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working world

PG 4.0 — Partnership Gwinnett Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2022—2026

Prepared by Ernst & Young LLP for
Partnership Gwinnett

March 9, 2021

Executive summary

In August 2020, Partnership Gwinnett hired us to assist in developing Partnership Gwinnett (PG) 4.0, the organization's fourth, five-year economic development strategy. This strategy is intended to build on the success of previous plans, identify new opportunities for improvement, and enhance overall economic development activities across Gwinnett County. Throughout the strategic planning process, we helped Partnership Gwinnett conduct extensive stakeholder engagement and research.

This research found that Gwinnett County is doing well on many fronts, but that there are areas for improvement. Gwinnett County is known for its great quality of life, for its highly ranked school system, and for being home to a thriving business community. At the same time, however, there are pockets of poverty throughout Gwinnett County and a common desire to increase wages and opportunities for all residents.

Reflecting the needs of stakeholders, our recommendations for PG 4.0 focus on continuing to support a thriving local economy while ensuring that all residents have access to economic opportunity. These goals are not mutually exclusive, but actually can work closely in tandem, since our national research has shown that more inclusive communities are also more prosperous and fast-growing communities. The COVID-19 pandemic provides additional urgency to these planning efforts, with businesses and people seeking support in recovery.

This is a pivotal moment to plan for Gwinnett County's economic future, and this PG 4.0 strategy provides a road map that will help position its economy for an even brighter future.

The vision statement for an economic development strategy should reflect the values and economic priorities of a community. It should be bold and aspirational — painting a long-term vision of where the community could be in 20 years. Below is a suggested economic development vision statement for Gwinnett County that incorporates diverse voices, aspirations and possibilities identified during the planning process. At its core, this vision is focused on creating business opportunities that raise the incomes of all households in Gwinnett County.

Gwinnett County is the leading destination for business and talent in the nation and has a thriving economy for diverse people and businesses of all sizes.

As Gwinnett County works toward a long-term, 20-year economic development vision for the future, Partnership Gwinnett should focus on short-term goals and strategies over the next five years. The following goals and strategies could help Gwinnett County achieve the identified vision.

Business development is, and should remain, the core role for Partnership Gwinnett to lead and manage. This goal area focuses on attracting, retaining, expanding, and facilitating the creation of new businesses. In addition to marketing local opportunities to outsiders, this includes providing businesses with the support and resources they need to thrive in Gwinnett County — a role that Partnership Gwinnett should play in collaboration with other local and statewide partners.

Business development goal: Gwinnett County is a top location for domestic and international businesses, local small businesses, and entrepreneurial startups.

Strategies

1. Enhance and expand marketing materials and activities to successfully reach and attract more targeted businesses.
2. Regularly meet with local businesses to support retention and expansion of their operations.
3. Convene an entrepreneur council to connect local entrepreneurs and small businesses with potential customers, external organizations, and other resources to support their growth.
4. Support the development of Rowen and other technology centers to establish Gwinnett County as a leading innovation center in the Southeast.
5. Strategically utilize incentives to support community economic development goals.

Talent development goal: Individuals can access educational resources that match their learning needs and offer rewarding career pathways with Gwinnett County employers.

Strategies

1. Establish a talent council to continue aligning post-secondary offerings to business needs and create a lifelong learning experience for people of all ages.
2. Continue working with K-20 educational institutions to ensure alignment and identify opportunities for the business community to support their success.

3. Strengthen information, training, and other workforce-related resources provided to local businesses.
4. Establish a talent retention, return, and attraction campaign that highlights career and living opportunities in Gwinnett County to support talent development, retention, and attraction of former residents.

Community development goal: Gwinnett County is safe and well-connected, and it offers diverse amenities for people and businesses to live, work, and play.


Strategies

1. Assist Gwinnett County, local cities, and Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) with redevelopment by promoting sites in business development activities, providing business perspectives on infrastructure and site needs, sharing information, and convening a redevelopment task force to make recommendations.
2. Establish an attraction campaign focused on bringing in outside developers and investors to facilitate redevelopment that matches the community's vision and needs, especially for commercial space.
3. Conduct an annual survey of the business community to understand and communicate which community investments are the highest priority for their operations and employees.

Detailed tactical actions that support each strategy are included in Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables, and should serve as a working document for Partnership Gwinnett, the Implementation Committee, and partner organizations throughout implementation.

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Introduction

In August 2020, Partnership Gwinnett hired EY to assist in developing PG 4.0, the organization's fourth, five-year economic development strategy. This strategy is intended to build on the success of previous plans, identify new opportunities for improvement, and enhance overall economic development activities across Gwinnett County.

About this report

This comprehensive economic development strategy report represents the culmination of months of research and stakeholder engagement, which included 7 one-hour focus groups, over 20 interviews and small group meetings, 4 advisory committee workshops, a County tour, and an online survey with over 800 respondents. This report contains the findings of this research and engagement; observations from EY on economic development conditions and opportunities; and vision, goal, and strategy options based on aspirations heard from stakeholders throughout Gwinnett County.

The report is divided into the following chapters:

Competitive assessment: The competitive assessment examines Gwinnett County's performance in the three goal areas of PG 3.0 and summarizes findings from the detailed quantitative benchmarking research conducted as part of this process and presented in full in Appendix I.



SWOT assessment: The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) assessment combines the consulting team's quantitative and qualitative research to better understand Gwinnett County's economic performance and how it can be improved.

Target industry validation: This chapter reaffirms Partnership Gwinnett’s targeted industries and provides the most recently available data on industry performance and opportunities for growth.

Vision, mission, and principles: This chapter describes the long-term vision for the community, provides an updated mission for Partnership Gwinnett, and describes principles that underly this strategy and all of Partnership Gwinnett’s work.

Goals and strategies: In this chapter, we provide in-depth descriptions of each of PG 4.0’s recommended main goal areas, explaining why it is a focus for economic development in Gwinnett County and what it entails. We then provide potential strategies that could be pursued to achieve each goal.

Implementation: The final chapter provides an outline of how Partnership Gwinnett, the Implementation Committee, and other partner organizations can collaborate to implement the PG 4.0 strategy.



Competitive assessment

Partnership Gwinnett 3.0

In order to prepare strategic recommendations for the next five years, we begin by evaluating the past five years. This helps us better understand which strategies are working, which could use improvement, and which should potentially be let go based on changing local and global conditions. By examining the PG 3.0 strategic plan, we also consider whether the mission and goals remain aligned with the needs and desires of Gwinnett County residents and businesses.

Since inception, Partnership Gwinnett has been focused on a core mission to advance comprehensive economic development in Gwinnett County. Economic development can mean different things in different communities. In this case, through inclusive collaboration, Partnership Gwinnett works to attract and retain jobs, cultivate capital investment, support educational institutions, foster workforce development, and contribute to the exceptional quality of life found in Gwinnett County.

To achieve this core mission, PG 3.0 focused on three strategic goal areas: business development, talent development, and community development.

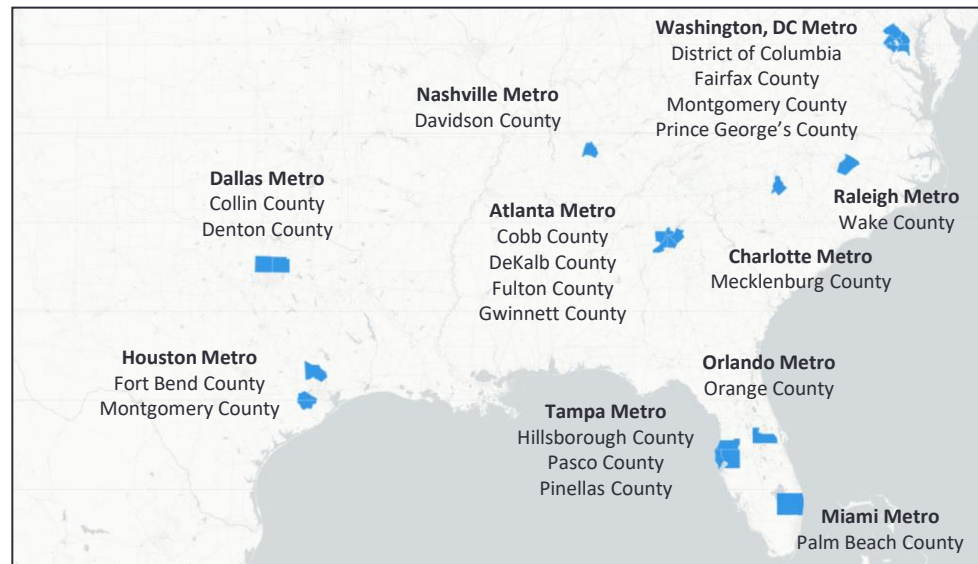
In this chapter of the strategy, we assess how Gwinnett County is performing in each of these strategic goal areas, in addition to the core mission that is focused on overall economic development in Gwinnett County.

Inclusive stakeholder input

Inclusion has been a fundamental approach to the implementation of PG 3.0 and was continued in developing this next strategy. To ensure broad, representative stakeholder input, EY and Partnership Gwinnett facilitated intentional and inclusive meetings, focus groups, workshops, and surveys of residents and businesses from across Gwinnett County. This included 7 focus groups (1.5 hours each) with nearly 100 participants, over 20 one-on-one interviews, 4 workshops with a 40-person advisory committee, and a community survey that received more than 800 responses. The findings from these engagements are discussed throughout this chapter and helped inform our assessment of Gwinnett County's needs and opportunities, as well as the vision for the future. Full results of the survey can be found in Appendix II.

Benchmarking Gwinnett County

In addition to interviews, focus groups, and surveys, EY conducted a detailed data benchmarking analysis. The full results of this analysis can be seen Appendix I. Gwinnett County was compared to 19 other counties of similar population size and location in large metropolitan areas.



Source: EY

The 19 benchmarks are located across the southeastern US and include three comparable counties in the Atlanta Metro: Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton. None of the benchmarked counties are exactly like Gwinnett County; thus, each offers a useful comparison to contextualize conditions in Gwinnett County.

The core mission

PG 3.0's core mission has been focused on advancing comprehensive economic development in Gwinnett County. Choosing metrics that perfectly reflect success in that mission can be a difficult task. Throughout implementation of PG 3.0, Partnership Gwinnett has prepared detailed report cards and key performance indicator (KPI) reports to assess strategic activity and impacts. Data from these reports were examined in our assessment and utilized in our evaluation.

In assessing Gwinnett County's overall economic development position, however, we chose to focus on global metrics that help contextualize how Gwinnett County is performing overall. Examples of these metrics are total employment growth, population growth, per capita gross regional product (GRP) and growth, household income levels and their growth, and average salary levels and their growth.

