



Annual REPORT 2015

City of
Suwanee
georgia



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Isn't it interesting how things work? Processes, logistics, procedures – there's even an entire television show dedicated to how things work.

Most people don't put a lot of thought into how their local government works. We know the basics from the required high school government class, but isn't it curious that the same people who pave the roads also smooth out bumps in the budget? People in charge of keeping the grass growing in the parks also plan the festivals on top of that grass? And someone (actually, a lot of someones) sat down and created a master plan for the entire city?

As you might imagine, running a city is complicated, and requires multiple experts and processes to set a course for the future. Though created nearly four years ago, Suwanee's strategic plan is the guiding force behind the 2015 Annual Report. The same seven principles inspired the organization of the Annual Report, further answering the question, "How do we do it?"



THE
CONNECTION
HOW WE

“The National Citizen Survey remains an important tool for us to gauge citizen satisfaction. We always learn a little something about ourselves as a community through the survey, and it’s gratifying that this year’s results indicate that the City of Suwanee continues to be headed in the right direction.”

JIMMY BURNETTE
Mayor
City of Suwanee

The City continues to successfully use multiple social media platforms to create a space for discussions and citizen engagement, as well as for information distribution

Facebook fans **11,600+** 25 percent increase from 2014
Twitter followers **5,800+** 37 percent increase from 2014



At the end of 2014, the City of Suwanee participated in its fourth National Citizen Survey, a tool from the National Research Center that gathers resident opinions across a range of community issues. As in previous years, Suwanee residents’ ratings put the City of Suwanee at or near the top in a variety of areas as compared to other communities across the country.

In fact, residents rated Suwanee higher than other participating communities across the nation in eight categories and in the top 10 in another 26 categories. Across 127 categories, Suwanee scored in the top 10 in 27 percent.

The 2014 National Citizen Survey, was sent to 1,200 randomly selected City of Suwanee addresses in November and is endorsed by the International City/County Management Association and the National League of Cities.

The City of Suwanee was ranked #1 compared to other benchmarked communities in the following areas:

- City-sponsored events
- Welcoming citizen involvement
- Overall built environment
- Availability of affordable quality childcare
- Overall confidence in local government
- Generally acting in the best interest of the community
- Being honest
- Treating all residents fairly

Survey results continue to indicate that Suwanee residents are highly satisfied with the community’s overall quality of life:

- **96%** rated Suwanee’s quality of life as good or excellent
- **98%** said Suwanee was a good or excellent place to live
- **97%** found Suwanee a good or excellent place to raise kids
- **96%** would recommend living in Suwanee

When the City asked survey-takers who had moved to Suwanee after January 1, 2009 to score the most important factors in their relocation decision, they rated the following as essential or very important:

- Police/public safety (**92%**)
- Suwanee’s neighborhoods (**90%**)
- Community appearance (**88%**)
- Overall community feel/vibe (**86%**)
- Suwanee’s park system (**83%**)
- School system (**78%**)

Suwanee Youth Leaders

Nearly 60 high school sophomores and juniors participated in the second offering of the Suwanee Youth Leaders (SYL) program. The program provides students with **hands-on leadership development opportunities** beyond the classroom. The 2015 program kicked off in March with a weekend retreat, then continued to meet monthly through September. Students assisted with a variety of events, including Arts in the Park, August Food Truck Friday, Suwanee Fest, and Trek or Treat. SYL students provided **more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time** to the City of Suwanee and community.

Promoting the Suwanee brand

Bubbles, bubbles everywhere – the City continued to brand anything that would stand still (and a handful of things that wouldn’t) with the Suwanee bubble logo in an effort to create a stronger sense of place within our community. These efforts included **new banners** in Town Center and Suwanee Gateway, **installing historic marker signage**, and the famous **Bubble Car**: an old police car that was refurbished and wrapped using drug forfeiture money. A cheerful blue, green, pink, orange, red, and purple bubble-covered vehicle, the Bubble Car has been making appearances at local schools and community events **in an effort to encourage stronger community relationships** and reinforce, especially with children, the role of the police as protectors, not enforcers to be feared.



While their real specialty is customer service, the City's business services department deals with numbers all day long as they work with businesses, taxes, fees, and licenses. Those numbers offer an interesting peek at Suwanee's business community.

Attracting Talent

If there's one thing the metro Atlanta area is great at, it's growing. Through our collaboration with Partnership Gwinnett, the City of Suwanee is building a brighter future by attracting and retaining world class talent and leaders. Named one of Niche.com's **2015 Best Cities for Millennials**, Suwanee's unemployment rate (3.6 percent) is 1.5 points below the U.S. rate and 2.2 points below the Georgia rate (as of September 2015).



Helping Small Businesses Thrive

The City of Suwanee partnered with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce for the second year to host a **Small Business Essentials seminar** in October to educate area entrepreneurs on the many resources available to assist them. The free seminar covered business and marketing plans, finances and lending assistance, licensing and taxes, minority certification and disadvantaged business assistance, training and mentorship programs, growth, and doing business with the City of Suwanee. Representatives from the University of Georgia's Small Business Development Center, SCORE Association, Gwinnett Chamber, City of Suwanee, and Gwinnett County were part of the panel of experts on hand.



"Suwanee has a growing base of technology-driven businesses that recruit an educated, skilled workforce, in addition to several large industries. We have an interesting mix of small, independently-owned businesses that contribute to Suwanee's quality of life and allow our residents to 'shop local.' We also have an entrepreneur-friendly climate that is attractive to startups and home based businesses."

