

City of Norcross

*65 Lawrenceville Street
Norcross, GA 30071*



Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 9, 2021

8:30 AM

2nd Floor Community Room

Mayor and Council Retreat

Mayor Craig Newton

Mayor Pro Tem Josh Bare

Councilmember Andrew Hixson

Councilmember Matt Myers

Councilmember Bruce Gaynor

Councilmember Arlene Beckles

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Craig Newton	Mayor	Absent	
Josh Bare	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Andrew Hixson	Councilmember	Present	
Matt Myers	Councilmember	Present	
Bruce Gaynor	Councilmember	Present	
Arlene Beckles	Councilmember	Present	

Special Meeting was called to order at 8:37 AM by Mayor Pro Tem

A. Kickoff and Introduction [2021 Mayor and Council Retreat PPT](#)

B. Welcome and Opening Remarks

C. Strategic Planning

a. Mayor's Strategic Priorities

b. Councilmembers' Strategic Priorities

1. Ensure a safe community
 - Bridging the diversity gap
 - More fluent Spanish speaking employees
 - Goal is to reach a 40%-50% Spanish speaking force
2. Be a catalyst for the positive development of young people
3. Foster neighborhood pride and community understanding
4. Provide and maintain first-rate infrastructure and community facilities
5. Ensure an attractive and well-maintained city
6. Recruit and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce for the city
7. Ensure the City's long-term financial ability to deliver quality services
8. Optimize staff effectiveness through training, technology equipment, and facilities

c. Review/Update of Previous Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (2017 Retreat)

Strengths

1. Police
2. Walkability
3. Downtown
4. Park and Trails **
5. Institutional Knowledge*
6. Financial Solvency*
7. Cultural/Ethnic Diversity*
8. Norcross Power
9. Strong Branding*
10. Partnerships - DDA, County
11. Customer Service Culture*
12. City Events

Weaknesses

1. Parking
2. East/West Divide***
3. Traffic*
4. Perception of Schools
5. Extended Hotel/Quality Housing
6. City-wide Masterplan
7. Affordability*
8. Digital/Technology
9. Unincorporated Norcross*
10. Salaries of Staff
11. Diversity
12. Less advantages population
13. Aging Infrastructure

Opportunities

1. Buford Highway Development
2. Young Family Boom
3. Location
4. Downtown Living and Investment*
5. Diversity
6. Industrial/Commercial Growth
7. Redevelopment*
8. Integration - East/West
9. Beaver Run Creek Greenway
10. Leadership
11. SPLOST Funding**
12. Lucent Site
13. Low cost financing
14. Underdeveloped Areas

Threats

1. Poverty Rate/Household Income
2. Affordability/Housing*
3. Staffing/Competition***
4. Economy
5. Aging Infrastructure
6. Balance between Old and New
7. Silos of Culture*
8. PTC
9. Transient Residents
10. Home Ownership
11. Finite Pool of Money
12. City/County relationship

d. Review/Update Three-Year (2020-2023) Priorities and Assess Progress (2020 Retreat)

D. Big Issues

a. Walkability

Walkability

- Look at infrastructure.
- Increasing sidewalks, trails, non-paved walkways, cross ability
- Use certificate rejection list to identify improvements; Interconnect entire city not just East/West
- Use a report card as guideline
- Staff should review list and determine cost factors to bring back in budget discussion.

East-west Connection

- Review notes of Buford Highway Masterplan
- How can we connect the entire city and creatively expand the bridge of Buford Highway and Beaver Run Road?
- Engage DOT and explain our vision
 - Create a plan relative to connection points of walkability

b. Redevelopment

a. Public Spaces

- Complete Street Plan for Mitchel Street
- Roundtable Conversation with developers/stakeholders regarding priorities
- Police Headquarters Building
- Complete Street Plan for Mitchel Street
- Density Flexibility
- Affordable Housing

c. Community Vision

- Comprehensive plan– community work program
- Buford Highway- and financing Proposal
 - Buford Highway Master Plan
 - Blend the Comp Plan and Buford Highway plan into new category to be developed later
 - Market Study
 - Ask developers to break down different type of units and mixed use-residential/office/retail/condos
 - Node 1
 - Node 2
 - Node 3
 - 2024 Comp Plan, develop new categories- “Category 11”
 - Encourage community feedback.

