with the Information Technology Services Department or hiring contractors to improve the controls and macros in the Excel workbooks used for budget preparation. In addition, the Division should evaluate data analysis and visualization tools such as Tableau and Power BI for reporting.	2	2	1

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Process	Financial Services - Grants Division	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should develop a comprehensive grants strategy, including criteria for objectively evaluating the value a grant may provide to the County or its citizens, the estimated cost of grants implementation and any post-grant maintenance of effort or additional costs.</p> <p>The evaluation should also consider whether it may be more impactful for the County to leverage County funds to support programs that could be supported with grant funds. Utilizing County funds instead of time-limited or scope-limited grant funds could expand the potential impact and reduce compliance concerns with terms and conditions associated with grant funding.</p> <p>The County should also consider a Grants Strategy position in the County Administrator’s office, to assist in overseeing an enterprise-wide strategy and helping determine which opportunities are best suited for the County and which may be a better fit for community partners who can apply for grants with the County’s support.</p>	1	3	1
People	Financial Services - Grants Division	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Grants Division should create a Compliance Officer position, who can assist in researching and interpreting questions about compliance requirements, allowable costs, or allowable activities. The position should require experience with common areas of grant questions, such as procurement, labor and employment, and construction management. This role should also be responsible for subrecipient monitoring and contract oversight for any third-party grants management organizations.</p>	3	3	1
Technology	Financial Services - Grants Division	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> As the County transitions to a new ERP, the Department should evaluate whether the option for carrying over prior year purchase orders and other grant financial records is feasible, or whether there are more automated means of recording year end accruals to reduce the current manual processes.</p>	2	3	3

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Process	Financial Services - Grants Division	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Grants Division should work with the Department of Support Services Records Management Section to draft County records retention policies specific for grants retention, including retention of archival copies of department policies, processes, and other organizational material that documents compliance controls. Training should be provided to Records Management Section staff, along with end-user staff who may have records management duties, to ensure consistent application of retention requirements for grant documents.	2	1	3
Culture	Financial Services - Grants Division	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Grants Management application project team needs to develop a change management strategy that encourages the implementation team and end members to accept new processes and use the software functionality instead of designing the system based on the current business processes and practices.	2	2	3
Technology	Financial Services - Investment Management	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> As the County transitions to the new ERP, it should assess whether the new ERP's investment management module would assist in reducing the manual compilation of portfolio reporting data and portfolio yield. If not, the County should consider procuring or purchasing a third-party portfolio management software that allows for import of reporting data from a variety of systems or platforms and more automated reporting data and real-time data analytics.	2	3	1
Culture	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should consider implementing process changes that allow staff to function more as a strategic procurement body, helping end-user departments better identify their needs and conduct long-range planning. While Buyers may not be experts in their assigned department's specialties, Buyers should be familiar enough to help their internal clients address potential deficiencies in procurement documents and provide recommendations to strengthen solicitation requirements and specifications.	2	2	3
Process	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions, such as solicitation preparation, to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management.	2	3	2

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Process	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should review its training program for end-user departments, considering both a more formalized training schedule as well as the method of delivery. A more regular training program, combined with as-necessary ad hoc training, can ensure relevant end-user-department staff get training on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The Division can also consider various training delivery models, such as developing online training modules or recorded training sessions for end-user department staff with the expectation all purchasers and approvers within each department complete the training modules on an annual basis. Another training delivery model might be occasional or regular delivery of policies and procedures to end-user-department staff as a reminder of the lessons learned in training.</p>	2	2	2
People	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> As a new ERP is implemented and new workflows established, the Division should evaluate its staffing model to determine whether additional staff are necessary or if current levels are adequate. A change in workflows, especially if eProcurement is implemented, might require changes in staff responsibilities and reporting structures.</p>	2	3	1
Process	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Division should consider implementing standardized vendor evaluations to be completed by end-user departments before contract renewal discussions. These vendor evaluations will provide the Division with necessary data about the performance of vendors and help Buyers guide end-user departments in updating solicitations when they are next published for bids or proposals.</p>	2	3	3
People	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should consider establishing a Purchasing Outreach and Access Coordinator to handle vendor outreach and address the factors which inhibit procurement accessibility. The Department should consider keeping this position separate from the Purchasing Division to avoid conflicts and ensure the personnel guiding community vendors through the purchasing process is not the same personnel conducting bid and proposal evaluations.</p>	3	3	1