DOUG IRELAND
Suwanee City Council

Licensed businesses in Suwanee	1,347	
Number of people employed	402	Number of people employed by Suwanee's largest employer, Southeastern Freight
Total Number of people employed	11,466	Number of people employed by Suwanee businesses
Average number of employees	8.2	
Full-service restaurants	48	Another 44 restaurants offer limited service
New businesses opened	222	New businesses opened in Suwanee in 2015; January is most popular month to open a new business
People working for top 10 employers	2,051	
Alcohol licenses issued	71	Licenses issued by Suwanee in 2015
Total sales generated	\$22,466,262	Sales generated in 2015 by Town Center businesses





“One thing to keep in mind about this plan [Downtown Suwanee Master Plan] is that it builds upon prior planning efforts. After years of implementing aspects of these previous plans, it’s now time to look at opportunities that in some cases are new ideas and in others are part of the long-term vision that as of yet hasn’t been implemented.”

BETH HILSCHER
Suwanee City Council

Other notable 2015 achievements include:

- Creation of a **commercial property database** to house information on all of the commercial property available within the city limits in one location.
- Approximately 40 downtown development professionals from across the U.S. and Canada visited Suwanee as part of the Atlanta-hosted **National Main Street Conference**. Visitors toured Town Center Park, City Hall, and residential space from the master planned area.

HOW WE GROW

Effectively managing the growth and development to meet all of the needs of the present and future is one of the main goals for the city. According to the National Citizens Survey, 91 percent of residents reported being satisfied with the overall direction that Suwanee is taking, and more than 80 percent gave positive ratings to the city for acting in the best interest of Suwanee and expressed confidence in the City’s government.

Downtown Suwanee

With its roots well-grounded in previous downtown plans and building upon the realized achievements of previous planning efforts, the **Downtown Suwanee Master Plan update**, adopted by City Council at its August 25 meeting, sets out four big ideas for the City to pursue in the next few years:

- **Focusing more intense development and extending mixed uses around Town Center**
New Town Center development will focus on the context-sensitive, complete-street reconstruction of Buford Highway, which will include bike lanes, wide sidewalks, street trees, medians and turn lanes, and street furniture.
- **Developing the former DeLay property**
The DeLay property in the Old Town area is primed to be developed as Suwanee’s next great place, beginning with the creation of a master plan for the approximate 20 acres.
- **Extending and constructing new roads to improve access in and around downtown**
The updated master plan also identifies several opportunities for improving the downtown street network and calls for potentially extending Suwanee Avenue and Stonecypher Road, as well as constructing a road through the former DeLay property.
- **Recognizing Old Town’s distinct character and its capacity to support destination-type uses**
A market analysis indicates that, at this time, destination-type (rather than retail) uses are more appropriate for Old Town.

“PlanFirst” Designation

The City of Suwanee was recognized with a statewide distinction from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with a **“PlanFirst” designation**, which acknowledges communities with a proven track record of good plan development and implementation. One of ten communities to receive this honor, Suwanee addressed four primary program criteria focused on having a proven record of plan implementation success: goals, leadership, community participation, and implementation. The designation **enables the City to take advantage of various incentives** that include public visibility, eligibility for funding, and certain reduced interest loans.

Growing Greener

With assistance through the Charge Georgia Rebate Program, the City of Suwanee installed an **electric vehicle fast-charge station** at Town Center for public use. The first fast-charge station to be installed by a municipality in Gwinnett County, the dual-head, level-three charging station is available 24/7 and capable of providing an 80 percent charge to most electric vehicles in less than 30 minutes.

Aiming to reduce environmental impact and improve the quality and longevity of lighting systems, the City **retrofitted all the lights** in Town Center Park, Municipal Court, the Police Station, and the Police Substation. **Upgrading to LED lighting** was an investment, but the upfront costs are outweighed by the benefits of lower energy bills, longer fixture lifetimes, and added value for our citizens.



Revenues & expenses

Revenues represent dollars received, and expenses are costs associated with providing services.

The three-year history to the right shows that revenues have increased by \$2,870,923 (19%) from 2013 to 2015 and by \$2,185,885 (14%) from 2014 to 2015. The majority of the difference between 2014 and 2015 is due to 2015 increases in multiple revenue sources including:

- 1) Property tax revenues \$315,302;
- 2) Municipal court fine revenues \$404,575;
- 3) Intergovernmental revenues, which include the 2014 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) along with federal and state grants, \$220,930; and
- 4) Increases in franchise fees, business and occupation taxes, hotel/motel taxes, and insurance premiums \$277,841.

The three-year history also demonstrates that expenses have increased but at a slower rate. Expenses were stable from 2013 to 2014 with an increase of \$11,068 (less than 1%). Expenses increased by \$1,297,255 (9%) from 2014 to 2015. The majority of the increase from 2014 to 2015 is related to street repairs and resurfacing.