By all of these measures, economic development in Gwinnett County from 2015 to 2020 has been successful.

From 2014 to 2019, jobs, population, and gross regional product all grew more quickly in Gwinnett County than the US overall. (Gwinnett County grew jobs at 11%, people at 7%, and GRP at 30%, compared to the US at 8%, 3%, and 28%, respectively).

Local growth in these areas also approximately matched Georgia, one of the most economically successful states in the nation, but lagged slightly behind the overall Atlanta metropolitan statistical area, of which Gwinnett County is a part.

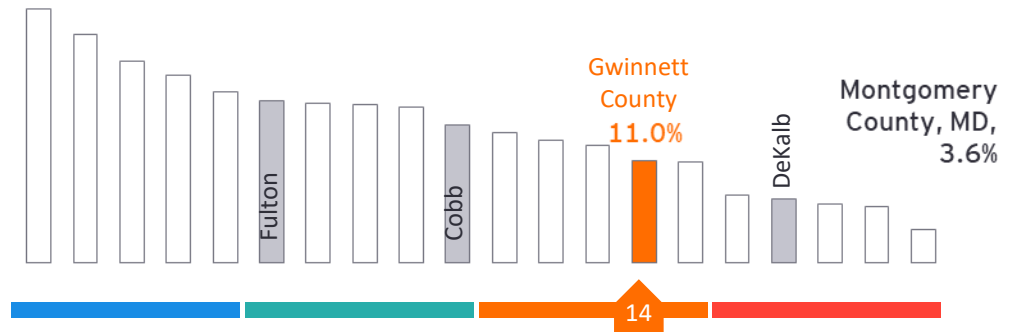
At \$72,100 in 2019, median household income in Gwinnett County was higher than the Atlanta Metro, Georgia, and the US, but, from 2014 to 2019, median household income growth lagged slightly behind those locations — rising 21% locally compared to 28% in the Atlanta Metro, 26% in Georgia, and 23% nationally.

At \$54,600 in 2019, the average wage of jobs in Gwinnett County is lower than the Atlanta Metro (\$61,700), Georgia (\$55,300), and the US (\$59,200). From 2014 to 2019, local average wages also grew more slowly than all of these benchmarks. The high household incomes in Gwinnett County compared to relatively low local wages indicates that many higher earning households likely hold jobs outside of Gwinnett County and commute each day.

Relative to the region, state, and nation, economic development in Gwinnett County has been highly successful, but, relative to the other 19 benchmark counties examined in our analysis, Gwinnett County is performing in the middle of the road. This does not indicate deficiencies in Gwinnett County; the comparison is to some of the highest-performing counties in the nation, but it does show that, despite success, there is room to improve.

Employment growth, 2014—2019

Denton County,
TX, 27.5%



Source: EMSI, EY.

Appendix I, Data benchmarking, provides a comparison on a range of metrics covering economic momentum and prosperity. The findings are generally consistent, with Gwinnett County ranked in the third quartile, between 10th and 15th in many categories.

For example, among the 20 counties examined, Gwinnett County ranked 14th for employment growth, behind Fulton and Cobb counties regionally, but ahead of DeKalb County.

Gwinnett County ranked 10th for population growth, 13th for GRP growth, and 12th for median household income growth. Notably, Gwinnett County ranked 19th for average annual salary growth, ahead of only Fort Bend County, Texas.

Business development

PG 3.0's business development goal has been focused on six strategic objectives:

1. Retain, expand, and leverage existing businesses.
2. Assist entrepreneurs and high-value startups.
3. Attract new business in high-value target sectors.
4. Nurture international business development through export promotion and foreign direct investment.
5. Leverage partnerships with local, regional, and state entities.
6. Foster policy and incentives frameworks that best support County business development.

Over the past five years, Partnership Gwinnett has been highly successful in accomplishing these objectives. It has facilitated and landed 95 projects that brought in over 12,800 new jobs and \$944 million in capital investment. Partnership Gwinnett continues to have strong success recruiting international businesses to Gwinnett County. Many businesses in Gwinnett County also do business overseas, with exports making up nearly 7% of Gwinnett County's gross regional product in 2018 — the 12th highest among benchmarks.

Gwinnett County has also been successful supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs. The number of small businesses in Gwinnett County is growing rapidly and shows a high concentration. In 2018, 75% of businesses in Gwinnett County had fewer than 20 employees — the 5th highest among benchmark counties. From 2013 to 2018, the share of businesses of this size increased 1% — the 2nd highest increase among benchmarks.

Like the residents of Gwinnett County, business ownership is also diverse. In 2017, 7% of businesses in Gwinnett County were owned by Hispanic individuals (the 7th highest among benchmarks), 5% were owned by Black individuals (the 8th highest), and 20% were owned by Asian individuals (the 3rd highest). Women owned 22% of businesses in Gwinnett County, the 15th highest among the benchmarks.

Since the creation of Partnership Gwinnett, the local entrepreneurial ecosystem has become much more robust with the creation of an entrepreneurship council, an angel investing group, a business plan competition, and a centralized website and marketing piece with information on entrepreneurial resources in Gwinnett County.

PG Projects

12,825

New employees from PG-assisted projects from 2015—2020

PG Projects

US\$944m

Capital investment from PG-assisted projects from 2015—2020

Highly successful innovation assets include Curiosity Labs, Atlanta Tech Park, and 22 Tech Park. These incubators and accelerators offer space, advice, and a variety of resources to support growing technology businesses in Gwinnett County. The Water Towers and Rowen projects also present unique opportunities to accelerate research and development and new technology commercialization in Gwinnett County.

Gwinnett County's entrepreneurial spirit can be seen in the high share of self-employed individuals locally — 12 out of 100 residents were self-employed in 2018 — the 2nd highest among benchmarks, and this number grew 20% from 2013 to 2018.

Now, Gwinnett County nears completion of the Gwinnett Entrepreneur Center in Lawrenceville, and Gwinnett County has entered into an agreement with Georgia Gwinnett College to run the facility. All of these resources and efforts underscore the strong opportunity to support small business owners and entrepreneurs as they create and grow businesses locally.

Strong collaboration between the County; Cities; the Chamber; Partnership Gwinnett; and other local, regional, and state economic development organizations has been cited as a reason for the success of business development efforts in Gwinnett County. Continuing to facilitate this collaboration will be important for future growth and for addressing remaining challenges, which include aging commercial and industrial properties, limited green real estate space, and a lack of site location incentives relative to some of the counties neighboring Gwinnett County.

Talent development

PG 3.0's talent development goal has been focused on six strategic objectives:

1. Support the continued excellence of the county's public school systems and their ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and multilingual student body.
2. Leverage the ongoing expansion of the county's existing post-secondary institutions and their continued alignment with the needs of residents and businesses in Gwinnett County.
3. Effectively retain graduates from our education systems.
4. Develop, retain, and attract the skilled workforce that is needed by existing and prospective future businesses in target sectors.
5. Foster next-generation and trusted leadership capacity.

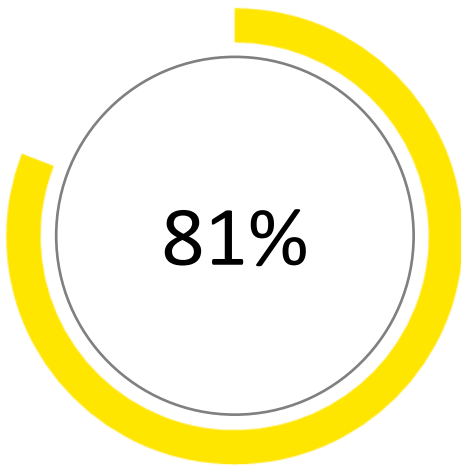
Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is considered one of the county's greatest strengths. Serving over 180,000 students, GCPS is the largest school system in Georgia and one of the largest in the country. The school system has won numerous awards over the years, including the Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2010 and 2014, which is given to the system that "demonstrated the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while narrowing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color." More recently, the system led the state, with 27 schools receiving 2019 Single Statewide Accountability System awards.

The success of GCPS's and PG 3.0's talent development efforts can also be seen in the data. From 2011 to 2019, the high school graduation rate in Gwinnett County increased 13 percentage points, from 68% to 81%. Over the same time period, the share of county residents over 25 years old with a bachelor's degree or higher increased 5 percentage points, from 34% to 39%.

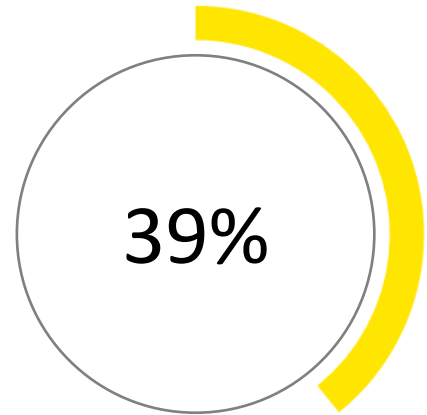
Notably, these gains were spread across racial groups. Detailed charts in the Appendix I show education gains by race. Breaking down the increase in high school graduations by race, from 2011 to 2019, White graduation rates increased by 9%, Black by 20%, Hispanic by 20%, and Asian by 12%. Over the same period, the share of White residents over 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher increased 7%, Black share increased 4%, Hispanic share increased 8%, and Asian share increased 4%.

Some significant gaps still remain in educational success by race. Notably, only 18% of Hispanic residents over 25 years old hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 47% of comparable White residents, 39% of Black, and 45% of Asian. Similarly, Hispanic graduation rates were 71% in 2019, compared to 90% for White students, 80% for Black, and 91% for Asian.

High school graduation rate, 2019



Share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, 2019



Source: Governor's Office of Student Achievement/US Census.

This shows that there remains room to improve, but, each year, Gwinnett County residents continue to gain greater access to education. Notably, this includes more than just GCPS, with Buford City Schools and numerous private schools receiving accolades as well. The Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology and other STEM programs continue to better prepare students for careers.

In addition to K-12 education, Gwinnett County offers post-secondary educational opportunities for all levels of students, including Georgia Gwinnett College, University of Georgia-Gwinnett, and Gwinnett Technical College. These institutions offer students a variety of options, price levels, and career pathways, but opportunities remain to continue aligning programs with business needs and improving the connections between learners, educators, and businesses.

One talent development area where Gwinnett County continues to face challenges is attraction and retention. In 2018, young professionals (residents 25 to 44 years old) made up only 27% of Gwinnett County's population (ranked 14th among benchmarks), and this share declined in recent years. Similarly, in 2019, more college educated residents left Gwinnett County than moved into it.

