

County Administrator's Report

Fourth Quarter 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I County Administrator’s Welcome Statement	2
Welcome Letter	2
II Strategic Priority Highlights	3
Mobility and Access	3
Livability and Comfort	4
Strong and Vibrant Local Economy	6
Communication and Engagement	7
Smart and Sustainable Government	8
Safe and Healthy Community	10
III Recognizing the Gwinnett Standard	11
Awards and Recognition	11
VI Employee Spotlight	12
Chris Shaw – Community Services	12
V Notable Numbers	13

I | County Administrator's Welcome Statement

The fourth quarter continued to present many of the same challenges as the rest of 2020 as we faced the ongoing reality of a worldwide pandemic. In some ways, those challenges were amplified as case counts grew locally and we worked to complete activities related to CARES Act funding before an anticipated December 30 deadline.

We also experienced a time of transition with multiple retirements, the election of several new constitutional officers, and the swearing in of three new members to the Board of Commissioners. It is in this context that I am proud to present to you the County Administration Update to the Board of Commissioners for the Fourth Quarter of 2020. The highlights included in this update represent a small sample of the activity that occurs within our organization daily.

As before, this report focuses on the Board of Commissioners' Strategic Priorities and the work happening within them. It also highlights external recognition of our team, one special employee whose efforts I think you will agree exemplify the Gwinnett Standard of going above and beyond, and several interesting metrics that help illustrate the complexity and scope of County operations. The goal is to provide you with a similar report each quarter that illustrates both accomplishments and challenges and offers deeper insight into the work by our tremendous team.

Thank you,

Glenn P. Stephens, County Administrator

II | Strategic Priority Highlights

The Board of Commissioners' Strategic Priorities are broad-based statements that define the outcomes we strive for in our community. We see these as the foundational pillars of our decision-making and the keys to a Vibrantly Connected future. Each year, the Board of Commissioners holds a strategic planning session where they define major initiatives within each priority. This report seeks to take that discussion further and show how the priorities are executed across County operations.

Mobility and Access

County residents use a variety of transportation methods, including a vast road network, transit, and trails. With a variety of initiatives, the County seeks to support safe and efficient movement throughout the community regardless of the method or purpose of travel.

The Countywide Trails Master Plan seeks to ensure access to an expansive network of greenways, trails, and parks with outdoor amenities for people wishing to travel on foot, by bike, or even on horseback in some areas. Gwinnett County currently has multiple greenways and trails under construction including the Ivy Creek Greenway Trailhead at George Pierce Park, phase two of the Harris Greenway Trail, and the Tribble Mill Park Chandler Road Entrance and Trailhead. In addition to projects under construction, multiple projects are in various planning phases including phase two of the Singleton Greenway, the Piedmont Pathway, and the Loop Trail study, which is nearing completion and was featured in the December Gwinnett Market Report by the Atlanta Business Chronicle. In addition to the formal planning underway, Community Services, Planning and Development, and Water Resources are coordinating efforts to further the Gwinnett Trails program. The County is also engaged with the Rowen Foundation to increase trail connectivity to this important economic development project and to better understand how trails along sewer easements can be scaled and replicated throughout the county.



For those in our community who use transit, the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges, requiring Gwinnett County Transit to implement mitigation measures such as the suspension of fare box collections. Fortunately, Federal Transit Administration CARES Act funding has allowed the County to sustain operations despite the decrease in fare box revenue. That said, beginning January 4, 2021, Gwinnett County Transit and the Xpress regional commuter transit service began contactless mobile ticketing through a new partnership with the Token Transit App. The app is free and is available in the App and Google Play stores. This safe, secure fare payment option reduces contact between riders, drivers, surfaces, and money.



The County also has several high-profile road projects underway. Challenges encountered during the State Route 8/Winder Highway at Dacula Road/Harbins Road intersection project have impacted the schedule as well as the traveling public. These challenges include utility relocation and coordination; the discovery of 11 underground storage tanks; prolonged right-of-way acquisition; geotechnical issues such as the discovery of soft-sub-grade material on State Route 8; weather issues with grading activities; and a quarry problem that resulted in the installation of unsuitable wall material and a 10-week delay. These issues led to the development of a revised staging plan coordinated with local stakeholders. Dacula Road and Harbins Road were closed for three weeks in December for the road to be tied into the new bridge deck and to prepare for the traffic shift to the new bridge. The shift occurred on December 29. Despite these challenges, project completion is still forecasted for spring 2021.