What the city owns & owes

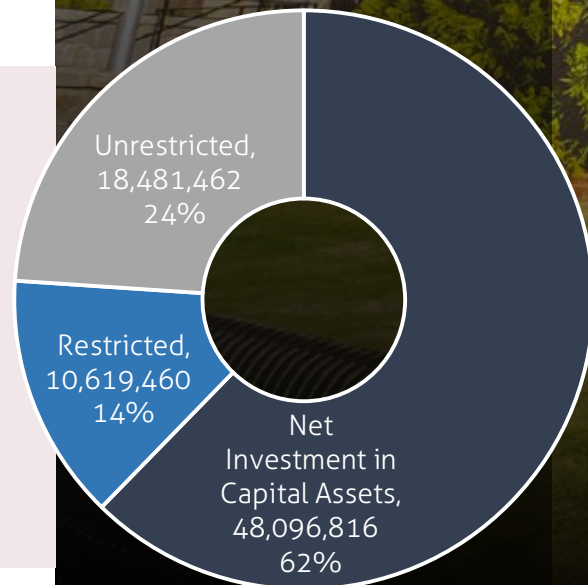
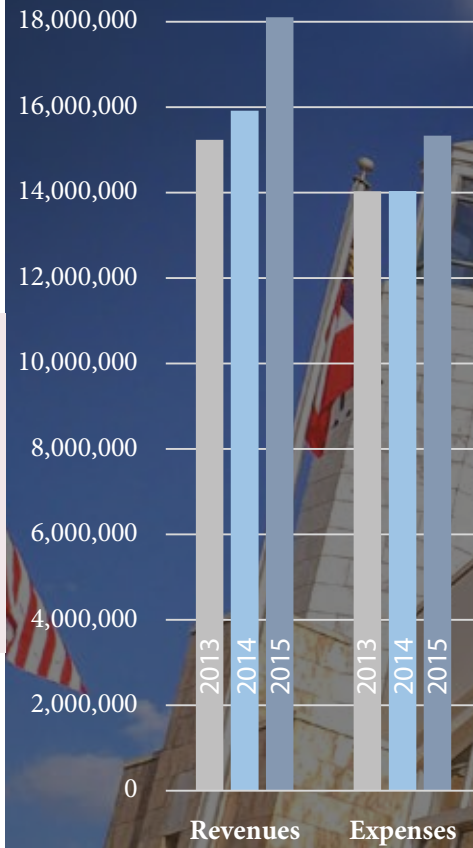
Net Position summarizes everything the City owns and owes. It provides a snapshot of the City's financial health at the end of the fiscal year.

The largest portion of Suwanee's net position (62%) represents capital assets such as land, buildings, equipment, and infrastructure (roads, bridges, and other immovable assets). The City uses these capital assets to provide services to citizens. Investments in capital assets are reported net, minus any related debt, as resources needed to repay any debt must be provided from other sources, since capital assets themselves cannot be used to liquidate debt.

Net investment in Capital Assets - The difference between the amount paid for capital assets and any debt used to acquire those assets, such as loans or mortgages.

Restricted - Funds that are not available for general use by the City because they must be used for a specific purpose or project as required by law or regulations. Examples included Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds set aside for capital projects, unspent grant funds, and resources collected for future debt payments.

Unrestricted - The remaining balance that has not been reported in any other classification.



“Suwanee’s strong financial position is reflected in our AAA bond rating from Standard & Poor’s. This rating reflects Suwanee’s solid history of conservative budgeting and our strong reserve levels are evidence of prudent financial management.”

AMIE
SAKMAR

Financial
Services
Director
City of Suwanee

Where did the money come from?

Total revenues for fiscal year 2015 were \$18,102,293, of which 30% was from property taxes. Other main revenue sources include grants (25%), charges for services (16%), and franchise fees (10%).

Grants – Include operating and capital grants. Operating grants are used for day-to-day operations of the City. Capital grants are used for capital purposes, such as building roads, sidewalks, facilities, etc.

Charges for Services – Fees collected for services rendered, such as court costs, building inspections, etc.

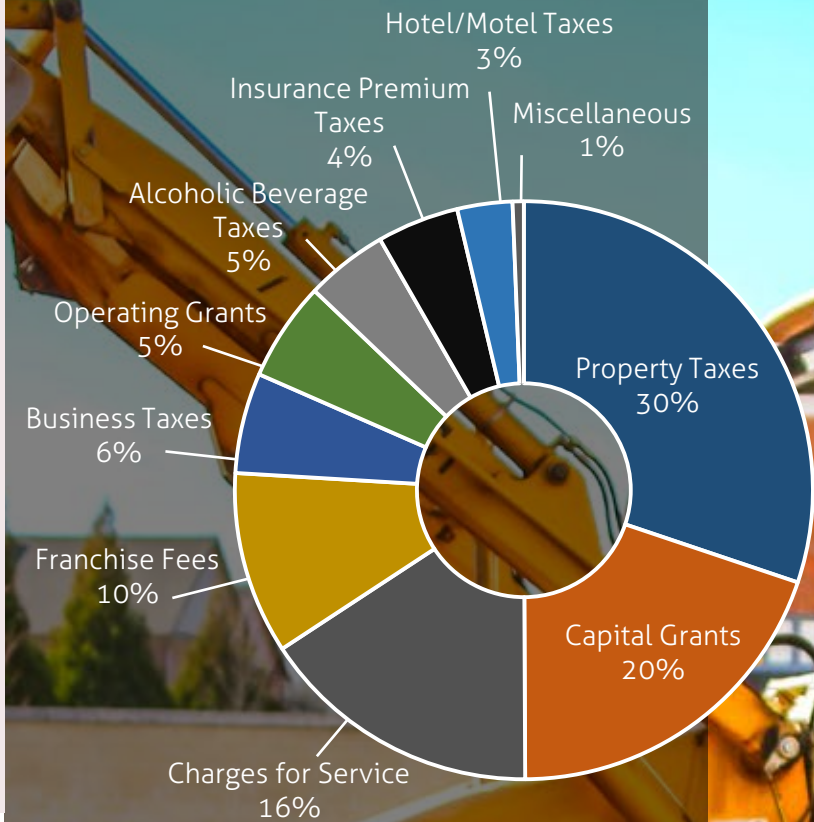
Franchise Fees – Fees collected from utility companies for the use of City streets and right-of-ways in order to provide services, such as natural gas, telephone, cable television, water, and fiber optics cable services.

Business Taxes – Revenues from occupational licenses issued to businesses and financial institutions.

Alcoholic Beverage Taxes – Taxes on the sale, distribution, or consumption of distilled spirits, malt beverages, and wine.

Insurance Premium Taxes – Taxes on insurance premiums written by companies conducting business within the City.

Other – Includes excise taxes charged for hotel rooms or accommodations, monies earned from investments of City funds, donations, and rental fees.



Where did the money go?

The City's expenses totaled \$15,334,736 for fiscal year 2015. Thirty-three percent were related to public works, 27% public safety (police services), and 17% general government.

