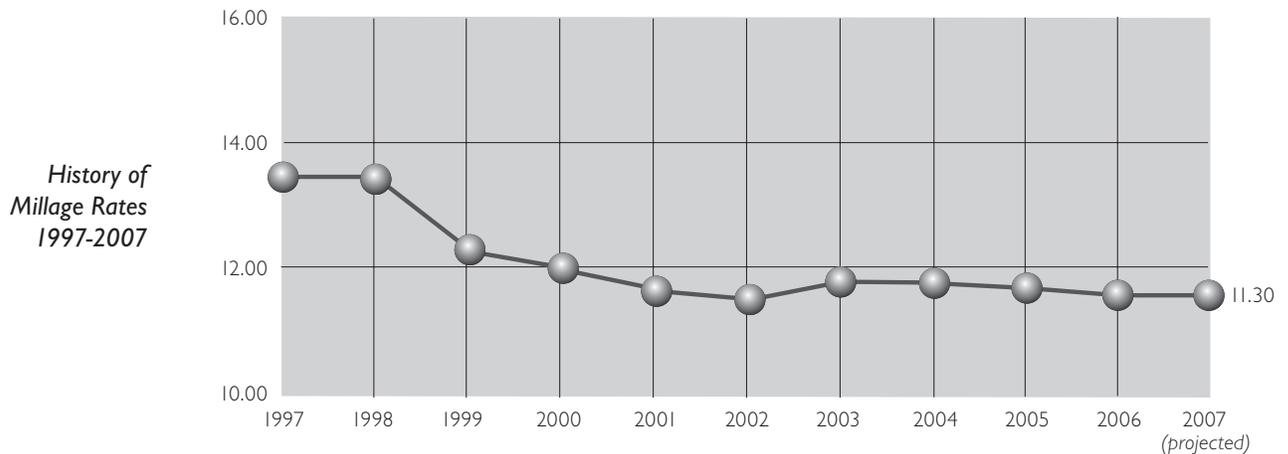


state of the county

Local Economy

By many different measures, Gwinnett is a prosperous and growing county. We continue to attract tens of thousands of new residents each year, drawn by employment, educational and housing opportunities as well as our quality of life.

- Our population now stands at an estimated 751,693 residents, up more than 155,000 since the 2000 Census. (Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Gwinnett County Economic Analysis Division)
- Gwinnett gained more than 11,100 jobs, a growth of 3.7 percent, between 2004 and 2005 contrasted with 2.5 percent statewide, according to the Georgia Department of Labor. Gwinnett had 321,466 jobs in the second quarter of 2006 (latest figure available), an increase of 2.4 percent over the same quarter the previous year
- Unemployment is 3.9 percent compared to 4.7 percent statewide according to the Georgia Department of Labor (October 2006)
- The Tax Digest continues to grow with the real property net tax digest and the personal property net tax digest each expected to grow 6.0 percent in 2007
- Gwinnett County has rolled back the millage rate with the passage of the 1997 and 2001 SPLOST programs a total 2.0 mills. Combined with rollbacks to offset property value updates, the County has reduced the millage rate a total 2.15 mills since 1997 – a 16 percent reduction to the total county millage. This includes a .25 mill addition in 2003 for the voter-approved jail expansion.
- Board of Commissioners adopted a new Economic Development Ordinance establishing the Office of Economic Development and to provide economic inducements for new and/or existing businesses; the new office saw its first success, a commitment by Hewlett-Packard for a \$240-million capital investment.
- Tax Assessor assessed 21,000 new lots and houses/buildings totaling more than \$1 billion in value and updated assessments on 51,000 properties



County Finances

Gwinnett has maintained AAA credit ratings from all three major credit rating agencies since 1997. We issued \$121.4 million in water/sewer refunding revenue bonds in 2006. Our excellent credit results in significant interest savings for our residents. The 2007 budget total is \$1.68 billion, approximately the same as last year.

The **Operating Budget** for 2007 includes:

- 211 new positions (compared to 181 last year)
 - 172 for public safety, courts, and sheriff
 - 18 for water resources (stormwater and water and sewer)
 - 9 for community services
 - 12 for general government functions

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- Implementation of a public safety step compensation system along with cost of living adjustments for all employees and a pay-for-performance increase for all non-sworn staff
- Revitalization reserve: \$200,000
- Operational efficiency studies: \$150,000

The **Capital Improvement** (2007-2012) program includes:

- \$1.3 billion for water, sewer, and stormwater projects
- \$483 million for transportation improvements
- \$178 million for parks, libraries, and social-service delivery centers
- \$164 million for general government, tag offices, and central services facilities
- \$133 million for public safety, courts, and sheriff

The **2005 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax**, or SPLOST, began on April 1, 2005, and is expected to raise about \$550 million over four years for transportation, public safety, parks, and libraries. The County portion is budgeted conservatively at 90 percent of projected revenues, or \$503 million. Gwinnett's 15 municipalities will share about \$89 million from the 2005 SPLOST program.

