



THE CITY OF SUWANEES 2018
PERFORM

CITY HALL
1817

MAYOR

SUWANEES.COM

The following 2018 Annual Report discusses several big initiatives and projects that were started, progressed and/or completed throughout the year.

In 2018, the City of Suwanee updated its 2040 Comprehensive Plan. This plan is an important tool for guiding future decisions about where and how to manage population growth and development, as well as provide predictability for residents and property owners about the future use of land.



The Comprehensive Plan included a new community-developed Vision Statement that broadly describes the overall vision for Suwanee.

Much like the Comprehensive Plan, the Annual Report should also instill confidence in our citizens. As stakeholders in our community, you want to know how the city is doing; whether we're making more money than we're spending; and strategic plans for the future. **In other words, where has the city been, where is it now, and where is it going.**

SUWANEE COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

(From the 2040 Comprehensive Plan)

Suwanee 2040 will be a safe, fun, attractive, inclusive, evolving city with a unique, vibrant downtown that is well-connected to established neighborhoods and commercial/employment opportunities.

Neighborhoods farther from downtown will be largely suburban, while development types closer to downtown will be taller, denser, and highly walkable. **Town Center** will be the city's economic, social, and cultural hub. **Historic Old Town** will be characterized by a mixture of old and new quaint smaller scale development integrated into the existing traditional fabric. **Suwanee Gateway** will serve local and regional commercial and employment needs.

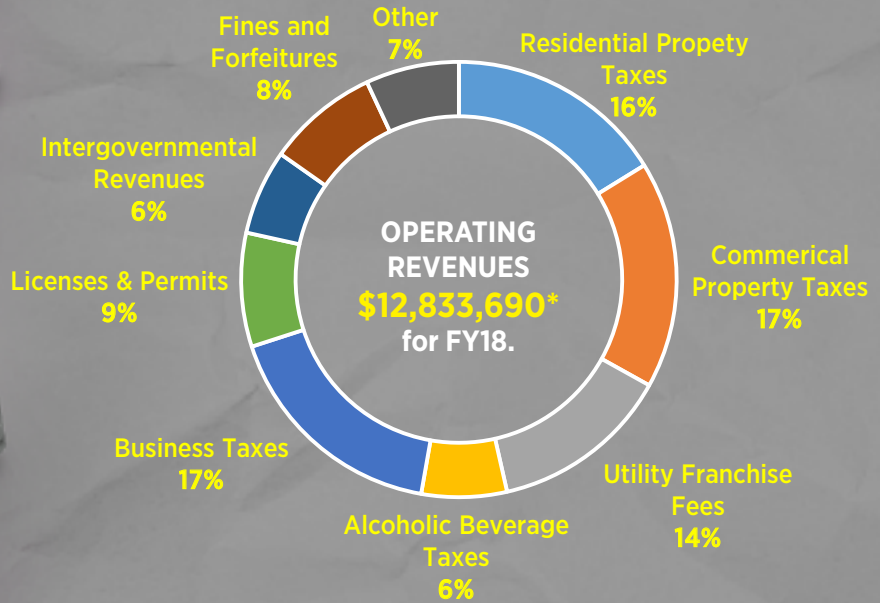
Established neighborhoods will continue to be an essential source of quality homes attractive to families. **Art, parks, greenways and open space** will be important elements for recreation and identity. Suwanee will continue to grow in a deliberate manner that enhances the city's varied communities and quality of life.

“As always with Suwanee, the 2040 Plan is not just a check-the-box report. It is a thoughtful, forward looking, and creative tool that the city will use every day to guide its future.”