Public works – Cost of maintaining City facilities, right-of-ways, paved streets, storm drainage, and municipal water system.

Public Safety – Costs associated with maintaining a police department which includes maintenance of order, law, safety, and other matters effecting the public welfare.

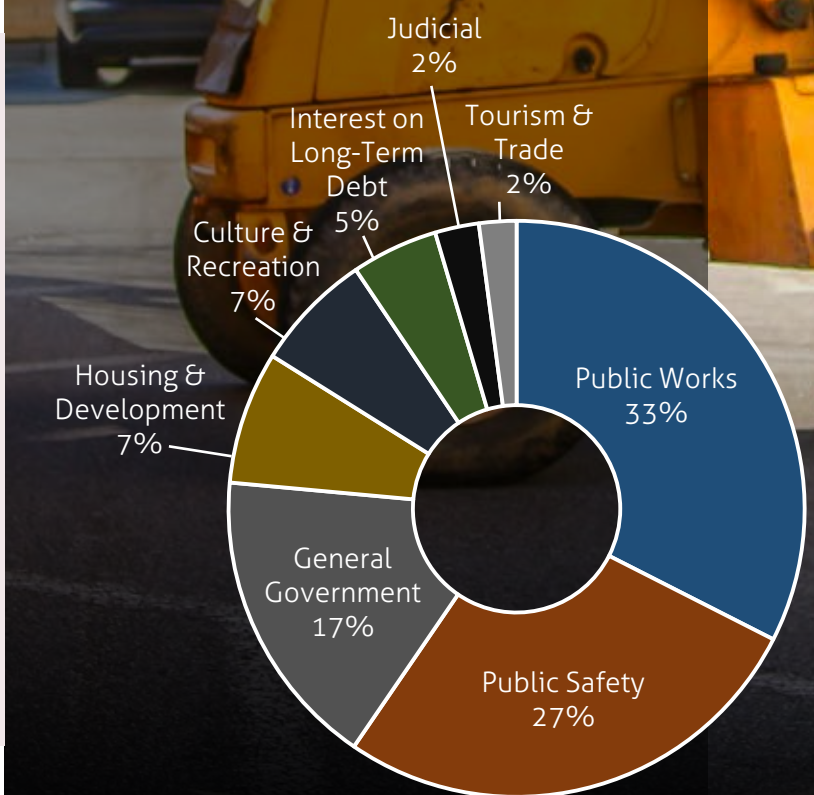
General Government – Cost of supporting legislative activities, human resources, city clerk, finances, legal, data processing, public information, and general government facilities.

Housing & Development – Cost of planning, inspections, code enforcement, and economic development.

Culture & Recreation – Cost of maintaining the City's park system and coordinating special events.

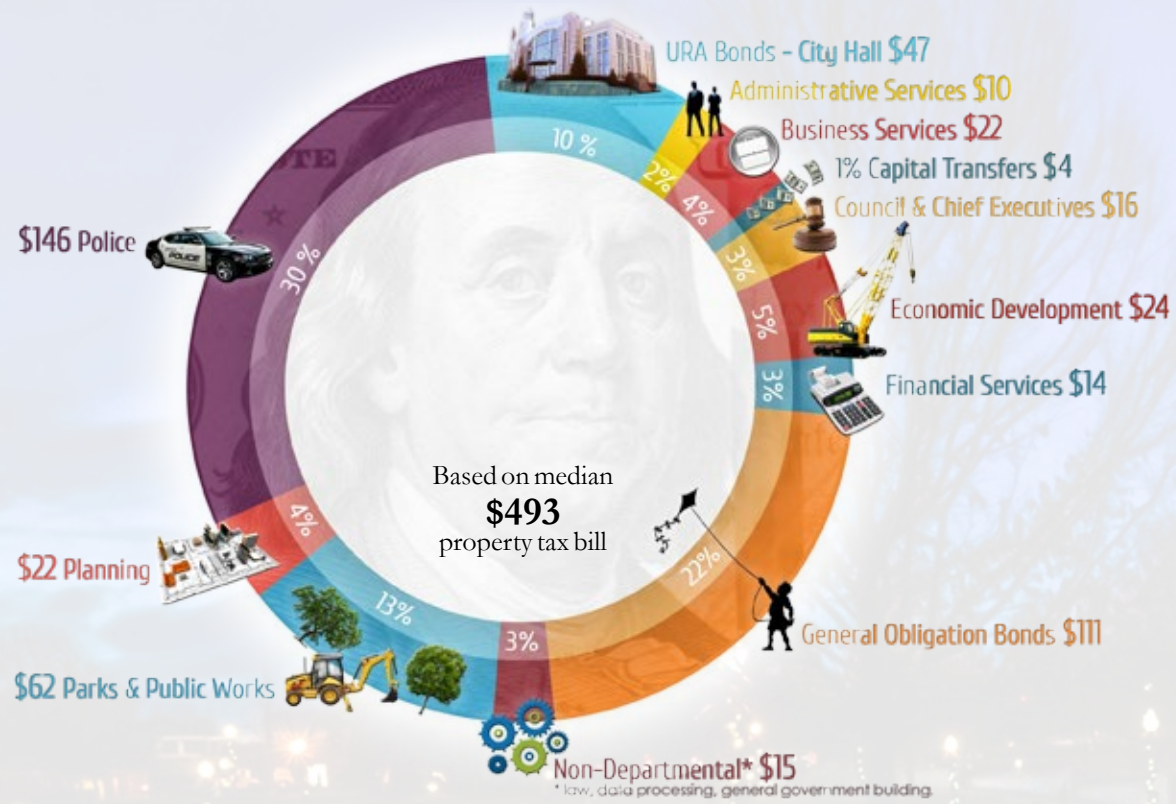
Interest on Long-Term Debt – Cost of interest payments for parks, open space, and construction of City Hall.