Community development

PG 3.0's community development goal has been focused on six strategic objectives:

1. Help preserve and maintain key assets and services that enhance community well-being.
2. Support the provision of necessary and competitive infrastructure.
3. Support initiatives that mitigate traffic congestion and provide transportation alternatives.
4. Aid in development and redevelopment of key corridors, activity centers, and public spaces.
5. Encourage the continued development of arts, cultural, and entertainment amenities, and other positive placemaking efforts.
6. Effectively engage the business community in support of community development objectives.

Gwinnett County is commonly recognized as a desirable place to live as a community with a high quality of life, but, of the three PG 3.0 goal areas, community development is the one that has the most room for improvement.

Along with great schools and parks, Gwinnett County is much more affordable overall than the US average and most benchmarks. In 2019, Gwinnett County had an overall cost of living index rating of 96.2, compared to 100 for the national average, and it ranked 3rd lowest among the benchmarks — below DeKalb (101.4), Cobb (103.1), and Fulton (111.6) counties.

Overall cost of living may be lower in Gwinnett County, but the cost of housing has increased significantly in recent years. From 2014 to 2019, the median home value in Gwinnett County increased 45%, the 10th highest among the benchmarks. Notably, median household income grew only 21% over the same period.

The increase in home values may be partly due to a limited increase in housing supply while population grew rapidly. From 2014 to 2019, the number of housing units in Gwinnett County grew 6% — the 12th fastest among benchmarks. Notably, during the same period, multifamily units comprised only 12% of total housing permits issued in Gwinnett County, which was the 2nd lowest among all of the benchmarks.

Part of Gwinnett County’s affordability is due to its geographic location relative to downtown, but this also increases travel distances for many commuters. In 2019, the average commute time in Gwinnett County was 34.5 minutes — the 4th highest among the benchmarks. The lack of public transit options is a notable challenge for many businesses when they are trying to recruit and retain talent, and it is an issue for many residents who are seeking employment and access to services.

Average travel time to work, 2019



Source: EMSI, EY.

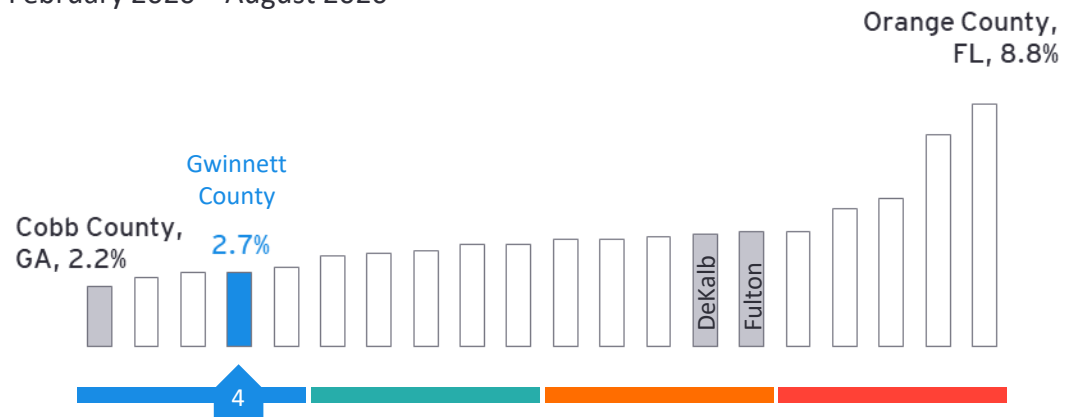
Commercial and industrial real estate product is another concern noted by stakeholders, the EY county tour, and the data. Much of Gwinnett County is built out, leaving limited space along transportation corridors for new development. Many of the commercial and industrial buildings currently available are older and less viable and attractive for new business tenants. This includes aging office space and smaller warehouse and flex spaces. Redevelopment of properties will continue to be critical to supporting further targeted growth in Gwinnett County, but, in Q3 2020, none of the office space under construction in the Atlanta Metro is located in Gwinnett County.

When surveyed, Gwinnett County residents identified the public transportation system, roads and highways, and tax rates as the top three weakest elements of the economy. Arts, culture, and entertainment came in 4th, showing that this remains a concern. It can be challenging to capture the arts and entertainment community in data, but, in 2018, Gwinnett County had 149 full-service restaurants and bars per 10,000 residents — the 7th lowest among the benchmark communities. New mixed-use developments and other cultural assets continue to provide more options in Gwinnett County, but, like much of the community development goal, there remains room for growth. Increased focus on this effort would likely require enhanced strategies and additional resources to be successful.

COVID-19 impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans and severely disrupted our economy. Each community has been impacted in different ways: economically, socially, and from a public health perspective. In terms of economic impacts, Gwinnett County has weathered the storm fairly well so far.

Change in unemployment rate,
February 2020—August 2020



Source: EMSI, EY.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 vary based on a variety of factors, including the severity of infections in a community, the regulations in response to the pandemic, and the makeup for local industries. For example, economies dependent on tourism, such as Orange County, Florida, the home of Walt Disney World, saw their unemployment rise from 2.8% in February 2020 to 11.6% in August 2020 — an 8.8-percentage-point increase.

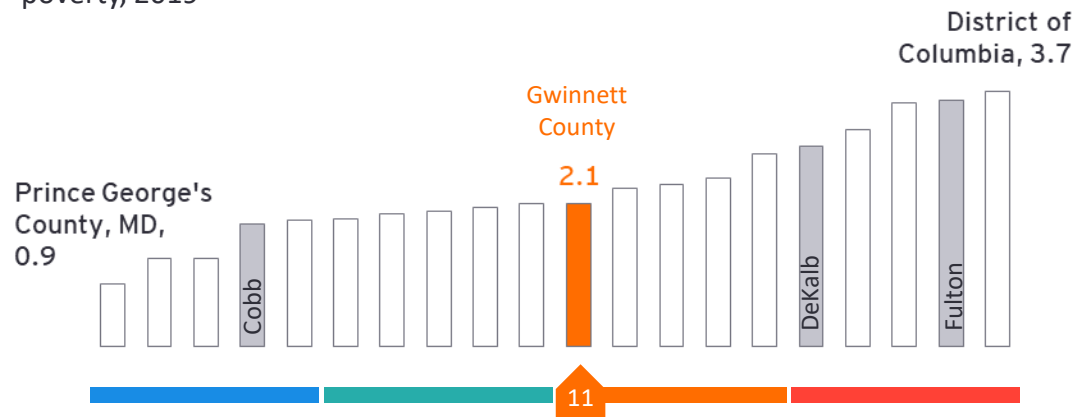
Gwinnett County, by contrast, saw the unemployment rate rise only 2.7 percentage points, from 3.1% in February to 5.8% in August. Almost all other benchmarks were more severely hit by the pandemic, with only Cobb County, Georgia; Collin County, Texas; and Denton County, Texas seeing smaller shifts.

Although impacts were less severe in Gwinnett County, this does not mean that businesses and individuals were not affected. Many businesses face challenges staying afloat, and many residents lost jobs. These people will need help through recovery to ensure that Gwinnett County emerges from the pandemic more resilient than before. Survey respondents identified helping business recover from COVID-19 as the 2nd highest priority for the next five years.

Equity of economic opportunity

In many communities, the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing health and economic disparities. Although the pandemic has less severely impacted Gwinnett County, disparities of economic opportunity are a reality.

Ratio of non-White poverty to White poverty, 2019



Source: EMSI, EY.

Gwinnett County has an incredibly racially diverse population. With a 0.87 in its racial and ethnic diversity index, Gwinnett County is the 2nd most diverse, beat only by Fort Bend County, Texas, among the benchmarks examined. But racial diversity does not equate to racial equity of economic opportunity. People of color are more than twice as likely to be in poverty in Gwinnett County than White residents. Gwinnett County ranked 11th among the benchmarks in this ratio — ahead of DeKalb and Fulton counties, but behind Cobb County.

Education disparities by race are smaller in Gwinnett County than those of income and poverty. In 2019, 0.7 people of color held some form of college education for every White resident of Gwinnett County — this ranked 7th among the benchmarks, ahead of Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb counties. From a gender perspective, in 2019, women's earnings were 77% of men's earnings in Gwinnett County — ranked 12th among the benchmarks.

Racial economic disparities are not unique to Gwinnett County or as severe as the US overall or many benchmarked communities, but they remain persistent. Additionally, numerous stakeholders noted the importance of ensuring equitable economic opportunities to a healthy, successful economy.



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SWOT assessment

Building on strengths to address challenges

The SWOT assessment in this chapter summarizes Gwinnett County’s competitive economic position and future opportunities through a holistic lens.

The conclusions in this section are drawn from analysis of quantitative data; qualitative information gathered from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and reports; and our national perspective and subject-matter specialization in this field.

The overall findings in this section lay a foundation of strengths on which Gwinnett County can build future economic development opportunities. They also help identify and prioritize strategic actions to address local challenges going forward.

Strengths

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Gwinnett is truly doing a great job. That's why we chose to live and work here. Getting better for tomorrow is key to staying on top.

Survey
respondent

- Jobs are growing faster than population in Gwinnett County, helping balance the ratio of residents to jobs.
- Partnership Gwinnett has been incredibly successful at creating jobs and encouraging investment in Gwinnett County. From 2015—2020, Partnership Gwinnett assisted in the creation of almost 13,000 jobs and more than \$900 million in investment.
- Public and private organizations in Gwinnett County are incredibly collaborative. Gwinnett County and Partnership Gwinnett are also seen as proactively planning for, and investing in, the county's future.
- Gwinnett County's schools are high-performing and contribute to an attractive overall quality of life.
- Alongside schools, Gwinnett County is recognized for its parks and recreational assets, such as the Stone Mountain Tennis Center. These contribute to a highly desirable quality of life that makes it attractive to both businesses and residents.
- Gwinnett County's population is highly racially diverse and international.
- Local diversity, food, and cultural offerings help make Gwinnett County successful with international business recruitment.
- Gwinnett County is home to multiple higher education institutions that allow local students and residents access to an education beyond K-12 in their own county.
- County schools and businesses have good relationships, which allows students the unique opportunity to explore different jobs and industry during middle school, high school, or college.
- Gwinnett County is known within the Greater Atlanta area and Georgia as an excellent partner, a great place to live, and a great place to do business. Regional organizations are supportive of Gwinnett County and Partnership Gwinnett.
- Gwinnett County is part of the Innovation Crescent and home to innovation-based assets, including Atlanta Tech Park, Curiosity Labs, 22 Tech Park, the new Water Tower project, and the recently announced Rowen project.
- Residents in Gwinnett County are highly educated. From 2011—2019, the number of residents with a high school diploma or higher rose 13% to 81%, and the number of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher rose 5% to 39%.

