SUWANEE 20/20 VISION

Planning is a way to guide investment, development, and allocation of services in a community. Suwanee has a legacy of effective planning. This vision plan looks beyond physical planning and discusses **WHAT MAKES SUWANEE, WELL, SUWANEE**. It's about **WHO WE ARE** and **WHAT BINDS US TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY**.

The 20/20 Vision engaged more citizens more intensively than ever before and in unique ways not previously undertaken. The plan is a **CONSENSUAL AND ACCURATE ROAD MAP** to the kind of Suwanee our community desires in 2020 and beyond – the "marching orders" to implement that vision in ways that are **BIG, BOLD, AND GAME-CHANGING**.

20/20 VISION PLAN

SEE HOW WE DID IT & WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO

OUR PROCESS

[WE LISTENED TO MANY VOICES]

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS X 20 CONVERSATIONS | OPEN HOUSE X 1 MONTH | FOCUS GROUPS X 7 SESSIONS | ROUND TABLES 25 X 4 DISCUSSIONS | PICNIC + PLAN REVIEW X 1 CELEBRATION

THIS PLAN WEAVES MANY VOICES INTO ONE VISION

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Creating a resident-driven vision for the future required tapping into the many voices of the community, engaging them in dialogue with one another and with the City, and weaving the many ideas and viewpoints that resulted from those conversations into one common vision. Fulfilling the goal of creating a transparent and inclusive process meant creating multiple venues and opportunities to get involved.

> A **STEERING COMMITTEE** to oversee the process and guide development of the plan.

> 20 **INTERVIEWS** with an array of Suwanee stakeholders to learn about the City from a range of viewpoints.

> An **OPEN HOUSE** that temporarily transformed a vacant storefront in Town Center to allow people to drop in over a five-week period to learn about the vision plan process and offer feedback.

> A **SUWANEE2020.COM WEBSITE** to provide a forum for people to engage with the planning process from the comfort of their own home.

> A series of **ROUNDTABLES** consisted of small-group, in-depth, facilitated conversations that allowed community members to discuss important topics and work together to create a vision for the Suwanee of 2020. A total of 25 roundtable groups, with just under 300 participants in all, were convened four times between September 2011 and January 2012.

> Seven **FOCUS GROUPS** to discuss, in detail, a few topics often raised. The focus groups represented: seniors, small businesses, Asian community, youth (middle and high school), arts and culture advocates, and young professionals.

> A southern **POTLUCK PICNIC** at the Everett Music Barn, with BBQ and a bluegrass band, to provide a forum of public review for the draft 20/20 Vision.

THE OPEN HOUSE INSTALLATION TOOK OVER A TOWN CENTER STOREFRONT

WE ASKED COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO SHARE THEIR **BIG IDEA** FOR HOW TO MAKE SUWANEE BETTER

...MORE THAN 435 COMMUNITY MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN THE TOWN CENTER OPEN HOUSE

ALMOST 300 CITIZENS PARTICIPATED IN ROUNDTABLES TO PRODUCE THE VISION AND GOALS OF THE PLAN

A STEERING COMMITTEE GUIDED THE PROCESS

A POTLUCK PICNIC PROVIDED THE FORUM FOR A PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT PLAN

THE 20/20 VISION

Suwanee of 2020 is....

WELCOMING: A place that everyone of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds can call home.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED: A unique combination of safe, friendly neighborhoods with excellent open spaces and environmental preservation, award-winning schools, and City amenities.

VIBRANT: A center for arts, education, culture, and events with strong commerce and employment.

BALANCED: A well-rounded community where development is a complementary mix of housing, businesses, parks, and recreation facilities that are designed to harmonize people and nature, old and new.

CONNECTED: A community where people come together across generations and cultures and are connected to the places where they live, work, and play.

FORWARD-THINKING: Proactive and accessible leadership that has cultivated a strong reputation for doing things differently and created a distinctive, easily recognizable brand and image.

ENGAGED: A place where all citizens have a voice and are active partners in guiding the future of the City.

TAKE A PEEK AT THE PLAN

SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN DRIVING PRINCIPLES & GOALS

"The vision is not just what to do to make it better, but what we need to do to preserve what is good..."

"Besides being hip, cool, and tolerant, Suwanee is open to almost any idea you bring to the table."

"Most people are like us, they want to be more involved...It's nice to have a City that really cares about the people and their input."

"Suwanee can be a little bit of whatever you want it to be."