E. Items Deferred from Work Sessions – Facilitator

a. Police Station

- No space for expansion in current location
- Buford Highway would be the optimal location
 - Quick access to all areas of Norcross as far as position and location
- If annexation happened, Jimmy Carter would be the ideal location
- Per Croft, retrofitting the existing library into the new police admin building would not be viable.
- Courts and Police should create a basic needs assessment.

b. Masterplan/ Study for Lawrenceville St to Wingo St (Entire area)

- More public spaces/parking
- Payment statistics and trends? (Paying at the drive-up, walk-up, checks, automated, online payments, etc.)
 - The goal is to encourage more automated payments
- Create landscape architecture rendering

c. Investments that will generate an ROI to the electric utility

- Norcross Power
 - Needs strategic and creative business plan to market and sell power
 - Encourage and incentivize customers to transfer from gas to electric
 - Council requested that Norcross Power create and present an aggressive business plan/strategy inside and outside of service area addressing the following questions: What is coming online? Holding funds? Size of funds and how long should they be there? What are the opportunities and threats?
 - What is the cost to bury lines?
 - The next step would be for Norcross Power to create a holistic comprehensive business plan to increase a return on invest. What are the associated costs to create plan?
 - Hire a business consultant
 - ECG will provide information addressing the questions relative to planning and zoning areas and costs. Mary Beth will connect with ECG offline to discuss creating a rough draft before Budget Retreat..

d. Determining what is an appropriate payment from electric fund to general fund

- Increase customer base
- Increase dividends

e. Veteran's Park Monument Sign

- The current installed signage is in line with our parks signage branding guide, created by Blue Sky
- Pam Ledbetter is conducting an audit to see if traffic is being directed appropriately
- LED Display update- intersection pf Peachtree Industrial and Holcomb Bridge
 - Should be completed and installed by the week of April 19th.

f. Food Trucks

- Involve the downtown merchants in this process by adding this topic as an item for discussion at an upcoming Mayor and Council Policy Work Session.
- City wide, not just Downtown
 - Food trucks should be allowed on private property if owners so choose
 - Permitting fees should be assessed if located in public spaces including city owned streets/parks
 - Create fee schedule
 - Discuss with Downtown Merchants- Coordinate with Cate and DDA
 - Setting up events around the food trucks?

g. Lights on Skin Alley

- Lights will be ready in the next 5-7 days
- Will combine the Mayor's lighting with Social Fox's one-year celebration

h. Phase Two Discussion

Council went around the room sharing their vision, budget perspective, and desired time frame for completion.

Councilmember Gaynor

- Current plan; likes the idea of the theater in public building Commercial buildings, preservation of creek /linear park
- Prefers owned units verses renting; flats perhaps?
- Not interested in high rate of return, more interested in subsidies for selling property
- As soon as possible

Councilmember Hixson

- Not interested in deviating from current Comprehensive Plan
- In favor of lowering the costs of the parcel to get what is desired
- Put a pin in it, no rush

Councilmember Myers

- Okay with whatever density works
- Would like to see a community center or cultural arts center
- Theater revamped for next generation of residents
- Retail space: shop, eat, play
- Parking closer up the hill will be valuable
- Return on investment
- Not in favor of long term tax abatements
- As soon as possible, let's get it done

Councilmember Beckles

- Flat homes
- Commercial walkability
- Art center
- Peace of mind
- Cap on tax abatement
- Within the next five years

Councilmember Bare

- Residential- town home, flats, etc.
- No subsidizing
- Maximize parking at City Hall first
- Invest in Cultural Arts Center on the other side of Buford Highway
- Within five years, not a rush

F. Next Steps

- Go back to eight objectives and deferred items and begin working on deliverables.

G. Closing Remarks**H. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM



2021 MAYOR AND COUNCIL RETREAT

AGENDA

- a. Kickoff and Introduction
- b. Welcome and Opening Remarks
- c. Strategic Vision
- d. Big Issues
- e. Items Deferred from Work Sessions
- f. Next Steps
- g. Closing Remarks
- h. Adjournment



*With 150 years of history behind us,
how do we nourish what we have and
plan for our future?*

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Mayor Craig Newton



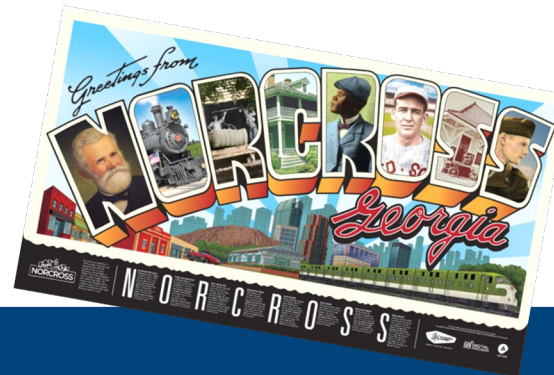
Vision **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Our Mission

Provide quality service to enhance the safety, livability and prosperity of the community.

Our Vision

Investment in Children, Neighborhood Pride, Enriching Cultural Experiences, Diversity, Thriving Economy, Quality Government Services, and Leadership among Gwinnett Cities.



