



Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | February 2021

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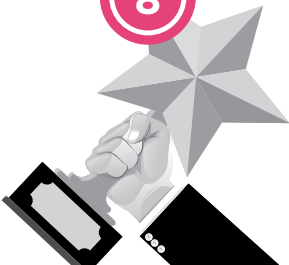
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Named State
Program of the Year

Planning for a **MORE WALKABLE, BIKEABLE SUWANEE**

In an effort to create a more walkable and bikable community, the City of Suwanee has embarked on a feasibility study for potential projects to be included and prioritized in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan update.

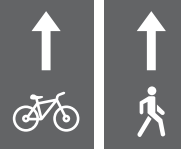
Originally developed in 2006, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan analyzes existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and identifies potential improvements. The purpose of the plan is to provide a guide for prioritization and implementation of projects to make Suwanee more walkable and bikeable.

The plan was updated in 2011, and the city is currently in the process of updating it again. In August 2019, the city held an open house to provide an opportunity for public input; it was then determined that a feasibility study was needed before finalizing the list of projects to include in the plan update. The city received a \$160,000 Livable Centers Initiative grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission to fund the study, and selected Toole Design Group, a firm that specializes in the design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to perform the study.

The Suwanee Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop Study will develop a concept plan for a continuous multi-use path around Suwanee with connections to the Suwanee Creek Greenway, downtown Suwanee, and other regional trails. The study will identify potential routes, creative solutions for crossing Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and develop a placemaking, branding strategy for the proposed loop route as well as an inner downtown loop.

Public input opportunities will be provided at two events during the study once potential projects have been analyzed and alternatives have been generated. These include an outdoor community engagement event and an in-person or virtual open house to display the findings of the study. A parallel online survey tool will be used to gather public input as well. For more information and to follow the study, please visit SuwaneeLoop.com.

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will develop a concept plan for a continuous multi-use path around Suwanee



Three-Story Mural

to Grace Side of Newly Renovated Municipal Courthouse



The City of Suwanee has completed renovations to its nearly 60-year-old municipal court building, including a three-story addition of approximately 8,600 square feet to the existing 3,200 square foot building. The building - which was Suwanee's original city hall - received an expanded lobby, doubled court clerk work space, and added new space for the police Special Enforcement Unit.

In keeping with the city's request of developers to commit one percent of construction costs toward public art, a large outdoor mural will be painted on a three-story wall. Hapeville, Georgia muralist Lauren Pallotta Stumberg was selected by the Suwanee Public Art Commission out of twenty-four artists from across the world who responded to the request for qualifications for the project.

Stumberg received her BS in fine arts from the University of Michigan, with post graduate work at the University of the South Pacific. Her public art commissions can be seen in Norcross, Peoplestown, Hapeville, Cabbagetown, Decatur, Old Fourth Ward, Midtown, and Southwest Atlanta. Stumberg leads Think Greatly, LLC, an art and

design incubator in Atlanta which enables her to support public art development through community engagement and female-driven collaborations. She is represented by dk Gallery in Marietta.

A colorful abstract of magpies will cover the entire exterior wall of the courthouse and wrap around to the smaller retaining wall in front of the building. It will also include two free-standing, five-foot-tall metal magpie sculptures. Stumberg frequently uses abstracted magpies in her work, having been inspired by an English nursery rhyme that translates one's fortune based on the number of magpies one sees.

"It is this perception of the magpie that inspires my work - the notion that the bird is an omen of change, and change, good or bad, is often invaluable," said Stumberg. "In this way, the presence of the magpie is a calling to enter a crucible of the spirit. It asks you to rethink social norms, to shift perspectives, to be open to personal transformation."

The State of 2021 Events in Suwanee

With all that is happening in our community with COVID-19, the City of Suwanee has elected to move towards safe event practices for 2021. At this time, we are accepting event applications for ONLY races, fun runs, and walks that will meet our guidelines for socially distant, participant-safe, well-managed fundraisers.