Improvements such as those planned for State Route 316/University Parkway are long-term efforts that are best executed with input from the community. In December, Gwinnett County and the Georgia Department of Transportation collected public feedback on five proposed projects along the route stretching from the State Route 20/Buford Drive interchange to the U.S. 29/State Route 8/Winder Highway intersection. The projects will help expand the freeway-style access on State Route 316, which will reduce congestion, increase mobility, and reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on this corridor. To cut back on public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide the opportunity for all residents to participate, detailed information about these projects was posted on the GDOT website. The state also mailed postcards to the property owners located in the project footprint, and information was shared on agency websites and social media. The projects will add five miles of freeway-style operation along State Route 316. These changes include intersection upgrades at Cedars Road and Fence Road, plus new interchanges at Hi-Hope Road, Hurricane Trail, and U.S. 29/State Route 8/Winder Highway.

Livability and Comfort

Livability and comfort is all about how we support our community in their pursuit of an excellent quality of life, requiring collaboration, partnerships, and exceptional levels of engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic hindered Community Services' ability to provide services like organized programs and events in 2020. Staff made a concerted effort to modify programming and events to provide safe options; however, patrons have been reluctant to return to organized activities even while the use of recreational amenities such as trails, pickleball courts, dog parks, disc golf, and indoor walking tracks has increased.

As organized programs and events slowed, Community Services shifted resources to support the needs of the community by calling on employees from across the department to assist with food distribution programs. In the fourth quarter, staff delivered nearly 900,000 pounds of food to assist partner organizations and residents. Thousands of residents received assistance through programs like mobile food distributions, pop-up grocery stores, the donation of 243 pounds of fresh winter vegetables from Gwinnett's community gardens, and the distribution of Georgia Grown mixed-produce boxes, which alone helped an estimated 105,300 residents facing food insecurity.



Staff from Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful and Gwinnett Solid Waste Management, with the assistance of volunteers, conducted the annual America Recycles Day on November 14, 2020. Following public health guidelines, Gwinnett County set up drive-thru stations to safely remove materials from nearly 1,700 vehicles of participating residents. More than 4,700 gallons of latex paint and 28 tons of electronics were recycled, and a total of 28 tons of paper was also securely shredded onsite.

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners in December accepted grant funding from The Recycling Partnership for recycling education and outreach initiatives aimed at reducing contamination in residential recycling. The grant will match the County's contribution to the recycling initiative up to \$100,000. In January, Gwinnett County Solid Waste Management and Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful will begin collaborating and planning initiatives with The Recycling Partnership, a national nonprofit organization that engages the recycling supply chain of corporations that manufacture products and packaging, local governments charged with recycling, and industry end-markets, haulers, material-recovery facilities, and converters.

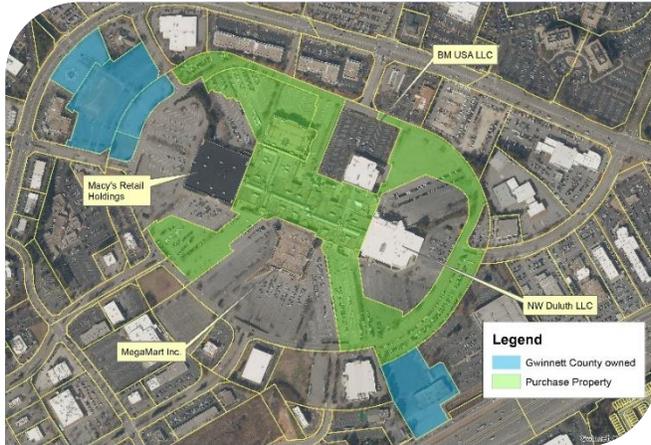


Officials cut the ribbon on an expansion of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center on December 15. The \$75 million expansion project, funded by the voter-approved SPLOST, includes a five-level parking deck that opened in 2019 and a five-story courthouse building set to open to the public this spring. A covered walkway from the parking deck, a security node at the entrance to the Charlotte J. Nash Court Building and an enclosed pedestrian bridge to the existing GJAC building opened to guests and employees December 21. The courthouse addition provides space for a jury assembly room as well as eight

courtrooms, holding cells, workspace for the District Attorney, mediation rooms, and space for up to six additional courtrooms.