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Process	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The Law Department should consult with DoFS in reviewing and potentially updating the Purchasing Ordinance to reflect the current global business environment and eliminate some of the barriers to procurement accessibility for small and disadvantaged business enterprises. The County should consider a range of policy updates, ranging from raising delegations of authority to conducting six-month Consumer Price Index reviews for more regular price increases on annually renewed contracts.	1	2	3
Technology	Financial Services - Purchasing Division	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division should evaluate the eProcurement functionality of any new ERP system to automate source-to-contract functionality. Given the implementation timeframe, the Division may want to consider a standalone eProcurement system for all parts of the procurement process and integrate or replace the standalone system with the new ERP system procurement modules.	2	3	1
Culture	Financial Services - Standards and Controls Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should proactively begin knowledge transfer and documentation of the existing staff's knowledge of the current ERP system processes and integrations.	2	1	3
Technology	Financial Services - Standards and Controls Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> As the Division assists with the implementation of a new ERP solution, the Division should consider working with ITS to develop a series of standardized user roles with set security access and permissions. End-user-department staff conducting financial functions should be assigned user roles based upon their position rather than a customized set of permissions. Additionally, the Division should consider periodic end-user-department audits to determine if user roles provide the correct permissions to staff and whether all staff with user access are actually using the access granted.	3	3	3
Culture	Financial Services - Standards and Controls Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Division should consider regular training of County leadership, including Department Directors, on the County's ERP system to provide basic explanation of processes and workflows. If training County leadership on SAP is determined to be inefficient, the Division should at least consider training County leadership on the new ERP system after implementation.	3	3	3

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Culture	Financial Services - Office of Strategic Excellence	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> County leadership should continue to promote the services and solutions that OSE can provide other County departments. OSE should also consider a roadshow, similar to the roadshow led by ITS, to promote its staff capabilities, and leverage existing success stories to encourage additional engagement.	1	3	3
Technology	Financial Services - Office of Strategic Excellence	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> To address the usability and skill set challenges with Corporation, the County should define the requirements for new performance management tools and develop a strategy for procuring new performance management applications. The strategy should include using the functionality of the new ERP system for financial and human resources dashboards plus tools and applications for the performance management of non-ERP data.	2	2	1
Technology	Financial Services - Office of Strategic Excellence	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should take a holistic approach to data management and governance and define the requirements for an enterprise data architecture and management strategy. The strategy should include identifying and defining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-common data elements and creating a data dictionary</li> <li>-a central repository for data storage</li> <li>-tools for extracting, transforming, and loading data</li> <li>-data storage schemas such as data warehouses, data marts, and data lakes</li> <li>-data analysis and visualization tools</li> <li>-security controls for sensitive data</li> </ul> <p>As part of the strategy, the County should consider conducting a pilot project with a data analytics cloud services provider such as Amazon Web Services (“AWS”) or Microsoft. These vendors offer tools, applications, and services that accelerate an organization’s ability to create a modern data architecture.</p>	2	3	1

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Process	Financial Services - Office of Strategic Excellence	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> OSE staff in Performance Management and Management Framework should collaborate to develop a better requirements-gathering template and include the Management Framework staff in the requirements-gathering meetings. In addition, the Management Framework staff should provide the Outreach Staff with information and training on the capabilities of the Management Framework application.	2	2	3
Culture	Financial Services - Office of Strategic Excellence	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> OSE performance management staff should be utilized more strategically, in evaluating department Business Proposal Plans and performance metrics and helping end-user departments develop performance metrics and KPIs that better align with funding priorities and decision packages. This should include developing logic models that clearly define the inputs, outputs, outcomes, budgets, and other resources necessary to drive performance, and to ensure that the performance metrics truly align with and contribute to the Gwinnett Standard and the County's mission and strategic initiatives.  The County should consider working towards performance-based budgeting in the coming years.	2	3	3
People	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Office should coordinate with the Department of Human Resources to review Appraiser job level requirements to ensure they are not contradictory those set by DOR. The Office should consider opportunities for higher level Appraisers, such as Appraisers III, to gain supervisory experience, such as through serving as team leads or as staff trainers.	3	2	3
People	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Office should review its staffing model for all positions, but especially for Residential Appraisers. While the Office cannot meet industry standards suggested by DOR in the short-term, the Office should develop a long-term plan for gradually increasing staffing levels in order to develop more balanced workloads. The Office may also look at alternative staffing models, such as supplementing County staff with additional contracted appraisers.	1	2	1