“Many of the 5K races in Suwanee are for non-profit organizations who depend on events for revenue and support from the public,” said Events & Outreach Manager Amy Doherty. “We are pleased to host organizations who will work to ensure a socially distant and responsible event, in order to provide a safe environment for our staff and attendees.”

As CDC and state guidelines change, the city hopes to return to a calendar full of events, including food trucks, movies, and music. If you are interested in applying to the City of Suwanee’s limited event season, or have questions, please contact Amy Doherty at adoherty@suwanee.com. For more information regarding Suwanee’s event schedule, visit Suwanee.com.

Upcoming Events



Suwanee
Sweetheart
Sprint



Suwanee
Half Marathon
& Old Town 5K



Suwanee Beer
Fest Beer
Chaser 5k Run

A NEW VANTAGE POINT

AT SIMS LAKE PARK

Put your photos on the map - literally! The City of Suwanee is teaming up with Chronolog to create an online repository of time-lapse photographs in Sims Lake Park.

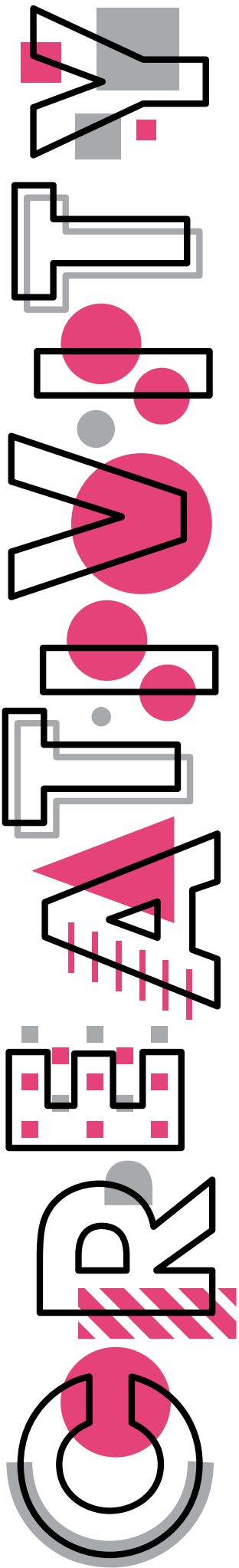
Visitors to the park can utilize the photo station, installed at the base of the waterfall stone steps feature at Sims Lake, with their own cell phone. Participants simply prop their phone in the cradle, snap a photo, and upload it to the website displayed on signage at the photo station. The website will automatically sort the photos in chronological order and can be viewed in a sequential time lapse at Suwanee.com.

"We're very excited to watch the seasons change at Sims Lake, as flowers burst forth, and then leaves change in the fall - all from the same vantage point," said Kim Towne, who spearheaded the project for the City of Suwanee. "It's a great opportunity to engage our citizens with nature and to keep a photographic record of environmental change, further connecting our community to the global environment."

More information - including an interactive map of over 400 other Chronolog locations - can be found at chronolog.io. Many of the stations reside in national parks and other locales around the country.

Sims Lake Park is located at 4600 Suwanee Dam Road and has been a local favorite for nearly 15 years. It is home to several public art pieces including the iconic *Sunset* sculpture, which will be prominently featured in the Chronolog photo series vantage point. The park also boasts a playground, paved walking trails, two pavilions, and an outdoor classroom, as well as lake and dock.





EXPLORE GWINNETT AWARDS SUWANEE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION CREATIVITY FUND PROJECT GRANT

Explore Gwinnett, the county's convention and visitors' bureau, has awarded the City of Suwanee Public Arts Commission a Gwinnett Creativity Fund project grant. Explore Gwinnett's Creativity Fund Grants provide support for arts and cultural initiatives within Gwinnett County in 2021.

The City of Suwanee will use their grant, totaling \$10,000, to create an approximately 180 feet long by 10 feet high public art mural on a brick retaining wall at the intersection of Buford Highway and Town Center Avenue in the heart of downtown. Matching funds for the mural will be provided by the Suwanee Public Arts Commission.