Strong and Vibrant Local Economy

Gwinnett County is focused on growing and maintaining a strong and vibrantly connected economy by partnering with all residents to foster, expand, and support businesses, development, and redevelopment to achieve a thriving community. Several notable projects are underway.



In December, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners approved the Urban Redevelopment Agency of Gwinnett County's purchase of 39 acres of the Gwinnett Place Mall site. The purchase is part of a strategic effort to create new opportunities for development in the area in partnership with the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District and local property owners. In the coming months, the County will begin a comprehensive planning process to explore ways to redevelop the site, actively engaging Planning and

Development, the Gwinnett Place CID, and residents to set a new vision for the property.

The Board of Commissioners also in December authorized staff to open negotiations with Fuqua Acquisition II LLC for the redevelopment of the former Olympic Tennis Center site in Stone Mountain, one of the major southern gateways to Gwinnett County. Fuqua's previous engagements include partnerships in the development of Peachtree Corners Town Center, The Battery Atlanta at Truist Park, and The Exchange @ Gwinnett currently underway near the Mall of Georgia. The Olympic Tennis Center site includes 26 acres of unused land located off U.S. Highway 78 connected at West Park Place Boulevard near the DeKalb County line. Gwinnett County acquired the property in 2016 in a land-swap with the Stone Mountain Memorial Association Board of Directors, trading a 35-acre tract of land bordering the existing golf course at Stone Mountain Park. Designated for redevelopment since its acquisition, the County expects the developer's offer to stimulate growth and support revitalization in the area. Fuqua's vision for the site includes multi-family housing with a grocery store, retail stores, and restaurants with estimated completion by the end of 2022.



Water Resources' new Eastern Regional Infrastructure project will provide water and sewer infrastructure to support the Apalachee Basin located along the eastern border of Gwinnett County. The project includes 6 miles of new gravity sewer, 7 miles of parallel force mains, a regional pump station, 5 miles of water lines, and a trail system. The area to be served by this new infrastructure encompasses approximately 13,000 acres, 2,000 of which will be the future Rowen development. The project will accept proposals for design/build in February 2021 with construction expected to be completed in 2023.

While few may realize it, Gwinnett County's airport, Briscoe Field, sees nearly 130,000 operations annually, making it the third busiest airport in the state behind Hartsfield-Jackson International and Peachtree DeKalb. Briscoe Field is managed by the County and occupied by a variety of aviation-related tenants with long-term leases ranging from Fixed Base Operators that provide aviation services such as fueling and maintenance to hangar facilities for aircraft storage. A number of the leases along the north side of the airport near State Route 316 are set to end over the next several years. This, coupled with trends toward more corporate jet traffic and the recognition of the airport as a unique economic development asset, led the County to study the potential for redevelopment of the property to better suit current aviation needs and maximize the economic impact to our community. The results of this study prompted the County to issue a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of available properties on the airport's north side. The target completion for this solicitation is mid-summer 2021.



Communication and Engagement

Our purpose, first and foremost, is to serve our diverse community. To do so effectively, we must listen, engage, and communicate. As an organization, we recognize that we must partner with our community, listen to residents' stories, and tell ours.

On December 17, 2020, officers from the Police Community Affairs Section partnered with the Gwinnett Fraternal Order of Police to host their annual Cops and Kids Christmas, held at Walmart in Buford. Following public health guidelines, officers escorted children as they received toys and other gifts. More than 116 children from 62 families participated in the event, which also provided them with food for Christmas Day, including turkeys. This holiday tradition was a positive and memorable experience for the officers and children alike.

Fire and Emergency Services continues to engage residents and promote safety. Community Risk Reduction Division educators completed 73 home surveys in the fourth quarter, shy of their benchmark goal of 50 per month due to limited access to homes during the pandemic. The survey is available to anyone and can be requested through the County website. Police and Fire and Emergency Services supported the County's branding efforts by coordinating with Fleet Services,



Financial Services, and Communications to update branding on vehicles. In the fourth quarter, Police removed old police markings from 448 patrol vehicles and re-striped each one with the

new design. The department managed costs by only re-stripping patrol vehicles with significant service life remaining. Fire and Emergency Services deployed Truck 11 in Norcross, Engine 10 in Lawrenceville, Engine 14 in Buford, and four medic units with County branding.