Weaknesses

- Real estate product offerings in Gwinnett County could be improved. Office, industrial, and warehousing buildings are often outdated and less attractive to new employers, and greenfield space for new development is limited.
- A lack of public transit options and growing traffic congestion are top concerns among residents and businesses.
- Gwinnett County offers fewer incentives to new businesses than neighboring counties, which can create challenges in business retention and recruitment.
- Racial economic disparities persist in Gwinnett County, and some stakeholders feel investment could be more evenly spread across geographic areas.
- Gwinnett County's distance from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport, coupled with the lack of public transit options, is a challenge, especially for some international visitors or businesses.
- Childcare options are a challenge in Gwinnett County, like many communities across the US — especially during the pandemic. Childcare options are limited and expensive for many families.
- Although Gwinnett County is known for accessible internships and on-the-job learning opportunities for students, many students lack the transportation to access these opportunities.
- Gwinnett County is known as a great place to live, but housing is becoming more expensive, especially relative to growth in income. Many stakeholders feel that the county currently lacks affordable options for the local workforce or younger generations, such as denser apartments, condominiums, or townhomes. Others in survey responses feel that too many apartments are being built. These differing perceptions can create challenges in supporting housing needs.
- The diversity in Gwinnett County sometimes results in cultural and language barriers, which can make it difficult to connect different racial groups to the resources they need, especially for kids and families in the education system.
- Employers have reported some issues with soft skills in the local workforce.
- Gwinnett County has a great and growing innovation ecosystem, but many stakeholders feel it could be better marketed within the region, state, and nation.

“

Commute times are really tough for some folks and defeat the work/life balance so many want to achieve.

Anonymous survey respondent

“

I would like to make the Gwinnett Place Mall area to become a thriving commercial cluster, like it used to be in its glory days.

Survey
respondent

Opportunities

- Many industrial and commercial buildings and corridors in Gwinnett County are primed for redevelopment. A comprehensive redevelopment strategy that includes connectivity, placemaking, and sustainability planning could address numerous needs county-wide.
- Expansion of MARTA into Gwinnett County could provide much-needed transit connectivity to the broader Atlanta metropolitan area.
- Gwinnett County’s burgeoning technology and technological entrepreneurship ecosystem could be bolstered and grow even further through strategic initiatives and increased connectivity to educational institutions: Gwinnett Tech, Georgia Gwinnett, Georgia Tech, and University of Georgia.
- The Rowen project presents a unique, long-term opportunity to position Gwinnett County as a research and technology center.
- As the most diverse county within a region that is leading conversations around equity and inclusion, Gwinnett County could be a leader for strategies that move beyond celebrating diversity to improving economic equity and being truly inclusive.
- Gwinnett County’s location and diversity make it especially attractive for international businesses.
- The west side of Gwinnett County is seen as a possible place for growth.
- New and younger residents are getting more involved in local political and civic organizations. Gwinnett County could become an excellent place for up-and-coming leaders to grow and collaborate, a County that’s known for fostering local leadership.
- The entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem is growing in Gwinnett County and will only get stronger as the Rowen site, Atlanta Tech Park, and the Water Tower continue to attract interest.
- The expansion of investors and venture capitalists in Gwinnett County could result in an even stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Gwinnett County is known for its diversity, but there is an opportunity to more intentionally reflect this diversity in leadership roles in civic organizations, businesses, and more.
- Gwinnett County’s international business and resident connections provide continued opportunities for business development, especially as COVID-19 brings more international companies looking to onshore.

“

There is a massive disparity between the parts of Gwinnett that are well off and the parts that are not. It seems that resources are allocated much better to the desirable parts of the county while poor areas with high crime are forgotten.

Survey respondent

Threats

- If Gwinnett County does not create new, modern real estate product, it could become more difficult to attract and retain target industry businesses. It could also be more difficult to help current businesses expand in the area without new product.
- Without an expansion of transit options and greater connectivity to the rest of the Atlanta Metro and the airport, Gwinnett County may face challenges attracting and retaining young professionals and businesses that rely on their talent.
- Collaboration is one of Gwinnett County's strongest characteristics, but it requires intentional planning, inclusion, and nurturing future leadership. If this spirit of collaboration and intentional inclusion is lost, it could affect the consistency of investments and planning.
- Similarly, if the diverse population of Gwinnett County feels that it is left out, not represented by leadership, and missing out on investment, it could increase local economic disparities and feelings of disenfranchisement.
- Gwinnett County does not offer as many incentives as neighboring counties or benchmark counties across the US, which could make Gwinnett County less competitive for some business deals.
- Some of Gwinnett County's major corridors are considered aesthetically displeasing by residents and businesses, which could deter future businesses or residents from locating in Gwinnett County in the future.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused health concerns among workers, which means that some jobs are going unfilled and some County residents will willingly remain out of work until they feel the workplace is safe again. This could cause long-lasting impacts on Gwinnett County's workforce and industries.
- Encouraging the development of more dense, affordable housing has proven to be a challenge, even when cities in Gwinnett County have offered incentives for denser housing.
- The innovation ecosystem is growing in Gwinnett County, but, without local investors and funds to support growth, many local entrepreneurs may be forced to grow their business opportunities elsewhere.



4 Target industry validation

As part of our analysis, we were asked to examine Partnership Gwinnett’s target industries, validate their continued relevance, and provide any observations on how they might be adjusted to match current competitive conditions and emerging trends.

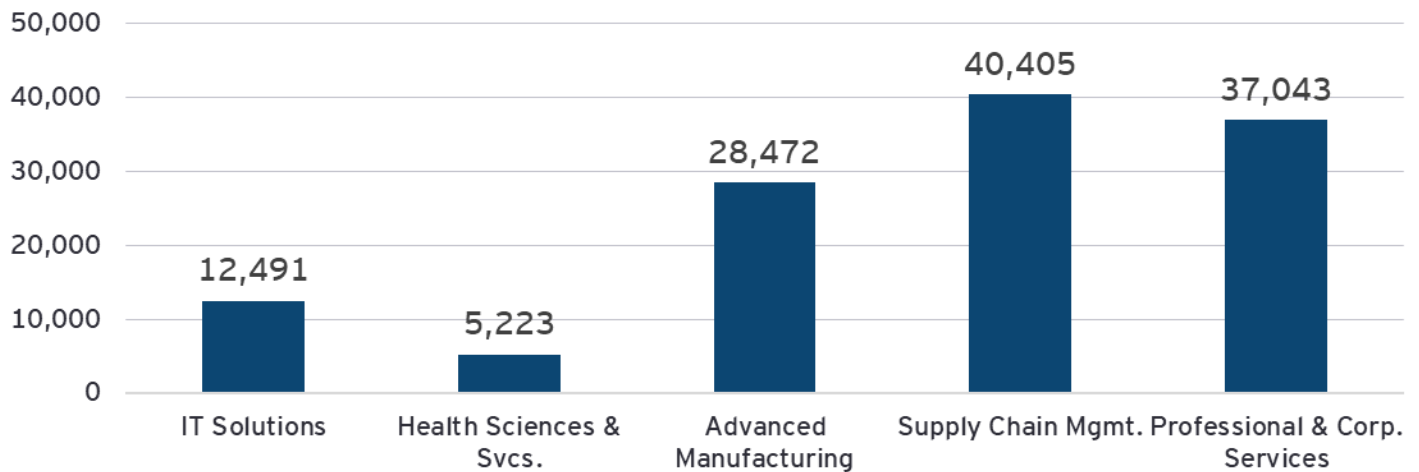
Partnership Gwinnett is currently targeting five industry clusters: Information Technology Solutions, Health Sciences and Services, Advanced Manufacturing, Supply Chain Management, and Professional and Corporate Services.

All target industries are performing well in Gwinnett County and present continued opportunities for growth that match the county's assets and aspirations to create more higher-paying career pathways. The following pages share statistics on each target industry, observations on challenges and opportunities associated with each, and recommendations for adjustments to how their performance is tracked by Partnership Gwinnett.

Notably, all target industries, except Advanced Manufacturing, are more concentrated in Gwinnett County than the US average, indicating the strength of local competitive assets. Each target industry pays local salaries above Gwinnett County average and close to the Atlanta Metro average. All target industries created jobs in Gwinnett County from 2014 to 2019, with the highest growth in Health Sciences and Services, which is also currently the smallest sector in terms of total jobs.

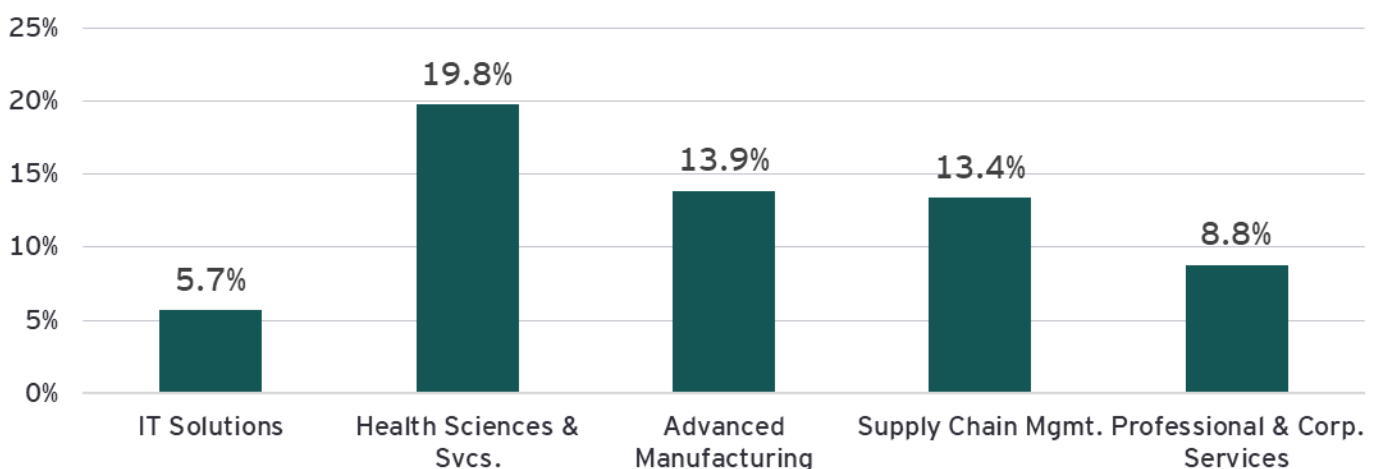
Combined, Partnership Gwinnett's target industries represent over 108,000 jobs in Gwinnett County — 30% of all employment. Supply Chain Management (40,405 jobs) and Professional and Corporate Services (37,043 jobs) are the largest local clusters. From 2014 to 2019, these combined clusters added 11,500 new jobs, a growth rate of 11% — equal to overall county employment growth over this period.