In this year's 2007 capital budget we have designated projects for libraries, parks and recreation, roads, and public safety, including:

- Construction of West Gwinnett and Peachtree Ridge Parks
- Continuation of existing fire station relocations and the addition of new fire stations
- Begin construction on the Sugarloaf Parkway extension
- Continuation of the existing road program, including ongoing rehabilitation and resurfacing
- Park improvements including renovations to Lucky Shoals and Mountain Park Park, plus funding for park land and open space acquisitions

Revitalization

- **Quality of Life Unit** within the Police Department completed its first full year of focusing on specific neighborhoods with elevated crime statistics; officers primarily enforce existing ordinances related to litter, trash, dumping, junk cars, parking, signs, graffiti, property maintenance, storage, zoning, and occupancy
- The County will centralize all Quality of Life efforts under the Police Department in early 2007; QoL efforts are also being strengthened with the addition of nine more sworn officers
- Officers made 7,499 violation contacts and wrote 3,292 citations
- Board of Commissioners approved new quality of life ordinances that ban urban camping and aggressive solicitation and regulate taxis; the Board also revised several aspects of the property maintenance ordinance, including a requirement for owners of commercial property to name a registered agent
- County gave \$200,000 in grants for quality of life projects to the Community Improvement Districts
- Numerous infrastructure investments are being made in the County's older, more developed areas:
 - **Parks:** Lion's Club Park renovation, new Graves Park, new community center/gymnasium at Lucky Shoals Park, and land acquired for South Gwinnett Park, Club Drive park site, Rockbridge Road passive park site, Highway 29/Lilburn area park site
 - **Transportation:** Satellite Boulevard widening (complete), Graves Road bridge replacement, Rockbridge Road widening
 - **Water and Sewer:** Decommissioned the 30-year old No Business Creek Water Reclamation Facility and transferred the permit capacity to the Yellow River WRF, which is being upgraded to modern standards



Recorder's and Juvenile Courts



Pre-Trial Detention Center

Public Safety and Courts

- Recorder's and Juvenile Courts relocated to a new building in Lawrenceville
- Gwinnett County Drug Court held its first graduation
- Pre-Trial Detention Center expansion opened with 1,440 beds and new laundry, kitchen, and medical facilities

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Fire Station 26

- Gwinnett County hired 133 new police officers and 113 new sheriff's deputies
- Fire and Emergency Services personnel responded to 50,000 calls for service
- New East Police Precinct opened near Dacula and there's a new satellite precinct in Peachtree Corners
- New state-of-the-art Police Training Facility will open in the first half of 2007
- New Animal Welfare Facility is slated to open this summer
- The new Fire Station 26 opened, bringing additional coverage to residents of Sugar Hill, and a relocated and expanded Fire Station 12 opened in Snellville
- Construction began on three new fire stations: replacement facilities in Norcross and Grayson and a new station in the Dacula area



Environmental and Heritage Center

Community Services

- Gwinnett County's 13th and 14th branch libraries opened in Dacula and Grayson
- Nearly 85,000 Meals of Wheels were delivered to seniors' homes and an additional 32,605 meals were served in the County's senior centers
- Volunteers and staff answered 13,144 calls for senior services information and assistance
- The Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center opened; it is the County's first "green" building to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* standards
- Parks and Recreation launched "play-live-learn" online registration for the system's nearly 4,000 classes, camps, and events offered throughout the year
- New or renovated park facilities now open: Graves Park, Yellow River Park, Lenora Park – family aquatics center and youth football field, Bethesda Park – new youth football field and aquatics center, Best Friend Park, Holcomb Bridge Park, George Pierce Park – new community center/senior activity center
- The Board approved the acquisition of about 200 additional acres of parkland
- Groundbreakings were held for three new parks: West Gwinnett Park/Aquatics Center, DeShong Park, and Peachtree Ridge Park