In October, Water Resources hosted the Sewer and Science Spectacular, an online experience exploring the County's award-winning wastewater treatment facilities. The online program featured virtual tours of the Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility, activities and crafts for kids, and virtual panel discussions. Two panels featured water experts discussing topics in STEM education and career pathways tailored for teachers and students, while a third, designed for adults, covered more in-depth topics on the wastewater treatment process.



Shaunieka Taylor was appointed director of Community Outreach in October. The County's community outreach program fosters communication and engagement with diverse constituencies, coordinates cultural events, and provides civic education and youth leadership development. The Board of Commissioners established the Community Outreach Program in 2015 to engage and empower residents to become more informed and involved in their County government.

The County continued to share important messages through its social media channels in 2020. The number of @GwinnettGov's Twitter followers more than doubled and Facebook followers more than quadrupled since 2019. In 2020, each post on the County's Facebook page reached an average of 2,944 people (excluding promoted posts), with our most viewed post reaching more than 46,800. @GwinnettGov's tweets received an average of 3,175 impressions per day. All County-owned pages grew in followers and engagement. This form of communication was especially critical in providing opportunities to reach residents in their own homes during the pandemic. Along with County news and alerts, the pages shared news from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Georgia Department of Public Health, and other trusted and critical sources of COVID-19 information to keep residents informed as events unfolded.

Smart and Sustainable Government

Maintaining a smart and sustainable government requires sound reasoning and a dedicated focus on long-term decision-making. It also requires a customer-focused mindset toward innovation, along with a willingness and desire to improve. This section highlights efforts related to the people, processes, and systems that allow Gwinnett County to maintain the high standard we've set as a smart and sustainable government.

Planning and Development worked with Information Technology Services to deploy new online services for Alcohol and Occupation Tax Certificate applications in the fourth quarter. This new service provides greater convenience for businesses, enabling the electronic submittal of initial

alcohol license and occupation tax certificate applications as well as submittal of renewals that was already available online.

In mid-December, the County issued a Request for Proposals for a new Enterprise Resource Planning system. The current ERP—SAP Enterprise Central Component—was originally installed in 2005. Despite regular updates over the years, it is antiquated by today’s standards. In fact,



SAP has announced they will no longer support our current system as their focus shifts to a new platform over the next decade. Considering this news, the County engaged Plante Moran to conduct a wide-ranging study of our current ERP landscape and provide recommendations for our future direction that will modernize our systems and provide greater capacity and flexibility to meet our community’s needs. As a result of this analysis, the County has decided to pursue a new cloud-based ERP platform focusing first on core human resource and

financial systems followed by the integration of best-of-breed ancillary systems like water utility billing. The RFP issued in December, the first of several, will focus exclusively on the selection of the County’s future core system for human resources and financial management.

While every department faced the challenge of keeping our employees healthy and maintaining continuity, ITS had the added challenge of rapidly deploying technology to the County’s workforce to improve remote work capabilities and enhance security. This effort peaked in the fourth quarter as ITS upgraded network capabilities, deployed more than 2,800 laptops, and updated 85 conference rooms with new videoconferencing equipment prior to the December 30 deadline for using federal CARES Act funding. While this fell just short of their original goal, ITS received a welcome reprieve when Congress extended the deadline for spending CARES Act funding three days before the end of the year. They will continue to deploy equipment and anticipate all CARES Act-related ITS projects will be completed in the first quarter of 2021.

The County is experiencing ongoing financial impacts from the pandemic. While property tax revenue has remained strong aside from a delay in billing, other revenues have been negatively affected. Largely, revenues that experienced the greatest impact are those with changes in activity due to pandemic-related restrictions or changes in behavior. For example, less activity in the courts has reduced fines and forfeitures revenue, cancellations of classes and programs have shrunk Community Services charges for services, and lower occupancy rates and lower daily room rates have lowered hotel/motel tax revenues. Another example is Fire and Emergency Services, where fewer transports have led to declining EMS revenues. EMS revenue was up in fourth quarter 2020 by 1.5 percent compared to third quarter 2020 but was still down compared to fourth quarter 2019.