STRATEGIC VISION

Our Strategic Goals

- ✓ Ensure a safe community
- ✓ Be a catalyst for the positive development of young people
- ✓ Foster neighborhood pride and community understanding
- ✓ Provide and maintain first-rate infrastructure and community facilities
- ✓ Ensure an attractive and well-maintained city
- ✓ Recruit and retain a highly-skilled and diverse workforce for the city
- ✓ Ensure the City's long-term financial ability to deliver quality services
- ✓ Optimize staff effectiveness through training, technology equipment, and facilities



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Are these still correct?

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

An initial step in strategic visioning is frequently to identify what is unique for a jurisdiction.

Mayor and Council performed a “SWOT” analysis as part of the 2017 retreat.

However, as noted at the bottom:

*Strengths and Weaknesses are intended to be Internal to the **organization**. Opportunities and Threats are External factors.*

City of Norcross S.W.O.T Analysis

Strengths & Differentiators (Characteristics of the City that give it an advantage over others) - Location - SPLOST Funding - Schools - People - Institutional Knowledge - Destination City - Historic - Financially Solvent - Cultural/Ethnic Diversity - Public Safety - Volunteer Engagement - Sense of Place - Sense of Community - Parks - Railroads - Parking Usability - Partners (CID/DDA/County) - Growing Movie Industry - City Events - Leadership - Sustainability - Customer Service Culture - Strong Branding - Growing Technology Base - Growing Industrial Base - Walkability - Geographically Compact - Business/Residential Mix - Electrical Department - Leading Voice – Lots of 1st	Weaknesses & Vulnerabilities (Characteristics that place the City at a disadvantage relative to others) - Traffic Congestion - Need for Parking - Historic/E Side Divide - City/County Jurisdictions - Slow Processes - Zoning Needs Changing - Length of Council Terms - Unincorporated Norcross - Drive To – Walkability - Built Out - Perception of Schools - Homeownership Opps. - Rental Properties - Extended Stay Hotels - Siloing of Staff - Legal Limitations to Meet - Diversity - Pockets of High Crime - Limited Public Transportation
Opportunities Ahead (Elements in the environment that the City could use to its advantage) - Redevelopment - Historic/E Side Integration - Movie Industry Growth - SPLOST Funding - Build on School Success - Community Engagement - Diversify Volunteer Base - Livable/Walkable Downtown - Land Ownership Around Parks - TAD/CID/DDA Partnerships/\$ - Park/Trail System Integration – Park Master Plan - Market to Millennials - Create Historic Preservation District - Strong Voice in Region - Proponent for MARTA - Beaver Run Creek Greenway - Best Practice Education on Redevelopment Options	Threats To Be Mindful Of (Elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the City) - Balance Between Old & New - Pace of Economy - Over/Under Development of Downtown - Finite Pool of Money Available - Average Income of Community – Developers Seek Higher - Competition from Surrounding Cities – New Cities Forming - Competition for Seasoned Staff - Inadequate/Aging Infrastructure - Complications of Immigration Reform - Increase in Poverty Rate - Absentee Landlords - Siloing of Cultures - Aging Community - Transient Residents

Strengths & Weaknesses are Internal to the organization.
Opportunities & Threats are External factors.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS



	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
internal	strengths	Weaknesses
external	OPPORTUNITIES	threats

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Considerations in revisiting the earlier analysis:

- ❖ Limit the number of items on each list based on which are the most important for that category, and/or
- ❖ Prioritize them (if everything is a priority, then nothing is really a priority), or rank them, and
- ❖ Describe them enough so it is clear why they are a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat. For example, what aspect of “Railroads” is considered a strength?

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

What has changed in this list developed four years ago?

- What should we add?
- Should anything be deleted – or reclassified (e.g., it is not internal to the organization)?
- Is there a better way to describe any strength?



Strengths & Differentiators

(Characteristics of the City that give it an advantage over others)

Location	Parking Usability
SPLOST Funding	Partners (CID/DDA/County)
Schools	Growing Movie Industry
People	City Events
Institutional Knowledge	Leadership
Destination City	Sustainability
Historic	Customer Service Culture
Financially Solvent	Strong Branding
Cultural/Ethnic Diversity	Growing Technology Base
Public Safety	Growing Industrial Base
Volunteer Engagement	Walkability
Sense of Place	Geographically Compact
Sense of Community	Business/Residential Mix
Parks	Electrical Department
Railroads	Leading Voice – Lots of 1sts

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

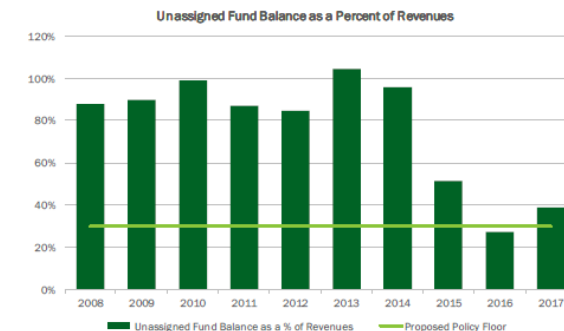
What has changed in this list developed four years ago?