Target Industry Employment, 2019



Source: EMSI, EY.

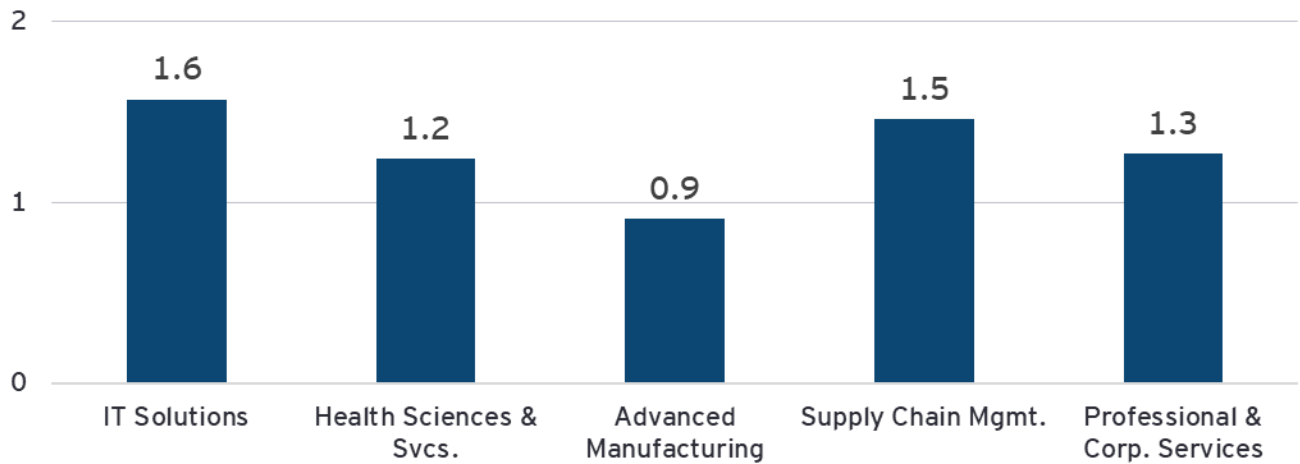
Target Industry Employment Growth, 2014—19



Source: EMSI, EY.

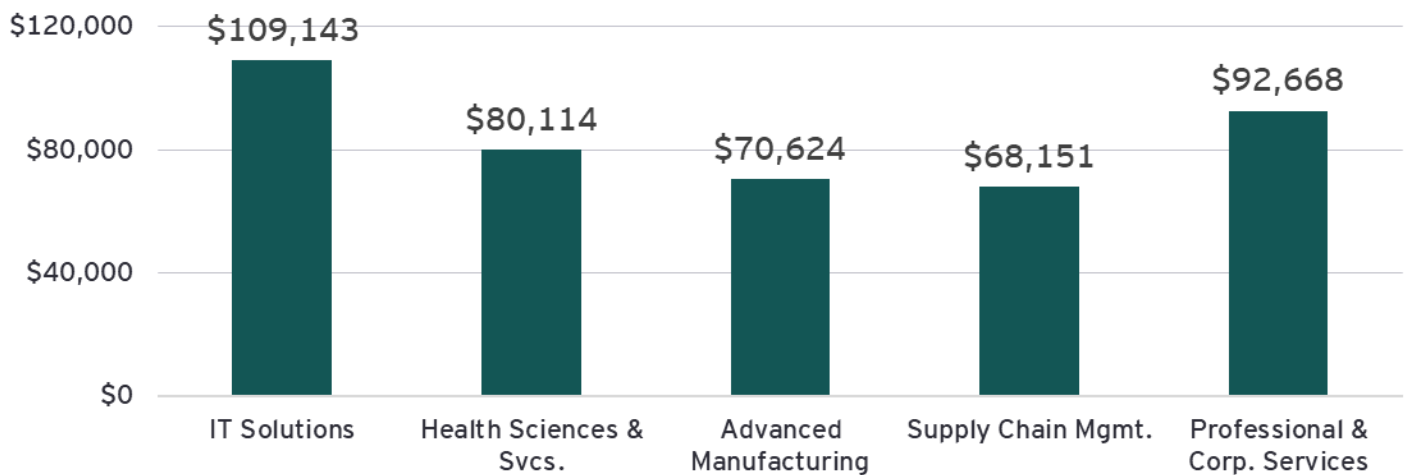
All target clusters, except Manufacturing, are more concentrated in Gwinnett County than the US average, with Location Quotients (LQs) over 1.0. All target clusters also pay salaries well above the county average (\$54,500), with IT paying the highest at \$109,100 on average in Gwinnett County.

Target Industry LQ, 2019



Source: EMSI, EY.

Target Industry Average Salary, 2019



Source: EMSI, EY.

Observations

Information Technology Solutions

- Gwinnett County is home to a relatively concentrated IT Solutions cluster that pays high wages — nearly double the county average.
- This cluster is growing more slowly than the overall economy in Gwinnett County, and challenges may exist finding Class A office space to accommodate larger operations in this cluster.
- This cluster is growing more rapidly in the rest of the Atlanta Metro, reflective of trends in recent years of IT Solutions employers seeking locations in proximity to larger concentrations of younger workers with transportation connectivity and access to concentrated amenities, such as bars and restaurants, and apartment housing. Continued mixed-use development, increased transportation connectivity, and growth of cultural amenities could make Gwinnett County increasingly attractive to employers in this target cluster.
- There are indications that the COVID-19 pandemic may also create more opportunities for growth in this cluster in Gwinnett County as more businesses in this cluster provide options for remote work, although how that will manifest in terms of business locations vs. worker locations remains to be seen.

Health Sciences and Services

- Health Sciences and Services is the fastest-growing target cluster in Gwinnett County, with local growth matching that of the Atlanta Metro and exceeding the US rate of growth.
- This cluster pays well above average salaries and offers a range of rewarding career pathways for individuals with different skill levels.
- Gwinnett County has high employment concentrations in pharmaceutical manufacturing and medical equipment, both high-wage and high-growth subsectors that are well supported by university research and development activities across Georgia and educational institutions in Gwinnett County. Innovative companies at Atlanta Tech Park and other locations in the county contribute to rising strengths in this sector.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to continue to accelerate growth in this cluster within Gwinnett County and the Atlanta Metro as the US and the world increase their focus on population health, recovery, and resiliency.

Advanced Manufacturing

- Advanced Manufacturing is the least concentrated (lowest LQ) target industry in Gwinnett County, but it saw the 2nd highest growth rate in recent years.

- Manufacturing opportunities for Gwinnett County should be especially focused on technologically advanced subsectors and international companies. Many larger traditional manufacturing and original equipment manufacturing operations are likely to seek lower-cost locations, but Gwinnett County has strengths related to availability of a highly skilled workforce, the ability to develop training programs at local educational institutions, strong highway logistical connectivity, and geographic proximity to other Atlanta Metro manufacturing companies and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.
- Gwinnett County's population diversity and past success with international companies continue to make it an attractive destination for foreign companies seeking domestic locations. The COVID-19 pandemic may further expand these opportunities as more international companies open operations in the US to avoid supply chain disruptions. Similarly, more US manufacturers may explore re-shoring opportunities for similar reasons.

Supply Chain Management

- Supply Chain Management is the largest existing cluster in Gwinnett County, which a high concentration of jobs, but the lowest average salary among target industries. This cluster still pays salaries well above the Gwinnett County average and has seen strong growth in recent years.
- Gwinnett County continues to have competitive strengths in this cluster due to Gwinnett County's geographic location within the Atlanta Metro, the state of Georgia, and the US, combined with a strong highway infrastructure.
- Much of the existing warehousing and distribution space in Gwinnett County is dated, with lower ceilings than desired by new operations, which may create challenges growing this sector without reinvestment and redevelopment of existing properties. These older flex spaces nonetheless offer competitive opportunities for smaller supply chain companies, small-scale manufacturers, technology companies, and more.

Professional and Corporate Services

- Professional and Corporate Services is the 2nd largest existing target cluster in Gwinnett County, with the 2nd highest average salary.
- This cluster is growing more slowly in Gwinnett County than the Atlanta Metro and the US, which could be due to a variety of factors, including limited availability of new office space and transportation options. As redevelopment occurs and the Atlanta Metro grows, these challenges may become less of a concern for employers in this cluster.
- Similar to trends in IT Solutions, the COVID-19 pandemic could increase the potential for Gwinnett County growth in this target cluster as more companies distribute operations away from city centers and allow for remote work.

Tracking adjustments

In the past, Partnership Gwinnett has used a combination of Standard Industrial Classification and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to collect and analyze data on these target industries. The codes being utilized to categorize the target industries have, in some cases, been fairly broad, and they occasionally double count jobs in two different target clusters.

To ease collection of consistent and accurate statistics on Partnership Gwinnett's target industries, we suggest that it utilize the following NAICS codes, which were used in our data analysis on the previous pages:

Information Technology Solutions

- 5112 — Software Publishers
- 518 — Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
- 51913 — Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals
- 5415 — Computer Systems Design and Related Services

Health Sciences and Services

- 3254 — Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing
- 3345 — Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing
- 3391 — Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing
- 54138 — Testing Laboratories
- 541714 — Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)
- 6215 — Medical and Diagnostic Labs

(Note: This focuses on Health Sciences and Services, not direct medical care, such as hospitals and doctors' offices.)

Advanced Manufacturing

- 31 — Manufacturing


(Note: This is currently the broad manufacturing code utilized by Partnership Gwinnett, which captures many activities that would not be considered "Advanced." It is worth considering a more refined subset of manufacturing codes to track.)

Supply Chain Management

- 42 — Wholesale Trade
- 48 — Transportation and Warehousing

Professional and Corporate Services

- 54 — Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- 55 — Management of Companies and Enterprises



Vision, mission, and principles

The vision statement for an economic development strategy should reflect the values and economic priorities of a community. It should be bold and aspirational — painting a long-term vision of where the community could be in 20 years. At the same time, the vision statement should feel attainable and measurable so that the community feels that it's been tasked with a challenging but realistic goal.

Partnership Gwinnett's vision statement provides a signpost to guide goals and strategies. It should also act as a reference point when making future decisions. When executing assignments, prioritizing investments, developing programs, and communicating about Gwinnett County, Partnership Gwinnett and economic development partner organizations should ask whether their choices match this vision for Gwinnett County.

Below is a suggested economic development vision statement for Gwinnett County that incorporates diverse voices, aspirations and possibilities identified during the planning process. At its core, this vision is focused on creating business opportunities that raise the incomes of all households in Gwinnett County.