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Process	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Office should consider developing standardized forms to provide to the cities for data and permit collection to ensure consistent collection of data from each city.	3	3	3
Process	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Residential Section should introduce and enforce standards for ProVal entry. The Section may consider workflow or process modification to provide quality assurance/quality control of appraisal reports.	3	3	3
Process	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 5A:</b> The Office should work with the Purchasing Division the next time a contract is up for solicitation to determine the appropriate degree of enforcement authority that can be written into the contract to ensure contracted appraisers provide quality work in a timely manner. The Office should utilize the Purchasing Division as experts in solicitation and contract development, relying on the Division's expertise to ensure adequate enforcement authority.  <b>Recommendation 5B:</b> The Office should consider establishing a Contract Manager position to provide oversight over the development and execution of contracts, allowing appraisal staff to focus on conducting appraisals and related activities.	2	3	1
Culture	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Office should increase cross training opportunities for employees within and across sections to ensure succession planning and continuation of duties should current employees leave their positions. The Office should also ensure all policies and procedures, especially highly specialized and technical processes, are adequately documented.	2	2	3
Culture	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> Office leadership should make more of an effort to engage with staff across all levels and functional areas, ensuring more intentional engagement across all sections. Communication should include both formal Office announcements and meetings as well as informal discussions among coworkers. Leadership should encourage collaboration among sections and assist sections in determining how to provide support for other sections' functions.	2	1	3

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People	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Office should review its staffing model to determine how best to provide Appraisers with administrative support. If the current structure precludes the Office's Administrative Support Associates from providing this support, the Office should consider establishing administrative support positions in the appraisal sections.	2	2	1
Technology	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> Before writing a possible RFP for the replacement tax appraisals system, the Office should work with the Tax Commissioners' Office to conduct a needs assessment to document the current state, identify the challenges with the current state and define the future state processes for records management and appraisals. Once the future state is defined, the Office should define the new system's requirements and conduct a market scan of the existing vendors offering systems that meet the Office's requirements.	2	2	2
Technology	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Office should coordinate with the Information Technology Services Department to determine if the current system is capable of holding new data entry without pushing that data live. If not, the Office should include the data entry freeze in the needs assessment recommended for ProVal.	2	2	3
Process	Financial Services - Tax Assessor's Office	<b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Office should ensure all workload reports completed by staff are being appropriately utilized and are not creating additional inefficiencies and strains on employees' time. The Office should review current procedures to determine if any workload data can be automatically pulled from systems rather than requiring manual completion of workload reports.	2	2	3
Process	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management. Specifically, the County should consider assessing safety and risk mitigation, certificate of insurance collection and acceptance, cash management, and revenue recognition.	2	3	2
Technology	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> As the County transitions to a new ERP, it should consider introducing Optical Character Recognition ("OCR") for invoice processing to reduce manual data entry and allow AP Division staff to spend more time on value-add tasks.	3	3	3