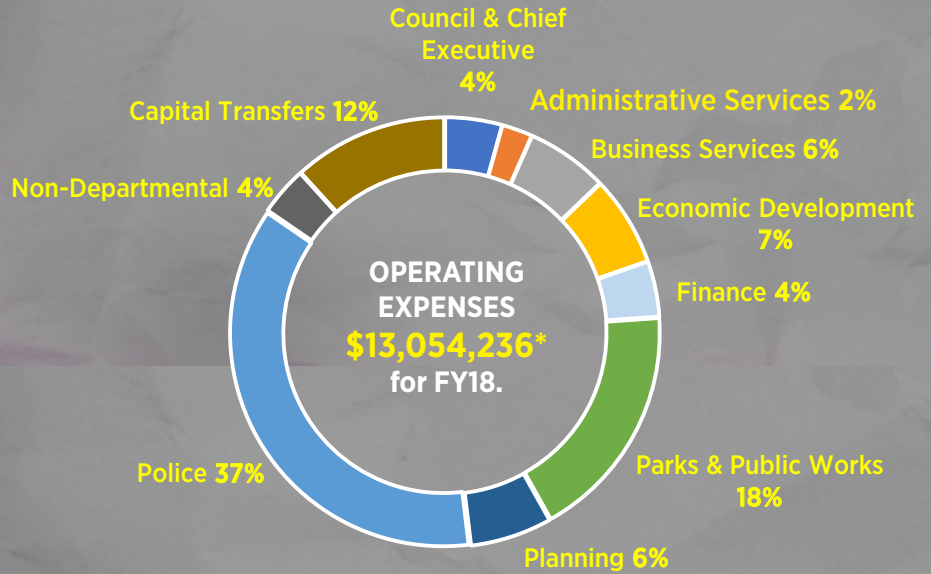


BOB BEGLE
Principle, Urban Design
Lord Aeck Sargent

Where did the operating money come from?



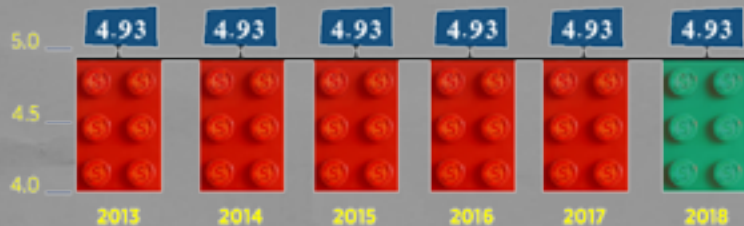
Where did the operating money go?



* The difference between revenues and expenditures is due to elected 4th quarter capital transfers.

This is a component of the city's pay-as-you-go financing strategy.

Millage Rate
2013-2018



The Performer[®]



Developed by governmental accounting consultants Crawford & Associates, The Performer[®] provides a “plain English” evaluation of a government’s financial information. Using financial statement ratios, The Performer[®] provides ratings on a ten-point scale that represent financial health and level of performance, with 10 representing excellent health and zero indicating poor financial health and performance.

FINANCIAL POSITION

Suwanee’s score:

9.4

“Point-in-time measures” of the government’s financial status, solvency, and liquidity as of the fiscal year end.”



Current Ratio - *Will our employees and vendors be pleased with our ability to pay them on time?*

Suwanee’s government-wide ratio of current assets to current liabilities was 12.68 to 1, meaning that the city had over 12 times the amount of assets to pay the liabilities.

Quick Ratio - *How is our short-term cash position?*

The government-wide ratio of cash and cash-equivalents to current operating liabilities was 5.59 to 1, meaning that the city had over five times the minimum amount of cash and cash equivalents needed to pay short-term operating obligations at year end.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Suwanee’s score:

9.9

“Look-back measures” as to whether the government’s financial position has been improving, deteriorating, or remaining steady.”



Change in Net Position - *Did our overall financial condition improve, decline, or remain steady?*

The city’s total net position increased by \$2.6 million (3.1 percent) from the prior year.

Interperiod Equity - *Who paid for the costs of current year services: current, past, or future tax payers?*

The city’s total costs were fully funded by current year tax payers, generating revenues at a level of 116 percent of current year costs.

Business Type Activities Self-Sufficiency - *Did business-type activities pay for themselves?*

94 percent of the city’s current year costs were funded by current year revenues.

Debt Service Coverage - *Were our revenue bond and note investors pleased with our ability to pay them on time?*

The city paid 100 percent of its revenue bond debt service from the proceeds of a current property tax levy and previously unspent property tax levies.



FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

Suwanee's score:



“Look-forward measures” of the government’s ability to obtain resources in the form of revenues or borrowing in order to finance future services.”



Revenue Dispersion - How much of our revenue is beyond our direct control?