20-year vision statement

Gwinnett County is the leading destination for business and talent in the nation and has a thriving economy for diverse people and businesses of all sizes.

Mission statement

The mission statement describes how the economic development organization will go about achieving the vision. Partnership Gwinnett requested an updated mission statement that was concise and memorable, inspired by the Gwinnett Chamber's mission, "We champion business". The draft mission statement below seeks to capture Partnership Gwinnett's core purpose in the community in a simple and succinct way, with the focus on actively creating opportunities that increase prosperity for people and businesses in Gwinnett County.



We drive economic prosperity in Gwinnett County.

Economic development goals

PG 3.0 focused on three key pillars: business development, talent development and community development. Focusing on these pillars provided a holistic approach to economic development, recognizing that growing desirable businesses depends on cultivating talent and investing in the community. This approach also positioned Partnership Gwinnett to play specific roles in each pillar: for business development, leading and managing; for talent development, convening and catalyzing; and for community development, encouraging and supporting.

PG 3.0 has been a successful strategy, and stakeholders in Gwinnett County expressed a desire to continue the good work while exploring ways to improve, address new challenges and opportunities, and take economic development to the next level. Among stakeholders' goals, we heard common themes around attracting more higher-paying jobs, raising incomes across the county, and accelerating redevelopment.

Based on these objectives, in PG 4.0, we recommend maintaining the same three pillars, but adding strategies and tactics to amplify efforts that grow attractive jobs, train individuals and connect them to profitable career pathways, and facilitate strategic investment in Gwinnett County. Although the goal topics may remain the same, instead of pillars that stand separately, in PG 4.0, they should be considered mutually reinforcing focus areas that each help Partnership Gwinnett accomplish its mission and Gwinnett County achieve its vision of prosperity. Additionally, as progress has been made around each goal, Partnership Gwinnett can play a more active role in community development as a convener and catalyst.

Business development goal: Gwinnett County is a top location for domestic and international businesses, local small business, and entrepreneurial startups.

This goal area focuses on actively growing and supporting the business community in Gwinnett County. Strategies within this goal area include those that attract new domestic and international businesses in targeted industries, connect with and support existing businesses to help them grow, and assist small business and entrepreneurial organizations as they cultivate new business creation in Gwinnett County. This goal area represents the core of traditional economic development activities that are led and managed by Partnership Gwinnett in collaboration with local and state partners when dealing with small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Talent development goal: Individuals can access educational resources that match their learning needs and offer rewarding career pathways with Gwinnett County employers.

This goal area focuses on ensuring that businesses in Gwinnett County have access to a skilled workforce and that County residents have access to educational opportunities that set them up for profitable local careers and help raise incomes. Gwinnett County's educational system is one of its greatest assets, and strategies within this goal include continuing to support the K-20 system, connecting learners to in-demand post-secondary training opportunities, and exploring opportunities for upskilling and reskilling to support local businesses and have access to a high-quality job. As educational institutions across Gwinnett County continue to successfully develop new programs, Partnership Gwinnett can play an important role in increasing collaboration and communication between organizations so that businesses and individuals can more easily access resources.

Community development goal: Gwinnett County is safe, well-connected, and offers diverse amenities for people and businesses to live, work and play.

This goal area focuses on ensuring that Gwinnett County remains a desirable location for people and businesses. In today's economy, businesses often follow people, and people seek communities that have a high quality of life. Business needs are ever in flux, and commercial properties require reinvestment or redevelopment to ensure that they support the changing space and technology needs of employers. Strategies under this goal include attracting new investors to Gwinnett County, gathering and sharing the needs of growing businesses, and catalyzing investment that will facilitate economic development throughout the community.

Foundational principles

Extending the principle of inclusion from PG 3.0, the following foundational principles reflect values that Gwinnett County stakeholders expressed throughout the planning process. These principles can guide economic development activities and decisions throughout strategic implementation:

- **Inclusion** — Bringing more voices to the table and incorporating diverse perspectives when making decisions and investments.
- **Innovation** — Leveraging technology and creative thinking to solve problems and create new opportunities in Gwinnett County.
- **Collaboration** — Working with partners to collectively achieve the community's economic development vision and address local needs.

Partnership Gwinnett 4.0 strategic framework graphic



A woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a red and black plaid shirt, is looking down at a tablet computer. She is standing in a greenhouse filled with green plants. The background shows the glass and metal structure of the greenhouse. A large, semi-transparent number '6' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Goals and strategies

In this chapter, we provide in-depth descriptions of each of PG 4.0's recommended main goal areas, explaining why it is a focus for economic development in Gwinnett County and what it entails. We then provide potential strategies that could be pursued to achieve each goal. The strategies themselves are at a higher level and are supported by specific tactical actions, which are provided in Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Metrics

For each goal, we provide suggested metrics that will help measure in Gwinnett County's longer-term progress toward the goal. These metrics do not provide a direct measure of Partnership Gwinnett's activities and their success, but rather offer reliable statistics to track overall progress toward each goal. Many of these metrics are available for only previous years and thus lag behind actual activity. They nonetheless provide useful insight into the health of Gwinnett County's economy and whether change is trending in the desired direction.

Key performance indicators

Alongside metrics, which measure overall progress toward each goal, we provide suggested KPIs that will help Partnership Gwinnett track progress implementing tactical activities and their impacts. The impact of some economic development activities can be difficult to measure, since the return on investment may not occur for many years. For example, a marketing brochure read by a company today may register with a CEO, but not translate into an actual relocation for five years. Throughout these goals, we suggest KPIs that are measurable, reflective of activity and impact, easily communicated, and not so extensive as to dilute the measurement.

Business development

Goal 1: Gwinnett County is a top location for domestic and international businesses, local small business, and entrepreneurial startups.

Business development is, and should remain, the core role for Partnership Gwinnett to lead and manage. This goal area focuses on attracting, retaining, expanding, and facilitating the creation of new businesses. In addition to marketing local opportunities to outsiders, this includes providing businesses with the support and resources they need to thrive in Gwinnett County — a role that Partnership Gwinnett should play in collaboration with other local and statewide partners.

Gwinnett County's economic development strengths make it a highly competitive location to attract and grow businesses in its target industries. Partnership Gwinnett has had particular success with international businesses, which continue to find Gwinnett County a top destination in the nation. The strategies below seek to leverage those competitive strengths and make these efforts even more successful.

Notably, during the PG 4.0 planning process, stakeholders articulated common desires to see an increased emphasis on supporting existing businesses, creating business opportunities across Gwinnett County's geographic areas, and focusing on quality economic development projects. Quality projects are business development opportunities that pay above-average wages, offer career pathways to economic prosperity, or bring significant capital investment that generates positive economic impacts (see the following callout page for more detail). These strategies aim to make Gwinnett County the Atlanta Metro leader for job growth, alongside population growth, and raise the average salary to 1st within the region.

Strategies

1. Enhance and expand marketing materials and activities to successfully reach and attract more targeted businesses.
2. Regularly meet with local businesses to support retention and expansion of their operations.
3. Convene an entrepreneur council to connect local entrepreneurs and small businesses with potential customers, external organizations, and other resources to support their growth.
4. Support the development of Rowen and other technology centers to establish Gwinnett County as a leading innovation center in the Southeast.
5. Strategically utilize incentives to support community economic development goals.

Business development

Goal 1: Gwinnett County is a top location for domestic and international businesses, local small business, and entrepreneurial startups.

Metrics

1. Total private employment and growth.
2. Target industry employment and growth.
3. Gross domestic product levels and growth.
4. Gwinnett County average wage and growth.

KPIs

1. Relocation project statistics (e.g., jobs created, average wage, capital investment, industry, international or domestic, site location).
2. Expansion project statistics (e.g., jobs created/retained, average wage, capital investment, industry, site location).
3. Existing business visit statistics (e.g., number of meetings, industry, geographic location, demographics of owners).
4. Marketing trips conducted and associated statistics (e.g., business meetings held) – international and domestic.
5. Inbound events hosted/site visits conducted (e.g., statistics on site location visits).
6. Leads generated by source.
7. Website and marketing statistics.
8. Incentive awards and economic impact statistics (shared by incentive-awarding organization and Partnership Gwinnett).

Defining quality projects

As Partnership Gwinnett focuses on business attraction and assisting existing and new businesses, it is important to choose the projects on which to focus limited staff time and resources. This does not mean that business opportunities will be excluded from Gwinnett County, but rather that Partnership Gwinnett can choose to spend more budget, time, marketing, and other resources on those projects that best match the elements of quality desired by local stakeholders.

By establishing agreed-upon essential criteria that define quality projects, Partnership Gwinnett can also more easily identify which projects are likely to receive incentives from Gwinnett County, cities, and other organizations, providing clarity and making communication with prospective businesses easier.

During the PG 4.0 planning process, we heard consistent expression from Gwinnett County residents, business leaders, and elected leaders regarding the types of business opportunities they would like targeted. The following criteria could provide a baseline to determine whether a business development opportunity is a quality project:

- A quality project should pay above-average wages compared to the existing average for that industry in Gwinnett County/Atlanta Metro.
- A quality project should offer benefits to its employees, such as health insurance and paid sick leave.
- A quality project should offer a variety of entry points for individuals with different education/skills and opportunities for rewarding career advancement.
- A quality project should additionally (or alternatively) bring a high level of capital investment to Gwinnett County, which would generate tax revenues that have a positive economic impact on the community.

These are common minimum criteria for defining a quality project. Other factors that Partnership Gwinnett could consider include whether the opportunity advanced strategic goals, such as growing the applied environmental research at the Water Tower or whether the firm expressed interest in investing additional resources in the local community, such as investments to youth programs or other community needs.

Defining the types of projects that Partnership Gwinnett will actively pursue could allow it to focus on pursuing leads that are pre-qualified as desirable by the community. It would also make it easier for Partnership Gwinnett to measure and communicate progress on identified goals and metrics for business development.

Business development

1.1 Enhance and expand marketing materials and activities to successfully reach and attract more targeted businesses.

Partnership Gwinnett currently has a robust marketing toolkit and widely admired brand, but it could be expanded and refreshed to better reach target audiences and industries. Enhancing these activities will also help Partnership Gwinnett reinforce the positive brand it has within the region and state while growing awareness nationally and internationally. Tactics within this strategy could include working with existing international businesses to enhance sales messages, adding new marketing tools, refining current marketing tools or tools in development, continuing to align with state and regional partners, and reviewing the analytics and efficacy of each tool throughout implementation.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

1.2 Regularly meet with local businesses to support retention and expansion of their operations.

Directly connecting with local businesses is the best way to hear what challenges they are facing and understand how Partnership Gwinnett can support them. Business retention and expansion meetings could include personalized one-on-one visits (or videoconference) with a single business's leadership or meetings with multiple business executives from a target industry in a group setting.