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People	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Payroll Section should work with HR to ensure that the County offers recently hired or promoted supervisor staff training on the official process for review and approval of employee time. This training should be recorded and available on the employee portal as needed.	2	2	3
People	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County should consider contracting with a third-party administrator to pursue unpaid claims owed to the County. The County should also consider assigning longer-term or more complex claims to the third-party administrator, to free up staff time for more proactive analysis and risk mitigation practices.	2	2	1
Process	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County should review and revise its insurance and bond coverage and requirements for contractors who do business with the County.	2	1	3
Technology	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Risk Management Section should request additional training from Riskconnect about the application's features and functionalities. Based on this additional understanding, the Section should update its processes and data entry practices and develop written processes and procedures. As needed, Risk Management should provide training to end-users to ensure consistency in system use and data entry standards	2	1	2
Process	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> The County should conduct cost-benefit analysis to determine if a cash handling policy that incorporates smart safe technology to reduce the number of armored car routes required.  The County may also want to assess the use of cash to determine if it would be more efficient to reduce the number of cash-handling facilities and create more centralized cash receiving hubs.	2	2	3
People	Financial Services - Treasury Division	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The Division should consider adding automated promotional opportunities to many of the Financial Analyst positions, to create additional opportunities for promotion and growth that reflect employees gained skills and experience.	2	2	1

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Technology	Financial Services - Technology	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should develop a comprehensive plan and supporting documentation for the entire ERP implementation that includes strategies to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Project Governance Structure</li> <li>-Project Budget</li> <li>-Project Management Office and Vendor Management</li> <li>-Project Resource Plan, including staff allocation and backfill plan</li> <li>-Procurement of system integration services and other consulting services</li> <li>-Current state documentation, including business process documentation, system integrations, user's roles, and workflows</li> <li>-Process mapping of future state business processes</li> <li>-Data Conversion Strategy</li> <li>-Organizational Change Management</li> <li>-Project Timeline and Implementation Plan (Pilot, Phased Approach, Big Bang, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the County should conduct lessons-learned calls with similar public sector organizations that have implemented cloud ERP platforms.</p>	2	3	3
People	Financial Services - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should consider developing internal onboarding or a better Department orientation and documentation explaining what each division, section, and even certain positions are responsible for to help staff understand interconnected processes and duties.</p>	2	1	3
People	Financial Services - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Department should consider a job classification study to determine if adequate job classifications and grades exist within the Department, and whether those classifications are appropriately reflective of responsibilities and growth opportunities.</p>	2	3	2

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Process	Financial Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Department should consider a more formal assessment of certain financial functional models to determine if shifting certain functions to more centralized models would increase efficiency and improve data and workload management. Specifically, the County should consider assessing budget preparation and management, cash management, certification of insurance collection and acceptance, journal entries, revenue recognition, safety and risk mitigation, and solicitation preparation and contract development.	2	3	2
Culture	Financial Services - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Department should consider a functional assessment to define the functions and authority of the Board of Tax Assessors and develop documentation delineating roles and responsibilities between the Department and the Board of Tax Assessors. The County should also consider different reporting structures for the Tax Assessors' Office, moving the Office out of the Department of Financial Services.	1	2	2