The values of the vision form the underlying spirit of the plan. The goals and aspirations of this plan will guide City policy and community actions. They provide a consensual road map for achieving the Suwanee 20/20 Vision. The full plan, available at www.suwanee.com, includes a list of potential strategies for each goal.

The goals and strategies are organized into

SEVEN DRIVING PRINCIPLES:

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT
HOW WE CONNECT

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE ENGAGED

Suwanee's approach to communication is one that values the opinions of citizens, whatever they may be, and encourages citizens to be involved in a very hands-on way. There's an active spirit of engagement and back and forth dialogue and a strong sense that Suwanee is listening. It's **"still small enough I can pick up the phone and call a city councilmember."** The City understands that to move forward in implementing this plan and others, to support what's working and improve what's not, transparency and a clear mandate from the community are crucial.

GOAL 1: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE
GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT
GOAL 3: PROMOTE THE SUWANEE BRAND
GOAL 4: EMBRACE NEW ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES & AUDIENCES
GOAL 5: SHARE INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY & REGULARLY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HOW WE PROSPER

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE VIBRANT

The public input process determined that economic development is the chief area with which the City should concern itself. Groups discussed the need for attracting diverse and high-quality commercial development, strengthening local small businesses, and most importantly, recruiting job-creating businesses. **"Encourage job growth in general so we are not a bedroom community."** For small business owners, Suwanee is a natural choice: it has great access and quality of life. The ultimate crossroads that Suwanee faces was posed in one of the roundtables: **"What makes some communities remain vibrant and sustainable while others dissolve?"**

GOAL 1: FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE AS THE CORE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
GOAL 2: COMPETE FOR THE FUTURE
GOAL 3: BECOME A JOBS CENTER
GOAL 4: RECRUIT AND DEVELOP A DIVERSE, HIGH-QUALITY COMMERCIAL BASE
GOAL 5: ATTRACT AND RETAIN KNOWLEDGE WORKERS
GOAL 6: HELP SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE

PUBLIC SAFETY
WHAT PROVIDES US COMFORT

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE SAFE

Suwanee has a reputation as being one of the safest, if not *the* safest community, in the region. Overall, the police force gets high marks from residents and business owners for being responsive, and citizens fully appreciate the high visibility approach the City has taken. Residents also appreciate **"how the police department interacts with the community is significantly different [compared to other places]."** Residents value friendly and engaging police officers with community ties.

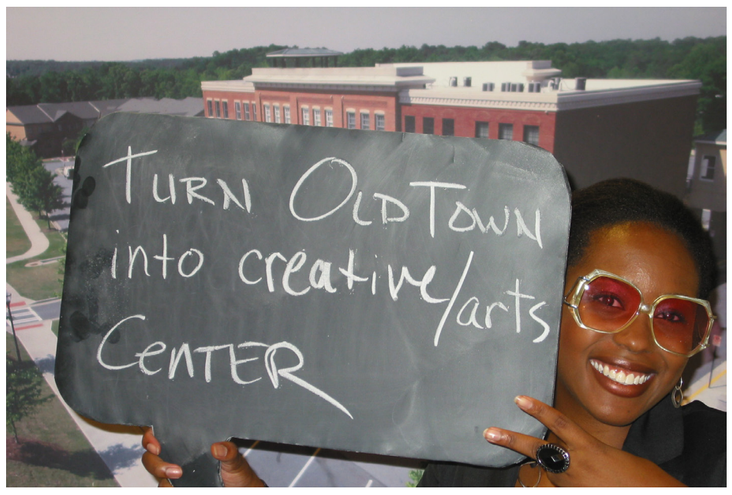
GOAL 1: PARTNER WITH THE COMMUNITY
GOAL 2: EDUCATE & ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY
GOAL 3: USE TARGETED POLICE VISIBILITY EFFORTS
GOAL 4: EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

PLANNING
HOW WE GROW

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE PROACTIVE

Suburban communities often grow quickly, which can result in a "cookie cutter" development approach that undermines the ability to establish a unique identity. Suwanee has bucked this trend. Throughout the process, residents made it clear that they approved of the City's proactive and open approach even if they did not always agree with specific decisions. Suwanee stands out; it has an identity that is decidedly not your typical suburb: **"We have a sense of place...this is not just a collection of strip malls."** To keep its edge, Suwanee must continue to be progressive, innovative, and proactive in its planning.