The city had direct control over 45 percent (service charges and property taxes) of its revenue. This ratio indicates that – like most cities – Suwanee has limited exposure to financial difficulties due to reliance on taxes that are capped or require voter approval.

Bonded Debt Per Capita - What is the generated bonded debt burden per capita?

The city had a general bonded debt per capita ration of \$568, which is lower than the average bonded debt per capita.

Legal Debt Limit Remaining - Will we be legally able to issue more long-term debt, if needed?

Suwanee had approximately \$11 million of general obligation debt applicable to the legal debt limit, meaning that the city had a little over 91 percent of its general bonded debt legal limit remaining.



CITY OF SUWANEE 2018 AWARDS

**Downtown
Excellence
Award;
Volunteers**
Georgia
Downtown
Association

**Davey Awards; Best Use
of Interactive Video**

Police Lip Sync Challenge Video

**Davey Awards; Best Art
Direction for Online Film/Video**

Police Lip Sync Challenge Video

Silver W3 Award

Police Lip Sync Challenge Video

**Georgia Outstanding
Chief of the Year**

Suwanee Police Chief Mike Jones,
Georgia Association of
Chiefs of Police



Best New Event

Silver, for Glow in the Park,
Southeast Festivals & Events Association

Best Children's Programming

Silver, for Suwanee Fest,
Southeast Festivals & Events Association

**Voice of the People Award;
Community Engagement**

International City/County
Management Association and
National Research Center

Best Volunteers

Bronze, for Suwanee Youth Leaders, Southeast Festivals & Events Association

Downtown Excellence Award; Organization

Georgia Downtown Association

3CMA Savvy Award

2016 Annual Report

Davey Awards; Copywriting for Design/Print

2016 Annual Report

Davey Awards; Art Direction/Graphic Design for Design/Print

2016 Annual Report

Davey Awards; Annual Report for Design/Print

2016 Annual Report

Popular Annual Financial Report Award

Government Finance Officers Association

Certificate of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Planning

Government Finance Officers Association

Distinguished Budget Presentation Award with Special Recognition

FY2018 budget document

Best Vendor

Bronze, for Classic Tents & Events at Suwanee Fest, Southeast Festivals & Events Association

Best Places to Live in Georgia community report card

A+, Niche.com

Bronze Workplace Health Award; Swell Program

American Heart Association

Certificate of Distinction for Superior Performance Management

International City/County Management Association



In 2018, the City of Suwanee coordinated over 44 special events, and launched a new Suwanee summer tradition. Held annually on the summer solstice, **Summer Porch Jam** was the first Make Music Day (an international celebration of music) event in Georgia!

With the feel of an old-fashioned summer block party, Summer Porch Jam featured food trucks and musicians playing outdoors at multiple venues throughout Old Town Suwanee, including the Mayor's front porch! Suwanee Summer Porch Jam 2018 won a Silver Award for Best New Event at the Southeast Festivals and Events Association's (SFEA) Kaleidoscope Awards. Other new events included **SculpTour Sip & See** and the **Jazz Fest** organized by North Gwinnett Arts Association (NGAA).

Other Suwanee brand promotion activities included:

- **Developing new marketing materials** for the public art campaign, downtown Suwanee, and Suwanee Fest sponsorships, millage rate information, understanding your property tax bill, and others.
- **Created Starbucks™ "You Are Here"-style coffee mugs** for the City and Suwanee Fest, as well as additional swag items to sell/give away at both City Hall and the Welcome Center.



The City of Suwanee Public Art Commission continued their work of supporting the city's niche for **public art**. In 2018, the PAC secured meetings with developers, encouraging them to commit 1 percent of their construction costs to public art. Four developers **purchased pieces** that are now installed within their projects. The city also added to its permanent art collection, which now includes 20 pieces.

The PAC also kicked off its first-ever **capital campaign** to fund public art (the City of Suwanee funds public art through private donations, rather than tax dollars). After completing a feasibility study, the committee set a fundraising goal for public art projects in the Town Center Park expansion and secured the Community Foundation of Northeast Georgia to support the operation.

An authenticated piece of the **Berlin Wall** has moved to Suwanee Town Center. The 12-foot-tall, 7,000 pound section of the wall was donated to the city by Friends Suwanee Grill proprietors Ray Stanjevich and Suzanne Cartwright, who purchased the piece in 2013 at an auction on the Town Center Stage.