"We pitched the idea for this large scale mural to bring joy to our residents and visitors during this pandemic. We envision a fun, vibrant, colorful, whimsical design that will be worthy of one million Instagram posts!" said City of Suwanee Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson.

Local non-profits Suwanee Arts Center and Suwanee Performing Arts also received Gwinnett Creativity Fund project grants. Explore Gwinnett awarded a total of 12 grants to Gwinnett County non-profit arts organizations for a total of \$80,700.

"Explore Gwinnett is honored to administer the Gwinnett Creativity Fund and we are looking forward to seeing these unique projects come to fruition," says Lisa Anders, Executive Director of Explore Gwinnett.



For more information regarding Explore Gwinnett's Gwinnett Creativity Fund, please visit [GwinnettCreativityFund.com](https://www.gwinnettcreativityfund.com).

CITY OF SUWANEE INSTALLS DONATED SUWANEE ROCKS MURAL IN TOWN CENTER

A group of rock legends are permanently playing the Suwanee Town Center Stage, thanks to a local artist.

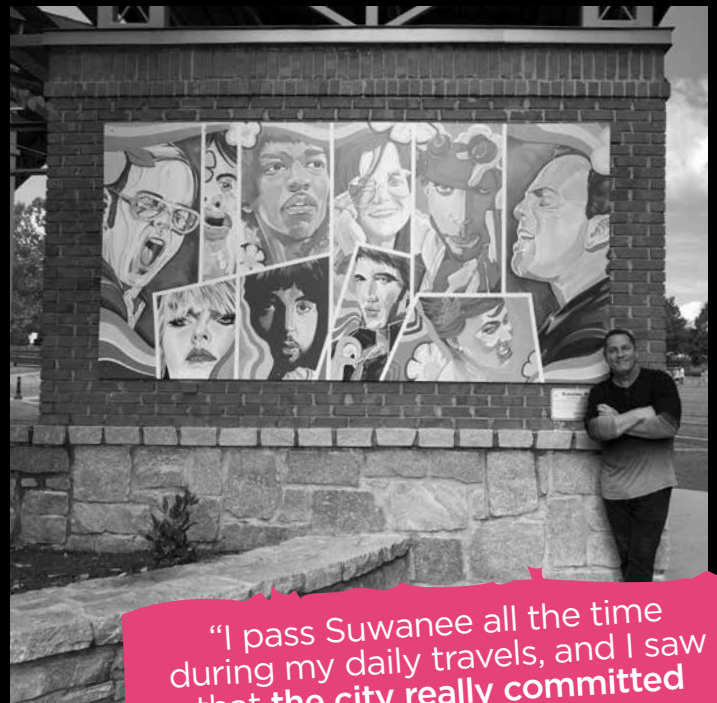
Muralist Kim Pitts donated his piece entitled *Suwanee Rocks* to the City of Suwanee's permanent art collection. The mural - depicting musicians Elton John, Mick Jagger, Jimmy Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Prince, Blondie, Paul McCartney, Elvis, Aretha Franklin, and Billy Joel - was installed on October 23, 2020 on the back of the Town Center Stage.

"I pass Suwanee all the time during my daily travels, and I saw that the city really committed itself to the arts. I've always loved the amphitheater and wanted to do a piece for it," said Pitts.

Pitts approached the city about displaying his work. The artist proposed the location on the back of the stage wing after noticing the space while eating outside at Brown Bag Deli.

The 5' x 10' mural is painted on Dibond metal with heavy-bodied acrylic paint and has a value of \$5,000. The inspiration for the piece came from Pitts' 64-year-old brother Tommy, who can still be found rocking out with his band on the weekends. The little bird nestled in amongst the musicians is Pitts' signature, and can be found on all of his work. It represents a little metal wind-up toy that was the artist's favorite as a child.

A Georgia native, Pitts works out of his home studio in Buford, where he resides with his wife and two daughters. For more information about his work, visit KimseyArt.com. For more information regarding the City of Suwanee's public art initiative, visit Suwanee.com.