GOAL 1: TRANSFORM SUWANEE GATEWAY
GOAL 2: INVEST IN DOWNTOWN SUWANEE'S FUTURE
GOAL 3: BALANCE GROWTH
GOAL 4: ENSURE LIFETIME HOUSING
GOAL 5: GROW GREENER & CONSERVE RESOURCES



COMMUNITY CULTURE
WHAT MAKES US INTERESTING

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE UNIQUE

Suwanee believes it can and should be a model community. A key factor in taking Suwanee to that next level, in achieving that kind of quality of life, is a commitment to the arts. Public art not only enhances and defines public spaces, but also creates a broader sense of identity, initiates conversations, and is accessible to everyone. Participants were supportive of the City's approach to arts and very enthusiastic about the many events on tap: **"there's not a weekend that goes by where there's not something going on in this park."**

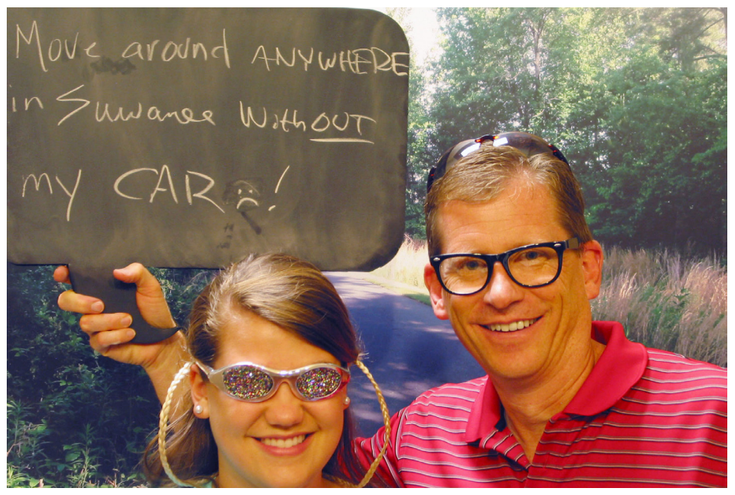
GOAL 1: OFFER A WIDE & DIVERSE ARRAY OF LOCAL EVENTS
GOAL 2: CAPITALIZE ON THE CITY'S RICH CULTURAL ASSETS
GOAL 3: MAKE PUBLIC ART THE CITY'S ARTS NICHE
GOAL 4: FOSTER LOCAL ARTS PROGRAMS & VENUES

PARKS+OPEN SPACE
HOW WE PLAY

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE FUN

"There was nothing to do here before Town Center Park. It is Suwanee's front porch." Not only do residents love Suwanee's parks, they have numerous ideas for what to do with them and how to make them better. The City's extraordinary green space network defines Suwanee as much as its development does. Aside from being a huge part of why Suwanee's residents enjoy such a high quality of life, it also is an example of the City's commitment to environmental preservation and demonstrates its philosophy of responsible development.

GOAL 1: VALUE PASSIVE RECREATION
GOAL 2: PRIORITIZE EXISTING PARKS
GOAL 3: ENSURE THE PARKS & TRAILS ARE SAFE
GOAL 4: EXPAND THE PARK CONNECTIONS & TRAIL NETWORK
GOAL 5: CONTINUE TO PROGRAM TOWN CENTER PARK AS SUWANEE'S FRONT PORCH



TRANSPORTATION
HOW WE MOVE

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUWANEE: BE CONNECTED

The most commonly cited transportation issue is **"TRAFFIC!!!"** During roundtable discussions about transportation, dealing with traffic and implementing the sidewalk plan were paramount. Reducing the need for car travel means making it safer and more convenient to use other forms of mobility. Currently many of Suwanee's major roads divide rather than connect areas and are dangerous for pedestrians to cross.

GOAL 1: IMPROVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT
GOAL 2: MAKE LOCAL CONNECTIONS
GOAL 3: FOCUS ON DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET AROUND
GOAL 4: DESIGN ATTRACTIVE ROADWAYS

WHAT'S NEXT?

"When people are passionate, they make others passionate and want to come and help. There are a lot of passionate people in this community."