<p><b>Culture</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Services - Department</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Department should separate transactional budget functions from strategic budget oversight, and consider moving strategic budget functions under the County Administrator, in an Office of Management and Budget, or similar structure. The Office of Management and Budget should work with end-user departments to align budgets with performance management and the County’s strategic goals and initiatives. This newly created Office should be empowered to identify critical performance metrics and work with end-user departments focus on meaningful data collection to drive decision-making and true evaluation of performance and value of services.</p> <p>The County should also evaluate the functions currently housed in the Office of Strategic Excellence and the Standards and Controls Division and realign these functions based on County-wide strategic value and oversight. Business process improvement and enterprise-wide system user authorities and workflow functions should be moved into the County Administrator’s Office. These functions should be utilized to lead enterprise-wide system migration, workflow development, transformation, and governance development. Staff should have the authority to compel action that is in the best interest of the enterprise, when needed. This work should be conducted in collaboration with current efforts to evaluate departmental processes and workflows to identify efficiencies and streamline and standardize processes throughout the County.</p> <p>This new unit within the County Administrator’s Office can assist in business case development for new systems, and helping end-user departments meet their needs by leveraging technologies currently in place throughout the County. This unit would also work with ITS and the end-user departments to develop workflows that are appropriate for the business use while also maintaining appropriate internal controls and separation of duties. However, the County should define the criteria for enterprise projects, systems, and business cases from tactical IT projects, systems, and business cases to delineate the functions of the new unit with the County Administrator’s Office and the ITS Department’s Business Strategic Services Division. As appropriate, the County may need to reorganize certain functions from the ITS Department’s Business Strategic Services Division to ensure the appropriate authority, knowledge, and project management skills exist both units. In addition, the County will need to clearly separate business case development functions from business relationship management functions that should remain within ITS.</p>	<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
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People	Human Resources - Employee Engagement Section	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should aim to fully staff the Operations Service Teams, and then allow the Employee Engagement Section staff to focus on its intended mission as opposed to supporting the Operations Service Teams.	1	1	1
Culture	Human Resources - Employee Engagement Section	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> County/Department leadership should formally define and detail the goals, scope, and daily responsibilities of the Employee Engagement Section and its two positions, to ensure progress towards the Section's original intent.	1	1	3
Process	Human Resources - Benefits Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should utilize the data collected from vendor surveys such as the Voya survey to target specific populations of County employees who do not leverage available benefits to their fullest ability or advantage. Data from the survey will help the Division identify where to target their efforts and help to increase employee's satisfaction with benefit plans.	3	1	3
Process	Human Resources - Benefits Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider allowing employee changes of 401(a) and 457(b) contributions on an annual, or more frequent basis.	3	1	3
Culture	Human Resources - HR Operations Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Department should establish a consistent policy for assigning tasks to ensure an appropriate division of labor within Operations Service Team members. By implementing a consistent policy, Teams will have consistent practices and the possibility for Team members to miss assignments or have uneven workloads will be decreased.	2	1	3
Process	Human Resources - HR Operations Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Board of Commissioners should consider revising or eliminating the RTF process as the policy is not as relevant in the current environment.	2	1	1

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Performance Assessment	Human Resources - HR Operations Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> To help ensure equity in salaries and job descriptions and classifications across the County, the County should consider conducting a classification and compensation study.	1	3	2
People	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should consider expanding the IMA program or increasing class sizes to allow more participants to enroll. Because the course is so competitive, County leaders and managers may feel that they are not able to get the training they need to be a successful leader.  In addition, consideration should be given for the HR Department to create unique management trainings, or for individual departments to create internal management trainings to allow managers from departments to be able to take management courses outside of the management trainings currently offered.	3	2	1
Process	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should require that HR Liaison Workshops become mandatory for all Liaisons to allow for consistency in practices. If Workshops are required, then all HR Liaisons will have the consistent training and knowledge, and the HRIS Section should experience less issues with data being entered incorrectly.  The Division should also obtain feedback regarding why HR Liaisons do not attend Academy Workshops. By collecting feedback from Liaisons, the Division can work to improve Workshops and gain more consistent attendance.	2	1	3
Process	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should ensure that all departments have dedicated liaisons and that those roles remain fairly consistent to help ensure that Liaisons have similar levels of knowledge of HR practices and systems used.	3	1	3

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Technology	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> The County should develop a plan to migrate to a single talent management system for recruiting and onboarding, performance management, learning, and succession planning. The system could be part of the County’s new ERP system, or a consolidated standalone platform integrated with the new ERP system, such as Cornerstone or NeoGov.</p> <p>The benefits of an integrated Talent Management System include the following:            -More friendly user experience            -Performance development plans are automatically linked to training and tracked as part of an employee development plan            -Ability to identify high-performing employees and link them to hiring sources            -Deployment of compliance training via a single system for all employees            -Automated assignment of training upon hire, promotion, or transfer to positions that have mandatory training requirements            -Consolidated enterprise reporting</p>	2	3	1
Technology	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> The County and Department should consider contracting a third-party vendor for temporary support for the HRIS Section and the HR Technical Coordinators related to the potential implementation of a new ERP solution.</p>	1	3	2
Technology	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Department should consider procuring an automated performance appraisal system to help standardize and manage the process, as well as reduce manual data entry.</p>	2	2	1
Performance Assessment	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> The County should consider revising its current annual performance appraisal process of conducting annual appraisals on employee anniversary dates and move towards a defined time period each year for conducting annual performance appraisals for all County employees.</p>	3	1	3