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AND SO THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

CITY EMPLOYEES RETIRE AFTER 20+ YEARS OF SERVICE

The City of Suwanee is both happy and sad to announce the retirement of two beloved 20+ year employees, whose contributions have been integral to the success of our community.

After 23 years of service to the city and a total of 47 years in law enforcement, **Suwanee Police Chief Mike Jones** has announced his retirement. During his tenure, the Suwanee Police Department has more than doubled in size. The department became accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in 2010 - one of just 56 in Georgia - and in 2016, the department was named the Phyllis Goodwin Agency of the Year by the Georgia Chapter of the FBI National Academy Associates. Chief Jones was also named Outstanding Chief of the Year by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police in 2018.



Chief Jones has been a leader throughout the state, serving as president and vice president of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and on the Reinhardt College Police and Gwinnett Technical College advisory boards. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and Georgia Command College, and Chief Jones has taught at all levels of

law enforcement, sharing his extensive experience and knowledge with his fellow officers.

"I can't say enough about Chief Jones and his outstanding tenure with the city. He transformed the Suwanee Police Department into the high quality Department that it is," said Suwanee City Manager Marty Allen. "In 23 years of working together, I have witnessed a dedicated professional that earnestly works to serve and better his community with humility."

Additionally, **City Clerk Elvira Rogers**, has also announced her retirement. Rogers has been with the City of Suwanee for 22 years, originally hired as part-time to support the planning, inspections, and public works departments. She completed the Management Development Program at the University of Georgia in 2001, and became a Certified



Municipal Clerk in 2009, obtaining her Master Clerk Certification in 2016. Prior to the city, Rogers worked for Gwinnett County government for 12 years.

Rogers is a pastor within the United Methodist Church, and plans to "devote more time to her calling" in her retirement.

"Life's journey has had many twists and turns but God has been with me along the way and I'm thankful to have served this great community," said Rogers.

"Elvira was the first person I hired when I came to the city. We've been through a lot together," commented Allen. "Her contributions will always be valued and remembered; Elvira's commitment and dedication these past 22 years are worthy of admiration."

With every change comes new opportunities for others: **Deputy Chief Cass Mooney** was sworn in as Suwanee's new police chief, effective February 1, and administrative coordinator **Robyn O'Donnell** is the new City Clerk.

Chief Mooney has spent 23 of his 26 years in law enforcement at the City of Suwanee. He holds a degree in criminal justice from the University of North Georgia, as well as a Master of Public Administration with concentration in Justice Administration from Columbus State University. Chief Mooney is a member of the FBI National Academy, Georgia Law Enforcement Command College, and completed the Certified Public Manager program at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia.

O'Donnell completed the Georgia Clerks Education Certificate Program in 2020, receiving the designation of official Georgia Certified Clerk. She began working on her accreditation in 2017, completing 105 hours of instruction in public administration courses. O'Donnell has been with the city since 2013, and has worked in municipal government since 2006.

Suwanee Municipal Court Named **GEORGIA MUNICIPAL COURT CLERKS COUNCIL 2020 PROGRAM OF THE YEAR**

The Georgia Municipal Court Clerks Council recently named the Suwanee municipal court Program of the Year for their efforts involving COVID-19 implementations, including a state-of-the-art queuing platform.

The Suwanee queue system was implemented in conjunction with a recent building renovation to meet the needs of court staff and customers alike. The system manages the flow of court participants during check in and tracks other customers that come into the lobby on non-court days, including defendants reporting to the private probation company housed in the building.

The queuing system also allows customers to check-in remotely and wait in their vehicles until contacted by their mobile devices. A dashboard provides real time insights that lead to instant solutions, such as opening another check-in window when the number of customers exceeds a certain limit.

“The queuing system allows us to minimize the number of people in the building and practice social distancing while still providing necessary services to our citizens,” said Suwanee Court Service Administrator Mariza Abdeljawad. “Beyond COVID-19, the system offers the ability to wait somewhere other than a waiting room, shortening the perceived wait time. The system also allows for employees to work remotely as needed.”