Transportation

- The Board of Commissioners awarded a record \$110 million in construction contracts for 57 projects, compared to \$43 million for 38 projects in 2005 and \$29 million for 42 projects in 2004
- 17 "quick fix" projects were completed to improve traffic flow at various locations, such as the creation of a three-lane section of Hi-Hope Road from SR 316 to Swanson Drive and the installation of new sidewalks for the Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village Community Improvement Districts
- Resurfaced 110 miles of roadway and maintained more than 2,600 miles of roads and 612 traffic signals
- Completed several significant projects: Satellite Boulevard widening from Steve Reynolds Boulevard to Old Norcross Road, Howell Ferry road improvements at the new hospital, and New Hope Road at Bramlett Shoals Road/Grayson-New Hope Road intersection improvement
- Began four major joint county-state projects: reconstruction of the I-85/SR 316 interchange, a tunnel to carry Pleasant Hill Road under Buford Highway and railroad tracks, widening SR 20 from Plantation Boulevard to Ozora Road, and widening SR 120 from Riverside Parkway to Sugarloaf Parkway
- Construction of the Sugarloaf Parkway extension phase one (from SR 20/Grayson Highway to New Hope Road) will get underway by year end – extension will eventually connect Duluth and Dacula
- Completed the Briscoe Field airport master plan and made security improvements
- Gwinnett Transit System's express bus service averaged 1,874 daily boardings and local service averaged 5,100 daily boardings



I-85/316 Construction

Water Resources

- Georgia Environmental Protection Division granted the 40-million-gallon-per-day lake discharge permit for the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Center
- Gwinnett's two water plants produced an average of 88 million gallons of water per day, up by seven mgd over 2005
- Lower Big Haynes pump station project began
- Stormwater utility start-up resulted in improved customer service and management of environmental and water-quality requirements; crews investigated 2,400 stormwater service requests and completed 150 construction projects



Stormwater Drain Cover



2030 Unified Plan

linkup

gwinnettcountry.com



gwinnett county government
access cable channel 23



National Gold Medal Award
for Excellence Finalist



Construction Management
Project Achievement Award

Planning and Development

- Began work on the **Gwinnett County 2030 Unified Plan**, a document that will guide future land use and community development decisions in the County through the next quarter century
- Amendments to the 1985 Zoning Resolution:
 - Hamilton Mill/Highways 124 and 324 became the newest activity center overlay district, which provides standards for enhanced aesthetic design for development projects
 - Created a senior housing district and added a residential dormitory classification
- The planning division processed 183 rezoning cases and 119 applications for special use permits
- The development division issued 6,617 new single-family permits in 2006, about 20 percent fewer than the previous year, and 1,858 commercial, office, and industrial permits, up about 23 percent over 2005

General Government

- Opened a new tag office with drive-through service in Snellville
- Completed first phase of renovation of former big box store for conversion to county offices – Elections and Voter Registration moved in prior to 2006 General Election
- Major space reconfiguration of Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center is ongoing; changes include renovated judge's chambers, expansion of Solicitor's space, relocation of Probate Court vital records, and new Communications offices with a production studio
- Processed 117,000 internal and external service requests through customer relationship management
- Received grant for \$750,000 in start-up funding for wireless broadband service; developed consortium with eight cities, three Community Improvement Districts, Gwinnett Health System, and Georgia Gwinnett College
- Commission meetings air live on TVgwinnett and www.gwinnettcountry.com

National and State Recognition

- Parks and Recreation was one of four finalists for the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association
- Unity Place, the special-needs playground and ball field at Bay Creek Park, won tops honors from the National Organization on Disability and the National Association of Counties
- The Department of Financial Services won several awards from the Government Finance Officers Association:
 - Budget Presentation Award
 - Outstanding Achievement in Popular Financial Reporting
 - Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- The Purchasing Division received the National Purchasing Institute Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing Outstanding Accreditation Achievement Award, as well as re-accreditation from this organization
- Fleet Management received the ASE Blue Seal of Excellence
- Two winners of Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties: GIS Situational Awareness Program and Trench Rescue Program
- Communications Division won seven awards in the National Association of County Information Officers Awards of Excellence competition and one from the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
- *Roads and Bridges Magazine* named the I-85/SR 316 road construction project one of the top 10 North American road projects
- The Shoal Creek Filter Plant and the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Center expansion both won the Construction Management Project Achievement Award from the Construction Management Association of America in the over-\$100 million category
- The Georgia Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., awarded the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center the Excellence in Construction Award for the use of green building technologies
- Honorable mention for the Atlanta Regional Commission's Create Community Awards in the environmental sustainability category went to the Stormwater Division's Surface Cleaning Guidelines program