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Process	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> The County and Department should review the recent performance appraisal process internal audit and consider implementation of the recommendations as applicable.	3	2	3
Technology	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> The Division should consider enhancing SAP to allow for the system to automatically calculate a pay-for-performance increase in salary. The Division should also consider implementing a secondary control in the form of an HR employee checking behind HR Technicians to help ensure that salary adjustments are entered correctly.	2	2	2
Technology	Human Resources - Training & Technical Services Division	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> As the County is evaluating new ERP solutions, they should also make efforts towards securing an LMS solution.	2	3	1
Process	Human Resources - Fiscal & Administration Division	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should consider tracking more data points from the Call Center such as the types of call or the reason for the call. If the Division was able to categorize the most common reasons for why the public or employees contact the Call Center, they could direct their efforts towards developing more proactive self-service guides or information to inform callers of where to find the answers to their questions. Increasing proactive efforts for calls would allow for less calls and therefore less employees to have to devote time to answering calls.	3	1	3

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Technology	Human Resources - Technology	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County should develop a comprehensive plan and supporting documentation for the entire ERP implementation that includes strategies to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Project Governance Structure</li> <li>-Project Budget</li> <li>-Project Management Office and Vendor Management</li> <li>-Project Resource Plan, including staff allocation and backfill plan</li> <li>-Procurement of system integration services and other consulting services</li> <li>-Current state documentation, including business process documentation, system integrations, user's roles, and workflows</li> <li>-Process mapping of future state business processes</li> <li>-Data Conversion Strategy</li> <li>-Organizational Change Management</li> <li>-Project Timeline and Implementation Plan (Pilot, Phased Approach, Big Bang, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the County should conduct lessons-learned calls with similar public sector organizations that have implemented cloud ERP platforms.</p>	2	3	3
People	Human Resources - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The County and Department should consider the creation of a new position, an Assistant Director. The Assistant Director would be able to assume daily operating tasks currently performed by the Department Director and therefore allow the Department Director to be more strategic and proactive for the Department.</p>	2	2	1
Performance Assessment	Human Resources - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> To help ensure equity of salaries and accuracy of job descriptions, along with market and internal structure alignment, the Department should consider contracting an outside vendor to perform a classification and compensation study.</p>	1	3	2
Process	Human Resources - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The County should consider allowing employee changes of 401(a) and 457(b) contributions on an annual, or more frequent basis.</p>	3	1	3

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Process	Human Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The HR Department should consider offering additional managerial trainings that managers can take in lieu of the EXCEL and IMA trainings that are either internal to the HR Department or are offered by departments if managers are denied enrollment in the programs due to competitiveness.	3	2	1
People	Human Resources - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> HR Liaisons should start tracking time to better understand how much of their time is dedicated to serving as HR Liaisons as opposed to other departmental responsibilities. That way, they can use this information to recognize the need to either have more liaisons or make Department staff fully dedicated to HR functions for the department. The County should ensure that all departments have dedicated liaisons and that those roles remain fairly consistent.	3	1	3
Process	GCPL - Administrative Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Gwinnett County Support Services should collaborate with GCPL to develop clear communications and processes for GCPL capital project reimbursement. This should include a financial meeting at the beginning of each project, so that Support Services can provide the budget and timeline for the FF&E portion of the project, and clarify any additional expectations around prior approval or supporting documentation. The County should also identify a point of contact to provide technical assistance and support to GCPL who is authorized to make decisions when needed.	2	1	3
Culture	GCPL - Branch Services	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> GCPL Leadership should evaluate the potential for conflicting branch services staff priorities and update messaging and expectations to better reflect the current working environment and customer needs. Leadership should establish a hierarchy of functional prioritization, and work to assess which functions are not being performed consistently to determine if workload can be reallocated, or if functions can be automated or modified to improve efficiency.  Leadership should also collaborate with branch and public-facing headquarters to establish guidelines and guidance on data capture and reporting ownership, to ensure consistent and accurate collection of numbers reported to GCPL.	2	1	3