The firsthand connection and personal outreach from these meetings allow Partnership Gwinnett to proactively identify obstacles that might prevent local businesses from expanding and to either directly address those obstacles or connect the business with another organization that might help. These meetings also allow Partnership Gwinnett to regularly take the pulse of Gwinnett County's competitive position by listening and compiling business perspectives on local strengths, challenges, and needs. Tactics within this strategy focus on regularly connecting with local businesses across Gwinnett County, systematically collecting feedback from these meetings, and actively supporting businesses based on their feedback.

Notably, during the planning process, stakeholders, including elected officials, expressed a desire to connect with minority- and woman-owned businesses and businesses in all geographic areas of Gwinnett County. To ensure demographic and geographic representation in this strategy, tactics could also include tracking of related characteristics associated with engaged businesses and intentional outreach to reflect Gwinnett County's diversity.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Business development

1.3 Convene an entrepreneur council to connect local entrepreneurs and small businesses with potential customers, external organizations, and other resources to support their growth.

Small businesses create the majority of new jobs in any community. There are differences between a local-serving small business, such as a restaurant, and a software development entrepreneur, but they both offer benefits to economic development. Whether a locally owned brewery or the next big technology startup, they play an important role in creating local jobs and offer important opportunities for wealth creation for business owners and their families.

Entrepreneurs can start a business anywhere but tend to thrive in communities with ample resources to help them grow. If an entrepreneur cannot find the resources they need locally, their business may never get off the ground, fail or move to a new location.

In the past, Partnership Gwinnett played a more direct role in small-business support, but the small-business support ecosystem in Gwinnett County has grown and, along with it, the small-business community, especially in the technology and innovation sectors. Newer organizations and facilities, like Atlanta Tech Park, the Water Tower, and the soon-to-open Gwinnett Entrepreneur Center, provide invaluable resources to support local entrepreneurs and small businesses. With the small-business support network growing more robust, Partnership Gwinnett's role in this area can also evolve.

In addition to attracting entrepreneurs to Gwinnett County and specific developments, such as Rowen, Partnership Gwinnett can help connect local entrepreneurs to larger county businesses as potential customers, mentors, or funders through formalized programs. These connections can provide valuable insights to new entrepreneurs and directly facilitate new business opportunities, all of which help grow businesses in Gwinnett County.

As a connector to information, organizations, and resources outside of Gwinnett County, Partnership Gwinnett can also serve as an important resource for local small businesses and entrepreneurs. This includes providing research and market intelligence to businesses, sharing information about state and federal programs for COVID-19 recovery and other topics, and bringing in outside experts to share knowledge.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Business development

1.4 Support the development of Rowen and other technology centers to establish Gwinnett County as a leading innovation center in the Southeast.

Gwinnett County is home to numerous growing technology centers, including the Water Tower, Atlanta Tech Park, and the Curiosity Lab at Peachtree Corners. Partnership Gwinnett can continue to support these technology centers by highlighting them in marketing materials, arranging site visits for prospective companies, and convening leaders in regular meetings to discuss development opportunities.

The Rowen project is a unique opportunity for Gwinnett County and the entire Atlanta region that complements these other assets. Partnership Gwinnett should support the Rowen Foundation and other partners as much as it can throughout the entire life cycle of the project. Rowen is a long-term investment, and some activities will be laying a foundation for future growth. At the same time, businesses are already exploring Rowen as a potential location site, which demonstrates the importance of incorporating Rowen into planning efforts alongside other technology centers.

Partnership Gwinnett can assist the Rowen Foundation and other organizations' marketing efforts by including the sites in marketing materials and promoting them at speaking events. Supporting marketing efforts will be especially important for Rowen because the community is still unclear about what the Rowen project is and what it means for the economy. Partnership Gwinnett could help the community develop and understand the vision for Rowen. It can also assist with business development efforts to sites in Rowen, the Water Tower, and other parks and support any related businesses by connecting them to training, the local workforce, and other assets.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Business development

1.5 Strategically utilize incentives to support community economic development goals.

Every community presents different strengths and challenges for businesses to locate, expand existing operations, or create a new startup enterprise. Incentives can take a wide array of forms, but they are generally considered tools that help a business overcome an operational challenge in a community. These could be tax abatements to offset costs, cash grants based on job creation, workforce training credits, expedited permitting processes, subsidized space in an incubator, and much more. Incentives should always be utilized strategically to advance community goals, such as redeveloping a blighted property or attracting an employer that will bring thousands of high-wage jobs to the community.

Communities should offer diverse incentive options to businesses in different industries and stages of growth, including options for both existing businesses in the community and newly located ones. In all cases, incentives should be offered only if they have a net positive economic impact on the community and align with community goals.

Gwinnett County is not the lowest-cost location in the Atlanta region, and, because it offers many other strategic advantages to businesses, Gwinnett County generally does not offer cash incentives. For businesses in some industries, this may make Gwinnett County less competitive for attraction. This is offset by competitive strengths that Gwinnett County offers for other businesses.

Gwinnett County has a well-articulated incentives policy in place, but it could be re-examined to ensure that it is up to date and reflective of best practices. Incentive policies should always protect taxpayers by including clawback provisions and other safeguards. This is particularly important because site selection dynamics and business needs change frequently, especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, to help Partnership Gwinnett most effectively target the right industry sectors and assist local and external businesses, Partnership Gwinnett could develop an incentive framework that identifies all possible incentives available in Gwinnett County from different sources, including Gwinnett County, the cities, the state of Georgia, and educational institutions. These incentive tools could then be cross-tabulated to the specific industry sectors and types of businesses they best support. By tracking which incentives are pursued and utilized by prospects and which are not, Partnership Gwinnett can gather statistics on which incentives are proving most valuable in attracting targeted businesses. This information could be shared with County, city, and other leadership to better inform incentive decision-making.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Talent development

Goal 2: Individuals can access educational resources that match their learning needs and offer rewarding career pathways with Gwinnett County employers.

Talent development is a key driver of economic development, since businesses require skilled workers and supportive educational programs. Talent development also helps build a thriving community. Attracting quality jobs to a community does not raise incomes if residents are not able to attain those jobs. This goal therefore focuses on understanding the current and future workforce needs of businesses, developing an educational system and pipeline to match those needs, and connecting individuals and businesses to educational resources and each other.

Gwinnett County is recognized for its top-performing public school systems and has seen graduation rates improve significantly for all demographic groups over the past decade (a 13-percentage-point rise overall). Gwinnett County is also home to numerous successful post-secondary educational institutions that offer programs at all levels, from certificates through professional degrees.

PG 4.0 talent development strategies can focus on increasing collaboration between these institutions and more effectively communicating about resources with businesses and individuals. These activities will enhance connectivity between institutions, employers, and learners to ensure that the workforce needs of individuals and businesses are met across Gwinnett County.

Matching educational resources to individual needs also means considering learners of different ages, backgrounds, and accessibility levels. This will support talent success and help Partnership Gwinnett maintain a strong, diverse talent pipeline for years to come.

Strategies

1. Establish a talent council to continue aligning post-secondary offerings to business needs and create a lifelong learning experience for people of all ages.
2. Continue working with K-20 educational institutions to ensure alignment and identify opportunities for the business community to support their success.
3. Strengthen information, training, and other workforce-related resources provided to local businesses.
4. Establish a talent retention, return, and attraction campaign that highlights career and living opportunities in Gwinnett County and helps grow the skilled working age population.

Talent development

Goal 2: Individuals can access educational and training resources that match their learning needs and offer rewarding career pathways with Gwinnett County employers.

Metrics

1. High school graduation rates.
2. Educational attainment of population (high school diplomas, associate's degree, bachelor's and higher – include racial breakdown)
3. Median household income
4. Share and growth of Gwinnett County population age 25 to 44
5. Number of internships and other work-based learning opportunities filled in the County

KPIs

1. Number of meetings of the new talent council.
2. Number of talent and workforce development resources shared with local businesses.
3. Number of active talent development programs with which Partnership Gwinnett is involved.
4. Responses to business survey questions related to talent development (see Strategy 3.3), which could include difficult-to-fill occupation categories.
5. Number of materials produced and shared for a talent attraction campaign.

Talent development

2.1 Establish a talent council to continue aligning educational offerings to business needs and create a lifelong learning experience for people of all ages.

Convened by Partnership Gwinnett and other community partners, a talent council could consist of diverse education, workforce, business, and government leaders who meet on a quarterly basis to advocate for an integrated career-readiness process from early childhood education through post-secondary learning.

The group could consist of executive leaders who have the ability to take the strategies and recommendations that the council develops and activate them within their specific organizations and spheres of influence so that tangible, measurable progress is made toward an integrated and aligned learning ecosystem. This council could create a direct connection between educators and businesses, allowing educational institutions to implement programs that train students on in-demand skills.

This council could also help cultivate education and business partnerships across Gwinnett County. As the council implements new programs and grows, Partnership Gwinnett can help report progress out to the greater community through marketing materials, like op-eds, social media posts, and annual reports.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

2.2 Continue working with K-20 educational institutions to ensure alignment and identify opportunities for the business community to support their success.

As a key County connector, Partnership Gwinnett can continue to facilitate collaboration across the education and ecosystem to ensure that organizational silos are lowered and that all students have the opportunity to receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for job opportunities in Gwinnett County. A subcommittee of the talent council outlined in Strategy 2.1 could consist of key representatives of both public and private schools in the county that would be tasked with fostering greater alignment and integration and presenting recommendations for business partnership and involvement.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Talent development

2.3 Strengthen workforce-related resources, including data and training, provided to local businesses.

Partnership Gwinnett is an ideal curator and depository of information, training, and workforce resources for local businesses and employers. Vital information would include resources on how business can support local education and training efforts and source talent from within Gwinnett County, and access data and insights on talent trends in Gwinnett County and region. Through direct consultation, Partnership Gwinnett can also help businesses set up effective, work-based learning programs and take advantage of federal and state workforce tax credits.

Making information publicly available on Partnership Gwinnett's website helps raise awareness among prospective and existing businesses of the tremendous educational resources in Gwinnett County. Highlighted messages about new programs and opportunities could also be integrated into email and social media communications, meetings, and programs so that it is not a static resource, but rather one that is relevant and actionable. All marketing materials and communications should direct users to contact Partnership Gwinnett for assistance in navigating resources and being referred to the right parts of the talent system.

In its role facilitating collaboration and communication, Partnership Gwinnett can also connect employers with internship programs, work-based learning programs, and other student training opportunities throughout the county.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

2.4 Establish a talent retention, return, and attraction campaign that highlights career and living opportunities in Gwinnett County and helps grow the skilled working age population.