In addition to the queue system, and in response to the pandemic, the Suwanee municipal court implemented contactless document scanning, allowing visitors can provide documents to staff without ever having to

exchange physical documents. A scanner was also added to the courtroom, allowing attorneys and customers to share documents with court staff. Scanned documents are transmitted directly to the judge’s monitor.

“These new systems have immeasurably improved wait times and brought a more sophisticated level of organization to our processes by giving court staff a better way to move court participants through the building, while enhancing the customer experience as a whole,” said Abdeljawad.



“The queuing system allows us to minimize the number of people in the building and practice social distancing while still providing necessary services to our citizens.”

VOLUNTEERS
CLEANING UP SUWANEЕ
& GWINNETT FOR

Earth DAY

Twenty-three volunteers braved the cold on Saturday, January 9 to collect 25 large bags of trash on the two-mile stretch of McGinnis Ferry between Satellite Boulevard and PIB.

Gwinnett Recycles organized the litter cleanup, which included a plastic brand audit. Details about collected litter were logged into a database that will be included in a community litter report launching on Earth Day. The report will allow Gwinnett Recycles to inform companies where their packaging is ending up and help residents and local leaders understand ways to take action on litter.

Inspired by the nonprofit Break Free From Plastic and its annual global Brand Audit Report, litter data collected includes type (i.e., water bottle, snack wrapper, cigarettes), brand name and parent company, product category, type of plastic, complexity of the packaging, and quantity. Child and adult volunteers logged several hundred pieces of plastic litter at the Suwanee cleanup.

“We’re not just picking up litter. **We’re becoming citizen scientists and collecting information about this debris.**

To tackle the crisis of plastic pollution and litter, we need to equip ourselves with data,”

said Laura Hernandez,
founder of Gwinnett Recycles.

Gwinnett Recycles is on a mission to clean up every city in Gwinnett by Earth Day on April 22. Currently, the organization has performed litter cleanups and brand audits in eight Gwinnett cities, with the Suwanee cleanup being the largest to date. For more information and to get involved, please visit GwinnettRecycles.com.



ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION!



**JOIN US IN
SIMS
LAKE
PARK
ON SATURDAY,
FEB. 20
TO PLANT
TREES
IN HONOR OF
ARBOR DAY!**

Those interested in volunteering can contact City of Suwanee Environmental Services Manager Bill Stinehart at bstinehart@suwanee.com or 770 904-3381.



Welcome to Suwanee

We recently welcomed the following new employees to the City of Suwanee!



ARYN SPENCER
POLICE



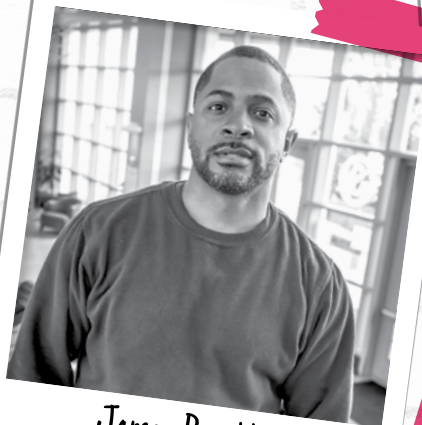
Will Palenzuela
Police



TYWAN FRANKLIN
PUBLIC WORKS



MARCO CHAIREZ
PUBLIC WORKS



James Brinkley
Public Works



Allison Coleman
Public Works



Henry Harden
Public Works

UPCOMING EVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

FEBRUARY 21

2	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
10	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
11	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
13	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
13	Suwanee's Sweetheart Sprint	9:30 am
16	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
16	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
20	Arbor Day Planting (Sims Lake)	10:00 am
21	Suwanee Half Marathon & Old Town 5K	7:00 am
23	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
27	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am

MARCH 21

2	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
8	Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting	6:30 pm
10	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
11	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
13	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
16	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
16	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
20	Suwanee Beer Fest Beer Chaser 5K	11:00 am
23	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
27	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am

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POLICE CHIEF Cass Mooney 770/945-8995
EDITOR Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check suwanee.com for updates.

**CITY OF
SUWANEE,
GEORGIA**