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Process	GCPL - Branch Services	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Branch Services Division should consider creating more specific operational procedures regarding things such as communications and program planning review to ensure some consistency between branches, and potentially make the transition from branch to branch easier for those who may be transfer branches.	3	1	3
Culture	GCPL - Branch Services	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> GCPL Leadership should consider more branch visits, both formal and informal. This should include opportunities for informal and organic interactions with non-managerial or supervisory branch staff.	2	1	3
Technology	GCPL - Branch Services	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Branch Services Division should work with IT to determine if there was a way that the current registration or program tracking systems could better track repeat registration or if there is a way to update branch tracking methods to include identification of repeat program attendees.  The Division should also perform a more detailed evaluation of available data to determine if broader themes or trends, either at the branch level or across all branches, can be identified in the data and leverage in goal setting and program planning efforts for future years.	2	2	2
Process	GCPL - Customer Experience	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> GCPL should develop more formal evaluation processes before making significant changes to processes, workflows, or duty assignments that may impact multiple sections or units. These processes should include collecting input from all impacted units or sections, and assessing the workload, timeline, and cost impacts of process improvement changes.	1	2	3
Process	GCPL - Customer Experience	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> Customer Experience should collaborate with HR to determine if separate onboardings should be established for non-branch staff, or if the new hire training could be shortened or modified for non-public facing and/or non-branch staff.	2	1	3



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Process	GCPL - Customer Experience	<b>Recommendation 3:</b> GCPL should develop collection development committees for each of the three collection types, to collect more real-time insight about changes in community interest and demand for materials. GCPL should also consider developing collection development committees for the acquisition of non-English materials. These committees should include representatives from a number of branches, and should consider opportunities for input from community members or other relevant partners.	3	2	3
Performance Assessment	GCPL - Customer Experience	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The Customer Experience Division should work with Facilities Management and Security to evaluate the current space and perform a needs assessment for the CCC. Based on the results of this assessment, Facilities Management and Security may need to work with Gwinnett County Support Services to determine if the needed modifications could be accomplished in the current space, or if a larger space planning project may be necessary.	2	1	2
Technology	GCPL - Customer Experience	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> GCPL should assess the costs of a customer relationship management (“CRM”) system, or create a comprehensive partnership tracking database that captures information on all current and recent partnerships and requests.	2	2	1
People	GCPL - Development and Community Outreach	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> GCPL should consider implementing an annual volunteer affidavit certifying that there have been no criminal charges or investigations during the last year. GCPL should consider conducting a new background check every three to five years when volunteers are consistently active.	1	1	2
Process	GCPL - Facilities Management and Security	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Gwinnett County Support Services needs to develop a formal communications protocol for use when overseeing GCPL capital projects, to ensure consistent notification and participation of GCPL contacts.	2	1	3
Performance Assessment	GCPL - Facilities Management and Security	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County should consider prioritizing projects within the GCPL system that are at risk of depreciating beyond schedule and causing failure. The County should hold more frequent meetings to discuss the status of approved projects, and to discuss what access to match or support funds that GCPL may be able to provide to reduce County costs.	1	2	1

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Process	GCPL - Human Resources	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> HR should consider developing and implementing more specific processes and templates for key HR transactions. Once developed, HR should develop training on implementing these templates, which should be supported and enforced by leadership.	1	2	3
Performance Assessment	GCPL - Human Resources	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> GCPL should conduct an HR functional assessment to better understand the key HR functions and workflows and how the Division utilizes ADP. GCPL should evaluate if the use of additional modules could reduce the manual components of current functions. GCPL may want to consider understanding the costs and benefits of using third-party benefits administration for worker’s compensation claims, FMLA leave, and other medical leave administration.  Once GCPL has conducted a functional assessment, it should assess whether to reclassify the open position to better meet the needs of the Division and GCPL.	2	3	2
Process	GCPL - Marketing and Communications	<b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Division should consider expanding the E-Newsletter as to provide more opportunities for branches to highlight their programs, or offering opportunities for more detailed, local newsletters. This added marketing for the branches could allow more people to view the programs at their specific branch and potentially increase attendance at these programs.	2	1	3
Technology	GCPL - Marketing and Communications	<b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Division should consider website functionality testing to better understand the website’s audience and the audience’s user habits. This information should be leveraged in combination for more consistently collected and analyzed website user data to develop a more comprehensive website update and strategic marketing plan.  The development of a website update and marketing plan should be utilized to streamline certain operations, such as templates and programming promotion plans that can be administered by branch staff. Marketing Division staff should be utilized for more strategic and enterprise-wide efforts. Once initial changes are made, the Division should assess its staffing needs to determine if additional interns, part-time or full-time staff would best support the Division’s needs.	3	2	2