- What should we add?
- Should anything be deleted – or reclassified (e.g., it is not internal to the organization)?
- Is there a better way to describe any weakness or vulnerability?

Weaknesses & Vulnerabilities

(Characteristics that place the City at a disadvantage relative to others)

Traffic Congestion	Perception of Schools
Need for Parking	Homeownership Opps.
Historic/E Side Divide	Rental Properties
City /County Jurisdictions	Extended Stay Hotels
Slow Processes	Siloing of Staff
Zoning Needs Changing	Legal Limitations to Meet
Length of Council Terms	Diversity
Unincorporated Norcross	Pockets of High Crime
Drive To –Walkability	Limited Public Transportation
Built Out	



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

**What has changed in this list
developed four years ago?**

- What should we add?
- Should anything be deleted – or reclassified (e.g., it is not an external factor)?
- Is there a better way to describe any opportunity?

Opportunities Ahead

*(Elements in the environment that the City
could use to its advantage)*



Redevelopment
Historic/E Side Integration
Movie Industry Growth
SPLOST Funding
Build on School Success
Community Engagement
Diversify Volunteer Base
Livable/Walkable Downtown
Land Ownership Around Parks
TAD/CID/DDA Partnerships/\$
Park/Trail System Integration – Park Master Plan
Market to Millennials
Create Historic Preservation District
Strong Voice in Region
Proponent for MARTA
Beaver Run Creek Greenway
Best Practice Education on Redevelopment Options

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

What has changed in this list developed four years ago?

- What should we add?
- Should anything be deleted – or reclassified (e.g., it is not an external factor)?
- Is there a better way to describe any threat?

Threats To Be Mindful Of

(Elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the City)

Balance Between Old & New
Pace of Economy
Over/Under Development of Downtown
Finite Pool of Money Available
Average Income of Community – Developers Seek Higher
Competition from Surrounding Cities – New Cities Forming
Competition for Seasoned Staff
Inadequate/Aging Infrastructure
Complications of Immigration Reform
Increase in Poverty Rate
Absentee Landlords
Siloing of Cultures
Aging Community
Transient Residents



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Recap on the SWOT exercise:

What has changed most significantly based on our update of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?

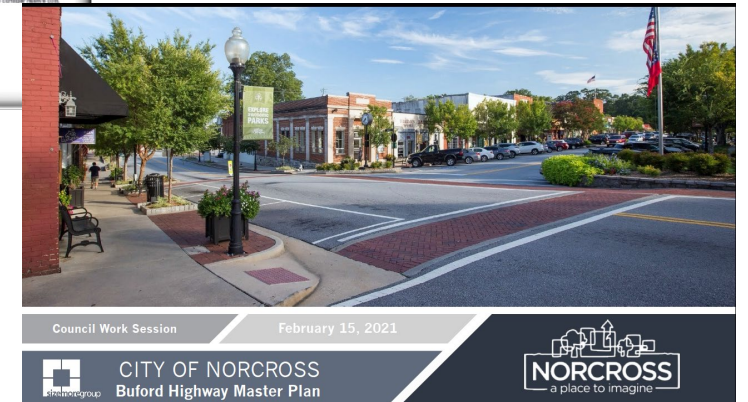
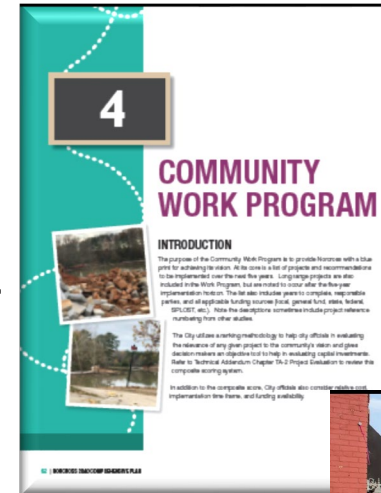
How might those changes impact our priorities moving forward?

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“BIG ISSUES”

- a. Walkability
 - East-west connection
- b. Redevelopment
 - Public spaces – e.g., community center
 - Affordable housing
- c. Community Vision
 - Comprehensive plan– community work program
 - Buford Highway – and financing proposal



ITEMS DEFERRED FROM WORK SESSIONS

- a. Police Station
- b. Masterplan/Study for Lawrenceville St. to Wingo St. (Entire area)
- c. Investments that will generate an ROI to the electric utility
- d. Determining what is an appropriate payment from Electric Fund to the General Fund
- e. Veteran's Park Monument Sign
- f. Food Trucks



Next steps ...

Where do we go from here?



Adjournment

