



# Gwinnett County Government Communications Division NEWS RELEASE

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## **2018 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOCUSES ON SAFETY, QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG OTHER PRIORITIES**

(Lawrenceville, Ga., Nov. 30, 2017) – As required by law, Gwinnett Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash presented the Chairman’s Proposed Budget for 2018 to the District Commissioners on Tuesday. The \$1.67 billion proposed budget is up about seven percent from this year, primarily due to transfers for capital improvements and increased costs for salaries and benefits. The proposed 2018 budget consists of a \$1.28 billion operating budget and \$390.0 million for capital improvements, including SPLOST-funded projects.

Nash pointed out that the budget starts with the base funding required to maintain core county services such as the jail, courts, police and fire protection, roads, transit and water. The base budget along with additions for new or ongoing initiatives reflects priorities set by the Board of Commissioners last spring and focuses funding increases on initiatives in those areas.

“This proposed balanced budget continues Gwinnett’s tradition of conservative budgeting based on multi-year planning,” said Nash. “In addition, the proposed 2018 budget maintains adequate reserves, uses pay-as-you-go financing for capital improvements and also sets aside money for future obligations.”

One priority, “mobility and access,” includes an additional traffic engineer, planning and design for two new Park & Ride Lots on State Route 316, funding to increase maintenance of roadsides, the addition of WiFi on buses, and SPLOST-funded transportation projects. The “livability and comfort” priority funds libraries, parks and senior services, adds staff to manage cultural and natural resources and the new Lilburn Activity Building, and sets aside seed funding to apply toward addressing homelessness. An expansion of the civic center, a small business resource center, and more planning and development staff fall under the “strong vibrant local economy” priority.

“Communication and engagement” includes new public relations positions, an animal welfare program focused on community education, and funds for the Gwinnett Bicentennial celebration. The global water innovation center and pay-for-performance increases to maintain

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a quality workforce fall under the “smart and sustainable government” priority. Funds for additional days of advanced in-person voting have also been included in the proposed budget but will be held in a reserve until the ability to hire sufficient poll workers can be confirmed. Four positions were added to the Elections Office specifically to enable the County to meet expanded federal requirements.

A “safe and healthy community” is supported by 65 more police officers, two new 24/7 ambulance crews, an additional ladder truck crew, construction of a new Bay Creek Police Precinct and alternate E- 911 center, two new positions in the District Attorney’s Office, and a dozen part-time Sheriff’s deputies.

In discussing the increase in staffing for various County functions, Nash noted that Gwinnett’s population has grown by 20 percent since 2008 while County staff has only increased five percent. In many cases, the additional positions represent the restoration of positions cuts that were made during the economic downturn.

The tax digest, the value of all assessed property, is back up to its 2008 level at \$29.4 billion after hitting a low in 2013 and beginning to recover in 2014. This proposed budget was based on maintaining the current 13.51 millage rate. Less than half of the total operating budget is funded with property tax revenue.

Seven resident volunteers served on the budget review committee. They listened to budget requests from department directors and elected officials, studied business plans, budget needs and revenue projections, and made recommendations to Chairman Nash for the 2018 budget. Videos and documents from that process are available online at [www.tvgwinnett.com](http://www.tvgwinnett.com).

Commissioners will take oral or written public comments at a public hearing on Monday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center auditorium, 75 Langley Drive in Lawrenceville, and online through Dec. 31 before adopting a final balanced budget on Tuesday, Jan. 2.

The entire proposed 2018 budget document is available online at [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com) and as a hard copy in the Financial Services office at GJAC, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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