The Police Backgrounds and Recruiting Unit completed an historic year with the hiring of 156 police officers during 2020, marking the largest number of police officers hired by the agency within a single year. Recruits from the 108th Gwinnett County Police Academy will graduate in January 2021, and the 17 new graduates will join the Uniform Division for the field training program. The 109th Police Academy, currently in session, will graduate in March 2021.



Safe and Healthy Community

Safety and health are essential components of a thriving community that require both proactive and reactive efforts. The County is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment through ongoing engagement and collaboration along with enforcement and response.

Fire and Emergency Services' Prevention and Enforcement Section in the Community Risk Reduction Division completed initial inspections of public schools by October 2020 as planned. Prevention and Enforcement initiates inspections at the outset of each school year. These inspections are especially significant because large numbers of people occupy school buildings – including students, staff, educators, administrators, and others – for eight to 10 hours a day for at least 180 days out of the year. Although things looked a bit different for the 2020-2021 school year, ensuring proper life-safety considerations in our public schools impacts most of Gwinnett's population, directly or indirectly. The department will conduct follow-up inspections for problems that were identified during the initial inspections.

Due to high emergency department volume at hospitals, Fire and Emergency Services has experienced increased wait times of up to several hours between arriving at the hospital and returning to service as the crews wait to transfer patients to hospital staff. The department and the hospitals communicate constantly to determine how to resolve this issue both in the short and long term.



However, long wait times at the hospital affect the availability of units to respond to calls. Despite these challenges, the department has been able to maintain its high service level throughout the pandemic. Furthermore, there have been no station closures even with multiple employees out on some type of leave related to COVID-19 at various times.



The Police Criminal Investigations Division has expanded its forensic capabilities for shell casings recovered from crime scenes. Every bullet fired from a handgun leaves a unique and distinguishing mark on the casing. This evidence is placed into our Vigilant Ballistic Search database. Other law enforcement agencies in Gwinnett County may have their shell casings entered into the database by our technicians. Detectives using this technology have successfully

linked shell casings and handguns to multiple crime scenes, leading to the arrest of several suspects in cases that might not have been solved otherwise.

The Sunny Hill Booster Station was completed in late 2020. This project provides a redundant water feed to the northern third of Gwinnett County. Previously, this area could only be served by one of Gwinnett's two water treatment plants. With the completion of this project, this area can now be served by both treatment plants, which will allow for flexibility in daily and emergency operations. The new booster station will also help ensure effective operation and water service during the construction of future large transmission projects in the northern area of the county.



III | Recognizing the Gwinnett Standard

The Gwinnett Standard is the expectation of excellence in service, stewardship, and integrity. In simple terms, it means that we strive to be the best in all we do. At times, the standard of excellence that we pursue is recognized outside of our organization.



Water Resources received the Uptime Award for Best Asset Condition Management Program this year. The Uptime Awards, sponsored by Uptime Magazine and Reliabilityweb.com, recognize the best maintenance, reliability, and asset management programs from around the world. Each year, public and private companies are invited by these organizations to nominate programs in a competitive process to be selected as the best in eight program categories.

Water Resources also received an American Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence award for the Beaver Ruin Wastewater Pump Station Digital Twin Pilot project. Gwinnett County and KCI Technologies together piloted cutting-edge technology at the Beaver Ruin wastewater pumping station. The pilot demonstrated numerous capabilities and benefits of the technology and serves as a roadmap for applying and scaling similar virtual asset management initiatives to other public utility facilities and industrial and operational plants in a range of markets.



During the fourth quarter, Gwinnett County Police attained accreditation for the ninth consecutive time from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. Accredited since 1993, the agency demonstrated compliance with more than 400 standards established by CALEA to promote fair and professional law enforcement services in the areas of policy, procedures, management, and operations. CALEA now conducts accreditation reviews once every four years.

The Countywide Trails Master Plan was one of 12 projects recognized with a Coalition for Recreational Trails 2020 Tom Petri Recreational Trails Program Achievement Award. This prestigious national award, named for former U.S. Rep. Tom Petri of Wisconsin, recognizes the outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program funds administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. The awards ceremony usually takes place on Capitol Hill but was held virtually this year.