Other – Cost of municipal court and tourism.

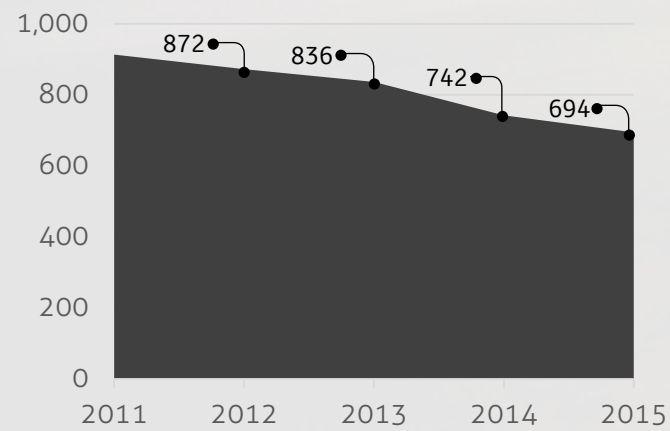


Where did my property taxes go?

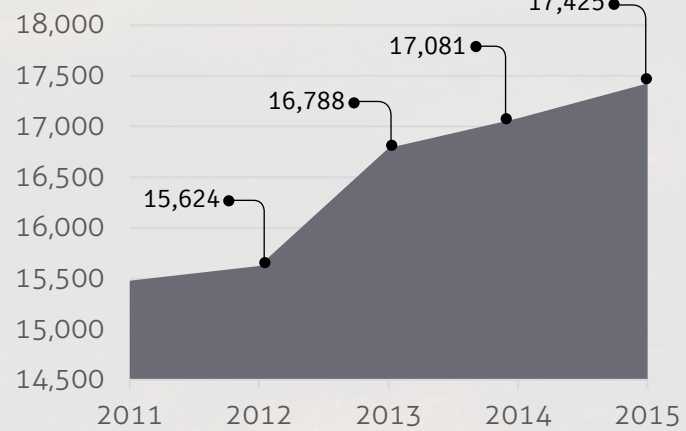
In 2015, median home values in Suwanee were \$250,000, and the typical resident paid about \$493 in property taxes. Suwanee's millage rate for fiscal year 2015 was 4.93, the same as in fiscal year 2014. This infographic answers a common question asked by many residents: "Where did my property taxes go?"



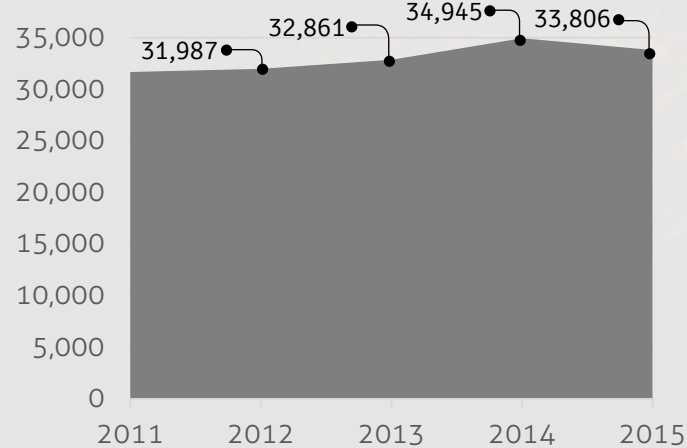
City of Suwanee's debt per capita



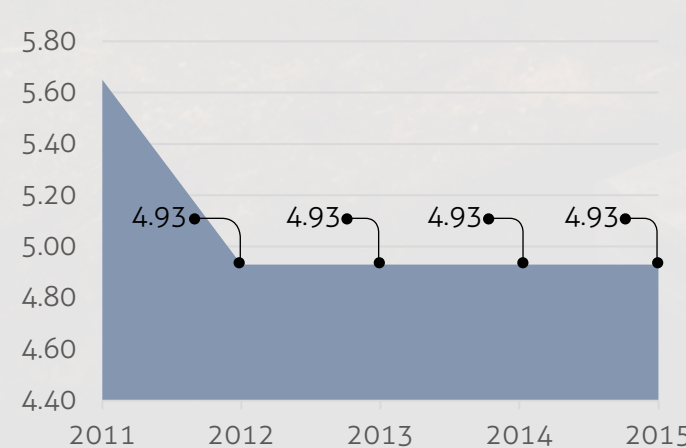
Suwanee Population



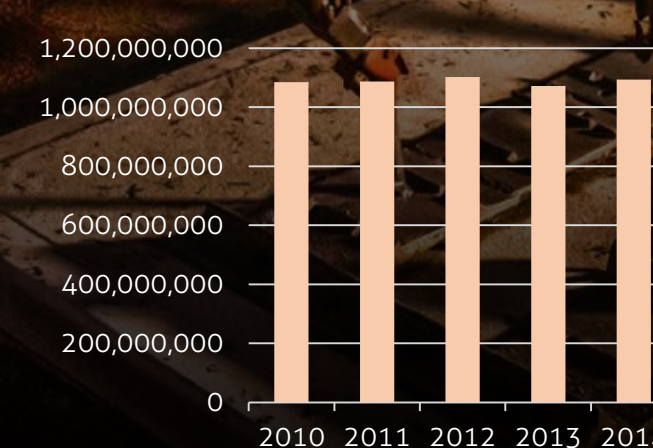
Per capita personal income



Millage Rate 2010-2015



Taxable assessed value of property by calendar year



TOP 10 PROPERTY TAX-PAYERS 2014

- HP Enterprise Services, LLC
- PPF AMLI 3021 McGinnis Ferry Road, LLC
- Wanstead Partners, LLC
- Landmark at Grand Oasis, LP
- Caryle Centennial Suwanee Station, LP
- Wal-Mart
- Flowers Bakery of Suwanee
- James Campbell Company LLC
- Lois Suwanee, LLC
- Lowes Home Centers, Inc

Source: City of Suwanee Financial Services Department

TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

- Southeast Freight Lines, Inc
- Meggitt Training Systems, Inc
- Wal-Mart
- Kroger Company
- Quality Technology Services
- Publix Supermarkets
- Flowers Bakery
- Lowes
- Blockbuster Textiles, Inc
- Hisense USA

In March 2015, author and economic development guru Peter Kageyama spent three days in Suwanee urging citizens, community leaders, students, and City officials to redefine problems and solutions by asking: “Where’s the fun?”