All the hours of hard work put in by volunteers at the **Orchard at White Street Park** paid off big – the Orchard received not one, but TWO prestigious awards! The Georgia Urban Forest Council recognized the city’s fully functional open-to-the-public orchard (the first of its kind in the Southeast) as its Outstanding New Initiative, and Keep Georgia Beautiful chose the orchard for its Community Beautification award.

Other park activities included:

- The city benefited from multiple scout projects, including the addition of **bat boxes at White Street Park**.
- North Gwinnett High School Robotics Club developed a **custom weather station** especially for the Orchard at White Street Park.



The city forged official **partnerships with several community organizations**. The **Suwanee Sports Academy (SSA)** formed a marketing partnership with the city, allowing for materials promoting Town Center to be placed in their facility. The city also allowed SSA to construct an overflow parking lot on city property. The lot is used for parking for SSA’s larger events, and for greenway parking the rest of the time.

The city continued to support the **North Gwinnett Arts Association** gallery, which serves as the city’s Welcome Center, and partnered with the NGAA to hold lantern classes for Glow in the Park. And in 2018, the city council passed a resolution recognizing **Everett Bluegrass Music Barn** as a public cultural asset.

The City of Suwanee completed its fifth year of the **Suwanee Youth Leaders (SYL)** program, with over 65 students participating in 2018. SYL is a ten-month leadership program for high school sophomores and juniors who live within the North Gwinnett, Peachtree Ridge, or Collins Hills cluster districts. SYL was recognized with a 2018 Bronze Award for Best Volunteers from the Southeast Festivals & Events Association.

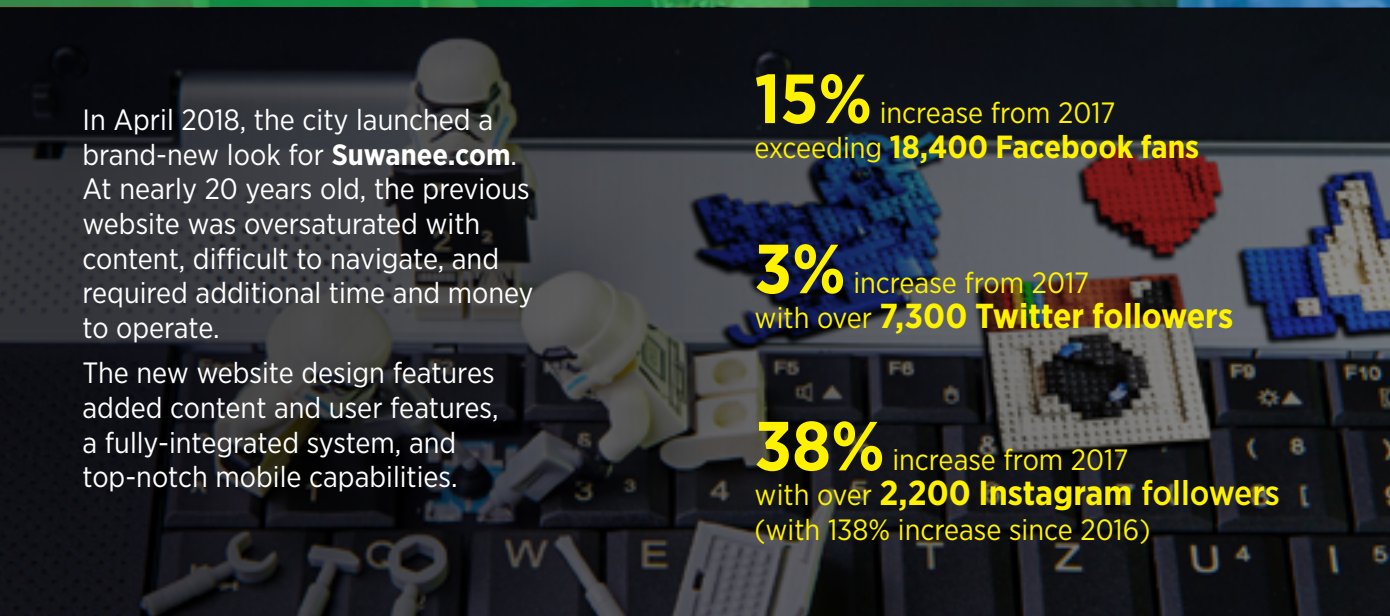
In April 2018, the city launched a brand-new look for **Suwanee.com**. At nearly 20 years old, the previous website was oversaturated with content, difficult to navigate, and required additional time and money to operate.