IV | Employee Spotlight



In the middle of a frost-covered grass lot on January 9, 2020, Gwinnett Parks and Recreation's Support Services Manager **Chris Shaw** and his Skilled Trades team were moving corrugated plastic sheeting across the grounds at Rhodes Jordan Park, mapping out Gwinnett's first community garden, unaware of the challenges the coming year would bring to our community and the world at large. The work he and his team accomplished there served as a template for eight more community gardens, each requiring coordination with fencing, water, ground surfacing, and concrete contractors as well as multiple rounds of bids for lumber, equipment, and storage sheds. As a result, 110 households now can grow their own food, and six additional gardens that will serve another 260 households are planned for 2021.

Chris is considered by his colleagues to be a natural leader with a can-do attitude who embodies the Gwinnett Standard. He has an impressive knowledge of his staff, their backgrounds, and passions, and he motivates and mentors them. He communicates with stakeholders and is responsible for millions of dollars in operating, capital, and grant funds. In 2020, he and his staff processed 25,000 work orders for County parks. His problem-solving skills helped his staff transport 1.8 million pounds of food and supplies in response to food insecurity in our community made worse by the pandemic.

Chris helped guide the design, implementation, and best practices for each community garden site. Personal touches were added to each property, such as painting a shed at Lenora Park to replicate the iconic red barn. He worked hand-in-hand with residents in the sweltering summer heat to erect a high-tunnel greenhouse and teamed with others on plot design improvements.

As a dedicated Gwinnett employee of more than 25 years, Chris never hesitates to step in to help where needed and this year worked closely with Voter Registrations and Elections staff to set up the Gwinnett Fairgrounds as an advance-in-person voting location. He conducted countless site visits and issued team directives to ensure the placement of proper directional signage, cones, barricades, parking layout, lighting, and sanitation. Consequently, more than 60,000 voters were afforded the opportunity of a safe and socially distant voting experience.

During election season, Chris oversaw 156 electrical audits at poll sites and the delivery of voting equipment to polling locations along with personal protective supplies. He also assisted Support Services with renovation of the main warehouse and newly leased warehouse space, which involved grinding all bolts in the warehouse floor, building and installing temporary walls for HVAC contractors, and working with multiple vendors to meet tight timelines. A diligent planner, Chris ensured readily available backup power supplies for facilities, dispatched heaters, coordinated contract COVID-19 cleaning vendors, installed 23 ballot boxes, and served on the team responsible for picking up ballots from those boxes nightly.

While we consider Chris Shaw a Rock Star every day, his steady leadership stood out in 2020.

V | Notable Numbers

- Human Resources processed **628** new hire, rehire, promotion, demotion, and transfer actions in fourth quarter. Of those, **58** actions were effective January 1 through January 4 to accommodate transitions in elected offices
- **2,100** people, including **104** employees, volunteered for the 2020 election cycle, not including the January 2021 runoff
- Planning and Development issued **7 percent** more building permits in 2020 than in 2019. Due to COVID-19's effect on the market, commercial building permits decreased by **27 percent**, while residential building permits increased by **19 percent** in 2020
- Residential lots approved through rezoning in 2020 increased by **192 percent** over 2019, while multifamily units approved increased by **79 percent**
- Animal Welfare and Enforcement received **926** animal intakes, processed **974** adoptions, transferred **189** pets to rescues, and returned **359** pets to their owners in the fourth quarter
- Health and Human Services served **27,045** home-delivered meals, **10,071** congregate meals, and **4,455** shelf-stable meals in October and November
- Only about **4 percent** of **18,000+** law enforcement agencies nationwide can claim the recognition of being a CALEA-accredited law enforcement agency
- Fourth quarter 2020 call volume for Fire and Emergency Services increased by **7.9 percent** over the same period in 2019 even though annual call volume for 2020 was flat compared to the prior year
- Information Technology Services worked with Water Resources to migrate **7,000+** accounts into the DWR water billing system following the County's acquisition of the city of Lawrenceville's water system
- Community Services enrolled more than **1,354** acres of park land in conservation easement status
- Through the end of 2020, the County paid approximately **\$18.2** million in hazard pay to support employees working in the field during the pandemic
- On October 1, Gwinnett County had about **28,000** cumulative confirmed positive COVID-19 cases. That number grew to about **52,000** by the end of the year
- **90 percent** of the total construction waste for the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center Courthouse Expansion Project was recycled, including **13,441** tons of recycled aggregate from the old parking deck