“Fun doesn’t cost a lot, and it needs to be considered a legitimate objective,” Kageyama said in one of several presentations offered as part of his ‘For the Love of Suwanee’ tour. Kageyama, the author of *For the Love of Cities* and *Love Where You Live*, has traveled around the country sharing his message and encouraging “cocreators” who make awesome things happen in their places.

Kageyama told his Suwanee audiences, which totaled about 300, what people love about their communities are small, intimate things that “surprise and delight.” Public art, signature events, and other undertakings that **make a community distinctive** and enchant visitors and citizens alike come at a cost, but Kageyama argues that equally important is the consideration of their value.

-  Harvest Farm was at **100 percent capacity** again, with all 76 raised beds being lovingly tended for its sixth season. Community plots are planted and managed by the gardeners, resulting in a cleaner space and more active local community at little cost to the city.
-  Suwanee’s park **pavilions hosted 61** birthday parties, family reunions, and other get-togethers in 2015.
-  The City’s Public Works department spent **921 hours removing litter** – in that same amount of time, they could have watched the entire *Star Wars* series nearly 58 times.
-  Suwanee **added 14 bistro sets** to White Street Park, Sims Lake Park, and PlayTown Suwanee to create informal spaces of community. Chairs can instantly activate empty spaces or blank walls, as pedestrians pause from a stroll to sit and talk or just rest their feet.
-  Nearly **8 million inches of toilet paper** were used at the city’s parks and municipal buildings in 2015 – enough to stretch from Suwanee to Asheville, North Carolina.
-  Over the holiday season, Harvest Farm gardeners **donated more than 300 cans of food** to the Quinn House in Lawrenceville.



Photography By Glen Sharpe - Rainy October Morning

- JANUARY 10** North Gwinnett Soccer Sprint
- 31** Suwanee kicked off the year with a brand new event, the Suwanee Gateway Half Marathon
- FEBRUARY 14** Suwanee Sweetheart Sprint
- MARCH 14** Over 300 different beers were served at the Suwanee American Craft Beer Fest
- 14** Suwanee Kiwanis Shamrock 5K
- 28** 100 canines participated in the Georgia SPCA Run for the Rescues 5K Fun Run Festival
- APRIL 03** Suwanee kicked off its 3rd season of Food Truck Fridays
- 04** Georgia Green Industry Association’s Spring into Color 5K Dash
- 05** A non-denominational service, the annual Community Sunrise Service is presented by a collective of churches from the Suwanee area
- 11** SheMoves Atlanta 5K
- 18** A brand new event, Suwanee’s Big Cheesy Festival was the Gold Award winner of the Southeast Festivals & Events Association’s ‘Best New Event’ prize, as well as a Bronze Award winner for ‘Best T-Shirt.’
- 25** March of Dimes March for Babies
- MAY 2** The first day of the Suwanee Farmers Market at Town Center Park
- 09** Dogs, cats, birds, ferrets...all were welcomed at Star 94’s Woolstock
- 16** Awards were given in the categories of elements, pottery, painting, photography, jewelry, and Best in Show at Arts in the Park
- 22** The traditional Memorial Day Concert became Red, White, Bluegrass & Bach
- 30** Hilaire Foundation’s inaugural Melanoma Awareness Event
- JULY 06** The first of three Movies Under the Stars Double Features
- 18** Cheyenne’s Faith 5K/Fun Run
- 24-25** Broadway in the Park is the Suwanee Performing Arts’ signature summer production performed in Town Center Park each July
- AUGUST 01** Fans tomahawk chopped and root, root, rooted for the home team while watching Braves on the Green at Town Center Park
- 08** “Runaway train, never comin’ back...” 90’s rock icons Soul Asylum performed at the August Concert & Wing Festival
- 15** Gwinnett Road Race & Skylar’s Run
- 22** Thin Mint Sprint 5K/1M
- SEPTEMBER 12** Suwanee Fest Classic 5K/10K
- 19-20** Suwanee Fest was named one of the ‘Top 20 Events of Fall’ by the Southeast Tourism Society
- OCTOBER 02** Peach State Chili Cook-Off
- 06** Big Peach Running Co. Anniversary Walk/Run
- 10** Over 30 local restaurants served 9,000+ at Taste of Suwanee
- 24** Alive! Festival promoted all things natural, organic, and green
- 31** Mummies and dead-ys, boys and ghouls came out for the spooktacular Trek or Treat
- NOVEMBER 07** Annandale Extra Mile Run/Walk 5K
- 07** Over 100 hand-selected wines were served at the 3rd annual Suwanee Wine Fest
- 08** Suwanee geared up for its 3rd annual Classic Car Show
- DECEMBER 04** “Ho! Ho! Ho!!!” Suwanee welcome Santa and lit the City tree at Jolly Holly-day

“Fun doesn’t cost a lot, and it needs to be considered a legitimate objective.”

PETER KAGEYAMA

Author & Economic Development Guru



HOW WE EXPERIENCE



“Over the last few years the City has worked through its Public Arts Commission and with private developers to establish our community as a regional leader in public art. Now seemed the right time to take our program to a more strategic, next level through a Public Art Master Plan.”