Now it's time to build on the momentum generated from coming together as a community and get started on implementing ideas. Some 33 goals and over 125 potential strategies were identified by a wide range of residents and stakeholders who all care about Suwanee. **This strategic plan is intended as a guide for the City – both for policy but also for allocating funds.**

The City will create a methodology for making decisions that takes into account the following questions:

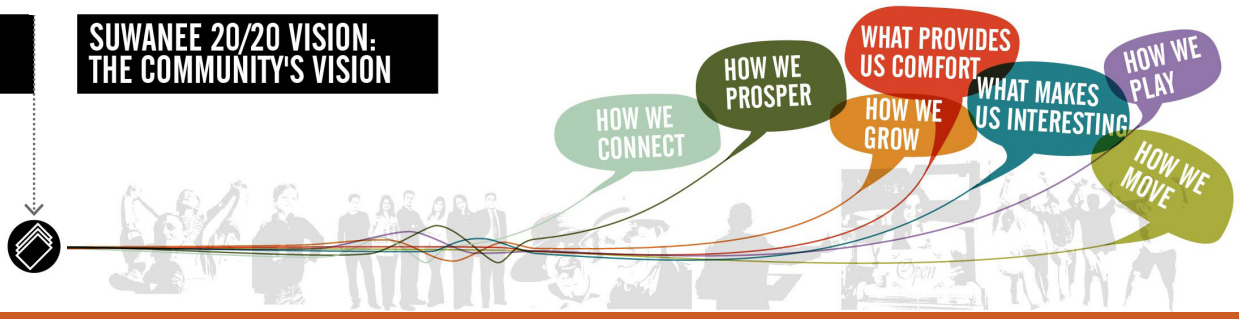
- Has this idea been **EVALUATED**?
- Who should **LEAD**?
- What is the potential **IMPACT**?
- What is the estimated **COST** to implement?
- How much **STAFF TIME** will this take to organize and implement?
- When could it **HAPPEN**?

This plan also is a means by which to further organize committed residents and other partners around the goals and ideas that they care most about with the intent of taking action. It won't be up to the City solely to implement strategies. There are things that can and should happen right away and we need **YOU** to get it started.

GET INVOLVED!

THIS PLAN WEAVES MANY VOICES INTO ONE VISION

SUWANEE 20/20 VISION: THE COMMUNITY'S VISION



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The City of Suwanee is committed to ensuring that Suwanee stands out as a distinctive and desirable place to live. We need everyone on our team. We know the citizens of Suwanee are exceptionally active participants in civic life and take pride in their strong sense of community and involvement. Hundreds of citizens participated in the roundtable discussions, open house, focus groups, and other planning activities. This active citizenry is one of Suwanee's greatest assets and will help to ensure the goals of the 20/20 Vision are achieved.

Here are some things you can do:

PARENTS

Show your kids what being an engaged citizen means and teach them how important community engagement is to keeping Suwanee great and making it even better. Take them with you to community meetings and events, participate in community volunteer opportunities together, talk to them about local news and events, and show them how they can keep up with what's going on in the City.

YOUTH

You are a part of this plan and your opinions matter. Take advantage of all Suwanee has to offer and speak up about new ways you would like to be active in your community - both in school and out. You can help make the Suwanee of the future happen by championing the ideas that interest you most and talking to your friends, parents, teachers, and community leaders about what you can do.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

You are the new generation of community leaders, and therefore central to Suwanee's future. Get involved so you are an active part of shaping that future. Bring your specialized skill set to bear in Suwanee by offering pro bono services for the issues that are important to you. Be an advocate by letting your peers know why Suwanee is the place to be.

SENIORS

You have valuable life experiences, as well as education and expertise, that Suwanee can benefit from. You may be at a point in your life when you have time to do the things you enjoy and are passionate about. Share your knowledge and talents by volunteering your time.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Discuss the plan with your constituents to identify the issues that most impact and interest you. Use your connections to reach out to the City and other potential partners to organize around these issues and formulate implementation steps.

BUSINESS OWNERS

Businesses are a crucial part of Suwanee's economy...and community. Partner with the City and local business associations to help strengthen your business and grow local jobs. A strong partnership will help you access available resources and help develop new ones to strengthen Suwanee's economy.

EVERYONE

Spread the word about the plan. Stay up-to-date with what the City is doing to implement the plan using the broad range of communication tools available. Become a passionate leader for the issues that matter most to you. Celebrate the accomplishments we make and take positive, proactive steps to overcome obstacles we'll face. Get to know your neighbors, support your local businesses, and be a champion of Suwanee. Help us maintain and promote the high quality of life we all expect and take it even further with the bold vision for the future that is **SUWANEE 20/20**.

TO GET A COPY OF THE FULL PLAN AND GET STARTED

VISIT: WWW.SUWANEE.COM
OR GIVE US A CALL: 770.945.8996