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Performance Assessment	GCPL - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> GCPL should consider conducting more periodic community needs assessments. This could allow for the GCPL system to set goals and standards that are more comprehensive to the relevant needs of the communities that the branches and divisions serve. GCPL may need to refine and redefine its mission and how it applies to each division within GCPL to minimize the potential for duplicated or conflicting in-house programs and services.</p> <p>GCPL may also need to develop a more formal process for evaluating proposals for new programs, services, or resources. Where GCPL may be duplicating services, or only serving as a geographic expansion of service delivery, it may need to consider offering space for access to existing partners, or creating a more formal and robust referral process to assist in meeting resident needs.</p>	1	3	1
Culture	GCPL - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The County and GCPL should collaborate to determine if new methods of funding, or developing guaranteed funding minimums should be established. Alternative formulas could include property tax formula calculations, per capita funding formulas, or other methods that can be utilized for long-term cashflow projections.</p> <p>In order to set a more formal funding arrangement, the County and the GCPL Board of Trustees may need to better formalize the arrangement for funding, and what each entity is responsible for. The current lack of formal agreement contributes to some of the confusion around responsibilities of each entity, and leaves staff feeling like they are receiving the worst of each potential option with limited benefits.</p> <p>GCPL should also develop more formal procedures for assessing when statewide contracts or piggybacking procurement opportunities may be available and provide them with cost-savings.</p>	1	3	3
People	GCPL - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> GCPL should assess whether basic foreign language training or key phrases education could assist in improving customer service. Potential solutions could include customized foundational classes or subscriptions to language learning software. GCPL should consider pay stipends to improve recruiting and retention of bilingual staff.</p>	2	3	1

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Culture	GCPL - Department	<b>Recommendation 4:</b> GCPL should consider developing additional training for new board members that provides more context and operational insight about library operations and the role of the Board.	1	2	3
Technology	GCPL - Department	<b>Recommendation 5:</b> GCPL should consider conducting a third-party security assessment or contracting with an organization to provide a fractional Chief Information Security Officer (“CISO”). The Georgia Technology Authority (“GTA”) provides a cost-effective CISO as a service. The service offers certified CISO professionals part-time (one or more days a week, a year at a time). These professionals can assist in planning, setting up policies and procedures, etc., and can be a cost-effective way to solve the talent problem.	3	3	1
Performance Assessment	GCPL - Department	<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Both Gwinnett County and GCPL need to conduct more formal planning and program launch processes, to ensure that program logistics and needs are developed. This program evaluation should include a needs evaluation, and should evaluate the availability and effectiveness of existing resources.  GCPL needs to more specifically define program or project success, and should ensure that baseline data is collected and measured, and more detailed participation data is collected and evaluated, to ensure that program outputs or outcomes are assessed and utilized in determining whether to continue programs and services.	1	2	2

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Performance Assessment	GCPL - Department	<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> GCPL should develop more comprehensive methods for collecting data from the communities it serves. This should include needs assessments, participant feedback, and program impact assessments. The County may want to consider conducting process evaluations, to ensure that the methods and approaches are appropriate for the communities being served.</p> <p>For programs where both GCPL and Gwinnett County, or other community partners, are providing the same or similar services, there should be regular review of these data to determine if there are lessons to be learned, or if it may be more effective to end one program and support the expansion of another program.</p>	1	2	1