The new website design features added content and user features, a fully-integrated system, and top-notch mobile capabilities.

15% increase from 2017
exceeding **18,400 Facebook fans**

3% increase from 2017
with over **7,300 Twitter followers**

38% increase from 2017
with over **2,200 Instagram followers**
(with 138% increase since 2016)



In order to safeguard the rights of non-English speaking individuals, the City of Suwanee Municipal Court introduced **Language Court**, which offers an online interpreter on standby to provide services in over 240 languages, ensuring clear communication between the defendant, prosecutors, judges, and staff. This efficient and cost-effective solution resulted in expedited regular arraignment sessions.



In an effort to improve communication, gain trust, and build relationships, the Suwanee Police invited the citizens to join them for multiple events in 2018. During **Coffee with a Cop** and **Pizza with Police**, citizens met local police officers, asked questions, discussed matters, and got to know one another.



“It’s important for our officers to be out in the community when we are not involved in traditional police work. It’s a unique opportunity to discuss what is going on in both the department and the community, as well as build relationships with the people we serve.”

CHIEF JONES

City of Suwanee Police Chief Mike Jones was named the 2018 Outstanding Chief of the Year by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police at the GACP Summer Training Conference!

- **100+ PACT meetings**
- **Park Ambassadors volunteered 128 hours**
- **20+ Citizens Police Academy graduates**
- **Police Explorers programs up to 24 participants**
- **Police Explorers consistently placed in top 5 in local and regional competitions**
- **3,284 hours of training completed**
- **Hosted 29 different training courses at the Training Center**



182K
views!



scan to watch

To show the lighter side of the black and blue, the Suwanee Police Department accepted the **Lip Sync Challenge** and created their own video to Portugal The Man’s *Feel It Still*.

The video is an online sensation, garnering multiple international awards and aids Suwanee police recruitment.

We saw a lot of **growth** in our fair city in 2018! The city managed **ten neighborhoods** under construction, as well as multiple **commercial projects**, including sewer line extensions in Old Town; Heartis, our first senior living facility; and Solis Town Center, the extension of Town Center.

The City of Suwanee earned redesignation as a **PlanFirst community** for another three years for successfully implementing our comprehensive plan. We were one of the first ten original designees back in 2015! The city also earned certification as a **Green Community** by the Atlanta Regional Commission and designation as a **Tree City USA** for the 29th consecutive year.

2018 Infrastructure Improvements:

- Removed traffic signal and median break at Sawmill Drive, resulting in a longer left turn lane that accommodates more vehicles turning onto I-85
- Completed dual left turns at Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Satellite Boulevard, resulting in more vehicles turning without increasing the amount of time for the left turn signal
- Converted 41 Suwanee street lights to LED, replaced globes, and painted posts along Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd near I-85
- Replaced the chain link fence along the I-85 bridge with decorative fencing
- Completed Stonecypher Road sidewalk installation, as well as numerous sidewalk-leveling projects throughout the city
- Installed a sidewalk handicap ramp to access Sims Lake Park walkway trail from parking lot
- Completed 7,453 building inspections – the most in a year since 2004!
- Resurfaced 1.80 miles of city streets
- Cleaned the inside of a 150,000-gallon elevated water storage tank





city of
Suwanee
georgia

*Great.
I think I got it,
but just in case,
tell me the whole
thing again.
I wasn't listening.*



CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR: **Jimmy Burnette** 770-868-7115 | COUNCIL: **Dan Foster** 678-404-9641 | **Dick Goodman** 678-446-7520
Beth Hilscher 678-546-3388 | **Doug Ireland** 770-265-0080 | **Linnea Miller** 678-592-4150

MANAGEMENT TEAM

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

330 Town Center Avenue, Suwanee, GA 30024

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