DENISE BRINSON
Assistant
City
Manager
City of Suwanee

Photography By Carol T. Vay - Piano

Suwanee’s first Public Art Master Plan, adopted by City Council at its August 25 meeting, called for placing public art where it matters most. The plan, developed over six months in consultation with art consultants, suggests that Suwanee focus its energy on public art that is:

- **Art + Play** Commissioning projects that are engaging, fun, memorable and distinctive.
- **Art + City Image** Projects that strengthen the urban design of the city.
- **Art + Temporary** Pieces on view only for fixed periods of time.

Fräbel glass exhibit sparkles at City Hall

Suwanee City Hall hosted **The Seven Sins and Virtues exhibit by artist Hans Godo Fräbel**, considered one of the founding fathers of modern flame glass art. The exhibit represented the first time that all 14 sculptures in this collection have been publicly displayed simultaneously, as well as a few additional pieces. Sponsored by the North Gwinnett Arts Association, Fräbel Glass representative David Copeland said that the Suwanee display offered the artist an opportunity “to exhibit sculptures in which he has great pride in completing such a technically difficult series of sculptures.”

City adds two pieces to permanent art collection

The Public Arts Commission, using donated funds, purchased two pieces from the 2013-15 Suwanee Sculp’Tour, adding to the City’s permanent public art collection:

- **Iron Canopy by Phil Proctor**
The 17-foot-tall steel, stainless steel, and aluminum kinetic sculpture (and **People’s Choice winner**) derives its inspiration from the magic of trees and represents the idea that life supports life.
- **Who Let the Dogs Out? by Jim Collins**
Dick Cunningham with Ippolito’s of Suwanee purchased this collection of sculptures and **donated** the piece to the City.

These pieces, plus new artwork added by private developers, bring the total number of public art pieces on permanent display in Suwanee to more than 20.



Photography By Clare Lashley - Dancer XX

Let’s play: Suwanee’s street piano project

Inspired by British artist Luke Jerram’s *Play Me, I’m Yours* program, people of all ages and musical skill levels joyfully banged out tunes on a **temporary interactive public art street piano** housed at Town Center Park. The donated piano – painted with a colorful tree theme by the North Gwinnett Arts Association – was coordinated by Suwanee’s Public Art Commission

The 4th Sculp’Tour

- **More sculptures:** 17
- **More local artists:** Six of the 15 artists represented are from Georgia; other artists are from Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and New York City. Eight artists are participating in Suwanee Sculp’Tour for the first time; seven were represented in previous Suwanee exhibits.
- **More...weight?** Dancer XX, a 20-foot tall galvanized and powder-coated steel sculpture created by Jack Howard-Potter, is the single heaviest sculpture to ever be included in a Sculp’Tour exhibit. Weighing in at 3,000 pounds, this kinetic sculpture of a male figure, who stands on one leg with his arms raised and holding a long piece of fabric, rotates with the wind.

Almost all residents who participated in the National Citizens Survey rated the overall feeling of safety in Suwanee positively, 94 percent as excellent or good. Similarly, almost all residents rated their feeling of safety in their neighborhood and Suwanee’s downtown as positive. At least seven out of ten residents gave positive ratings to all aspects of safety in Suwanee. **Suwanee has a reputation for being one of the safest, if not the safest, communities in the region.**

\$10,000 Grant from Governor’s Office of Highway Safety

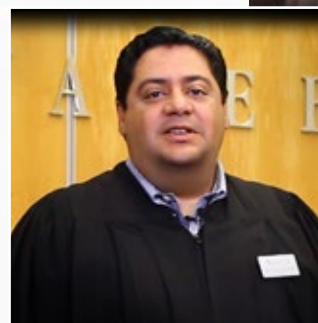
In September, the Suwanee Police Department received a **\$10,000 grant** from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety. The funds were used to purchase LIDAR (light detection and ranging) speed detection devices, crash investigation equipment, and signage to be used during DUI/safety check points. Suwanee PD is eligible for this grant based on participation in programming throughout the year. The grant enables the department to **purchase equipment that will be used to enhance the safety of Suwanee’s roadways.**

Hope Court

In 2015, a Georgia law was changed to allow offenders under the age of 17 to potentially appear in front of a jury, rather than a judge in a municipal court as the law stated prior. Suwanee Chief Judge Norman Cuadra thought that this type of trial would be detrimental to a youth with a minor violation, and set out to create a way to retain jurisdiction over these cases – and the City of Suwanee’s **Hope Court was born.**

The first of its kind in Gwinnett County, **Hope Court provides a second chance for offenders under the age of 21** who have committed lesser crimes. These first time offenders can plead guilty and receive a modified sentence and have the incident wiped from their records.

“We wanted an opportunity to educate these teenagers, and hopefully not see them again,” said Judge Cuadra. “Hope Court offers the chance to impact their lives and have greater consequences in the long run.”



Other notable achievements in public safety in 2015 include:

- Transitioning municipal court to **civilian bailiffs**
- Implementing a **Spanish language court**
- Upgrading the **police radio communications room**
- **Installation of payment kiosks** at Court and City Hall

“Ninety-two percent of survey-takers who had recently moved to Suwanee scored ‘Police/Public Safety’ as one of the most important factor in their relocation decision”

2014 National Citizens Survey

Okay, so YES – traffic is a problem in metro Atlanta. Our traffic...let's call them "issues" ...are almost as well-known as the Braves throughout the nation. But the National Citizens Survey results suggest, maybe things aren't quite so bad in Suwanee. The rating for ease of car travel in Suwanee improved from 2012 to 2014. The availability of paths and trails was given the most positive rating (rated as 'excellent' or 'good' by 85 percent of those surveyed), followed by ease of walking in Suwanee (rated as 'excellent' or 'good' by 67 percent). At least seven out of ten residents rated street repair, street cleaning, street lighting, and sidewalk maintenance as 'excellent' or 'good.'

- All tier one projects from the **Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan** are fully-funded and underway.

- The design and contracting phases of the **Brushy Creek Greenway** project are complete and construction is underway.

- The City obtained funding for three different **bicycle plan projects**.

- The City was granted an **additional \$1 million from the Georgia Department of Transportation** for improvements to Buford Highway.

- The City entered into an agreement with Gwinnett County to undertake **several sidewalk projects** on Smithtown Road, Suwanee Dam Road, and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.

- **Peachtree Industrial Boulevard median landscape redesign** was completed, and construction is underway.

- Concepting is currently underway to **improve the landscaping** on Russell Street.

- **3.4 miles** of city streets were **resurfaced** thanks to the Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant from GDOT.

- Improvements were made to the Suwanee Greenway, including **replacing boards** on some boardwalk areas.



“We anticipate that the Russell Street roundabout [which is part of the Buford Highway reconstruction project] may cause traffic patterns to change and perhaps coax more people to venture into historic Old Town. Once that happens, we can reevaluate what kinds of uses would be successful in the Old Town area.”

JOSH CAMPBELL
 Planning and Inspections Director
 City of Suwanee

WE'RE GOOD AT IT

WE'RE GOOD AT IT

City-County Communications Awards of Excellence

- Graphic Design – Publications for Connects newsletter
- Printed Publications – External Publications for Connects newsletter

Georgia Downtown Conference Awards of Excellence

- Promotions – Silver Award for Woofstock

Southeast Festivals & Events Association

- Best Festival with a budget Over \$75,000 – Gold Award for Suwanee Fest
- Best Volunteer – Gold Award
- Best Creative Idea – Gold Award for Blast Storm Troopers at Suwanee Fest
- Best T-Shirt – Silver Award

Georgia Department of Community Affairs for Excellence in Community Planning

- PlanFirst Designation

International City/County Management Association Certificate of Distinction

- Superior Performance Management
- One of only 11 jurisdictions

National Citizens Survey Voice of the People Awards for Excellence

- Community Engagement and Recreation & Wellness
- Suwanee is the lone community among 21 jurisdictions being recognized nationally to win multiple awards

Government Finance Officers Association

- Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award – Annual Report
- Excellence in Financial Reporting – Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
- Distinguished Budget Presentation Award – Fiscal Year 2015 Budget

RealEstate.com

- One of three 'Best Cities to Raise a Family'

NerdWallet.com

- Included in top 10 list of 'Best Cities for Home Ownership in Georgia'

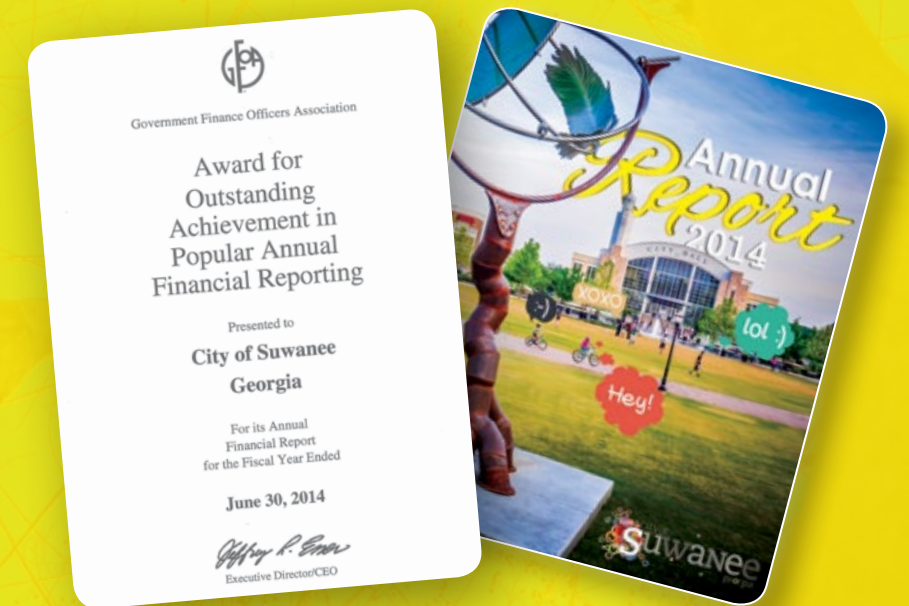


AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN POPULAR FINANCIAL REPORTING

The City of Suwanee strives to share financial information openly with citizens and others. In an effort to provide an easy to understand summary of the City's financial activities, the City prepares a Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR). The data for this report was taken from our audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015 and includes financial data from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, unless otherwise stated.

Each year the City of Suwanee prepares an audited CAFR that provides detailed information about the City's financial position. Prepared using financial reporting models prescribed by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Suwanee's CAFR is available in its entirety on the Docs & Downloads page at suwanee.com.

Last year the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) presented an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to Suwanee for its PAFR for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a PAFR that conforms to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal. This award is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that this current report continues to meet Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and it will be submitted for GFOA's review.



Photography By Tokimo Vyas - TreeDancers



CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR	Jimmy Burnette	770-945-3492
COUNCIL	Dan Foster	678-404-9641
	Dick Goodman	678-446-7520
	Beth Hilscher	678-546-3388
	Doug Ireland	770-265-0880
	Linnea Miller	678-592-4150

MANAGEMENT TEAM

CITY MANAGER	Marty Allen	770-945-8996
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER	Denise Brinson	770-904-3385
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	Elvira Rogers	770-904-3376
BUSINESS SERVICES	Jessica Roth	770-904-2789
FINANCIAL SERVICES	Amie Sakmar	770-904-2797
PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS	Josh Campbell	770-904-3372
POLICE CHIEF	Mike Jones	770-904-7611
PUBLIC WORKS	James Miller	770-904-3373