From 2013 to 2018, the share of young professionals (residents age 25 to 44) fell in Gwinnett County, reducing the number of working age residents available to employers. In 2019 as well, the county saw an out-migration of college educated residents. These trends are reflective of challenges expressed by some employers retaining younger workers and by residents, who see many young graduates from high school and college leaving to pursue career opportunities elsewhere.

One of the best ways to help ensure that young people are able to secure employment upon graduation and incentivize them to start their careers in the county is to raise awareness of career opportunities in Gwinnett's top industries.

Talent development

Partnership Gwinnett has the opportunity to serve as a catalyst and producer of a multimedia career talent campaign (e.g., Northern Virginia’s “Tech Pathways”) targeted to students, as well as parents and guardians, who influence their education and career decisions. GCPS and BCS Career and Technical Education programs are well positioned to play a key role in leading such an effort with adequate resources and support from local businesses. Such a campaign would benefit students and families throughout the community, including those in private schools, who should also be included as active partners.

A second, parallel campaign could be targeted toward college students and recent college graduates throughout the Atlanta Metro, Georgia, and perhaps other target states to promote the benefits of working and living in Gwinnett County. This attraction campaign should be particularly targeted at former county residents or people who grew up in the school system. This audience is already familiar with Gwinnett County and is more likely to relocate based on personal connections to the community. Communication channels to be leveraged could include a dedicated website, social media, content streaming platforms, and radio. Developing a successful talent campaign will require additional staff time and budget.

Partnership Gwinnett should also consider utilizing marketing materials from Choose ATL and supplementing those marketing efforts with information specific to Gwinnett County. This could enable Partnership Gwinnett to reach a larger audience with this talent attraction campaign and save Partnership Gwinnett the time and effort it could take to invest in a full talent attraction campaign from the ground up.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Community development

Goal 3: Gwinnett County is safe, well-connected, offers diverse amenities for people and businesses to live, work and play.

Community development can cover a wide range of activities, many of which directly support economic development, but do not necessarily fall within the responsibilities and mission of Partnership Gwinnett. This includes redevelopment of properties, expansion of transportation systems, construction of infrastructure, investments in placemaking, and provision of arts and cultural amenities. For economic development in Gwinnett County, redevelopment is a top priority because the age of many commercial properties limits the ability to recruit targeted, quality projects. Housing is also top of mind for many stakeholders, with most seeking to grow a diverse range of housing to increase options and affordability.

As a key connection organization, Partnership Gwinnett can foster collaboration in community development by bringing partners, information, and resources to the table and sharing perspectives on which investments are desired by the businesses community and how they support overall economic development. They can directly assist the County, cities, and CIDs by marketing sites, sharing ideas on how to make locations more competitive for targeted businesses, and convening a redevelopment task force.

For PG 4.0, activities in this area can continue focusing on accelerating redevelopment of properties, collecting and communicating business infrastructure and amenity needs, and supporting investments and events that enhance Gwinnett County's quality of life, making it an even more equitable and welcoming community. This also sends a signal to desired businesses and talent that Gwinnett County is focused on topics that are important to them, including expanding diverse amenities and cultural assets in all geographic areas of the county.

Strategies

1. Assist Gwinnett County, local cities, and CIDs with redevelopment by promoting sites in business development activities, providing business perspectives on infrastructure and site needs, sharing information, and convening a redevelopment task force to make recommendations.
2. Establish an attraction campaign focused on bringing in outside developers and investors to facilitate redevelopment that matches the community's vision and needs, especially for commercial space.
3. Conduct an annual survey of the business community to understand and communicate which community investments are the highest priority for their operations and employees.

Community development

Goal 3: Gwinnett County is safe, well-connected, offers diverse amenities for people and businesses to live, work and play.

Metrics

1. Commercial real estate availability.
2. New construction.
3. Housing prices and availability.
4. Business survey results.

KPIs

1. Redevelopment task force meetings and outcomes.
2. Prospect inquiries, submittals, and successful project landings by geographic location (buildings and sites).
3. Real estate developer/investor meetings facilitated.
4. Real estate outbound trips conducted.
5. Real estate in-bound events and attendance.
6. Number and demographics of business survey respondents.

Community development

3.1 Assist Gwinnett County, local cities, and CIDs with redevelopment by promoting sites in business development activities, providing business perspectives on infrastructure and site needs, sharing information, and convening a redevelopment task force to make recommendations.

Gwinnett County's thriving business community has led to a shortage of office and industrial space for new and growing businesses. Many available warehousing, office, and other industrial/commercial spaces are outdated or do not fit the needs of targeted businesses. Redeveloping existing properties to be more attractive prospective businesses will be crucial to increasing the competitiveness of Gwinnett County.

While Partnership Gwinnett will not be the entity directly redeveloping properties, it has important economic knowledge that can help community partners and developers focus on redeveloping properties that are in demand and suited for target industries.

Through staff and its redevelopment task force, Partnership Gwinnett can assist Gwinnett County, local cities, and CIDs by promoting sites in business recruitment and real estate developer attraction efforts, making recommendations on how to improve the viability of sites, encouraging the development of projects and infrastructure that facilitates economic development, and more. Priority site development opportunities could include existing Tax Allocation Districts, Georgia Opportunity Zones, Gwinnett Place Mall, the former OFS site, and Olympic Tennis Center. The redevelopment task force can provide additional independent, cross-sector recommendations on how to accelerate development across the county and at specific sites.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

Community development

3.2 Establish an attraction campaign focused on bringing in outside developers and investors to facilitate redevelopment that matches the community's vision and needs, especially for commercial space.

As noted in our research and by numerous stakeholders, many geographic areas of Gwinnett County are ready for redevelopment. Commercial and industrial properties and corridors throughout the county are aging, with warehouse, office, retail, and other types of space often not matching the quality expectations of the types of businesses that Gwinnett County would like to attract.

To accelerate new development and redevelopment of properties, Partnership Gwinnett can help attract developers and investors from outside Gwinnett County. This effort would look similar to business attraction, but with the focus on regional and national developers who might be interested in opportunities across Gwinnett County.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.

3.3 Conduct an annual survey of the business community to understand and communicate which community investments are highest priority for its operations and employees.

Through its business attraction and retention efforts, Partnership Gwinnett meets regularly with businesses inside and outside of Gwinnett County. This gives Partnership Gwinnett's staff unique insights into what targeted businesses and their employees need. Business needs may range from connectivity infrastructure, such as broadband and highways, to community investments that help develop, retain, and attract talent, such as schools and parks. Because business needs are frequently in flux, it can be difficult for local leadership at Gwinnett County and cities to stay up to date on these priorities.

Partnership Gwinnett could conduct a regular survey of businesses in Gwinnett County to provide a consistent conduit of perspectives from the business community to help inform local decision-making and prioritize investments. This survey could cover a range of topics, including workforce, tax and regulatory concerns, connectivity infrastructure, and cultural amenities. The full results of the survey could be shared publicly to provide clarity about these topics, and answers to specific sections, such as workforce needs, will help evaluate and refine strategies for talent development and more.

Community development

By asking the same questions on a recurring schedule, Partnership Gwinnett will collect valuable, consistent information on how Gwinnett County's business environment is changing with time. By combining this with anecdotal feedback collected by Partnership Gwinnett through business retention visits and attraction efforts, Partnership Gwinnett will be able to share valuable information with leaders and organizations across Gwinnett County and adapt future strategies to match evolving needs.

For tactics, see Appendix III, Tactical implementation tables.



Implementation

Introduction

Developing a strategic plan of action is the first step, but following through with implementation is the journey. Implementation is a continuous process that requires the coordination of many individuals and organizations over many years. Circumstances and opportunities will also change moving forward, so the community must be flexible and prepared to adapt strategies and renew focus down the road.

The following section provides guidance for Partnership Gwinnett and partner organizations to help set the community up to successfully implement the strategy. We provide an overview of next steps and the actions that Partnership Gwinnett and its partners should take to complete each step.

Implementing this strategy will also require collaboration across organizations and capacity within organizations. Gwinnett County is known for being a remarkably collaborative community, and, in this section, we describe in more detail how Partnership Gwinnett can most effectively engage the community and its partners to implement the strategy.

Partnership Gwinnett

Partnership Gwinnett is the economic development organization for Gwinnett County, and the strategies and tactics in this strategy are primarily meant for Partnership Gwinnett, as the lead implementation organization. The purpose of this strategy is to allow Partnership Gwinnett to focus on its day-to-day activities, such as business attraction, while also ensuring that other important areas of economic development, specifically talent and community development, are prioritized and improved.

Gwinnett County is known for being remarkably cooperative, which will be an incredible asset for Partnership Gwinnett. Partnership Gwinnett is known as a convener in the community and is uniquely suited to gather a diverse group of partners and work toward a common goal for the community. Continuing to intentionally bring together organizations to build a shared understanding of economic development priorities and collaborate to address needs will be important to continued success.

Implementation committee

The implementation committee is essential to the success of Partnership Gwinnett's economic development strategy. Members of this committee are already familiar with the strategy (having been a part of the strategic planning process), and their intimate knowledge of the strategy will be useful during implementation moving forward.

The implementation committee members can serve multiple roles throughout implementation depending on their expertise and experience. Committee members should champion and advocate for the strategy throughout implementation. As necessary, smaller task forces can be formed throughout this process to implement tactics to take advantage of the experience and expertise of all members. Individual members can also assist Partnership Gwinnett with implementing certain tasks, bringing diverse members of the community to the table, and consistently sharing updates with a wide network in Gwinnett County. To avoid task-force fatigue, task forces can be dissolved when necessary.

Partnership Gwinnett can keep the implementation committee fully up to date about the progress of implementation and how the committee members can step in and help. Partnership Gwinnett can also consider the makeup of the committee and ensure that it is representative of Gwinnett County, especially over the next few years as Gwinnett County continues to grow and change. It is important that this committee have connections to diverse groups throughout the community to make sure this strategy is truly reaching and serving everyone in Gwinnett County.

Other implementation partners

Although this is a strategy for Partnership Gwinnett, economic development serves the entire community, and success will require the cooperation of many community partners. This strategy focuses on actions that Partnership Gwinnett is responsible for, but economic development is multifaceted and affected by many factors in the community. It will be necessary for Partnership Gwinnett to utilize its relationships with partners to have a full understanding of Gwinnett County's economic landscape, particularly in areas like social services that are not Partnership Gwinnett's responsibility, but do affect Gwinnett County's economy. Community support will be invaluable as Partnership Gwinnett implements strategies and tactics.

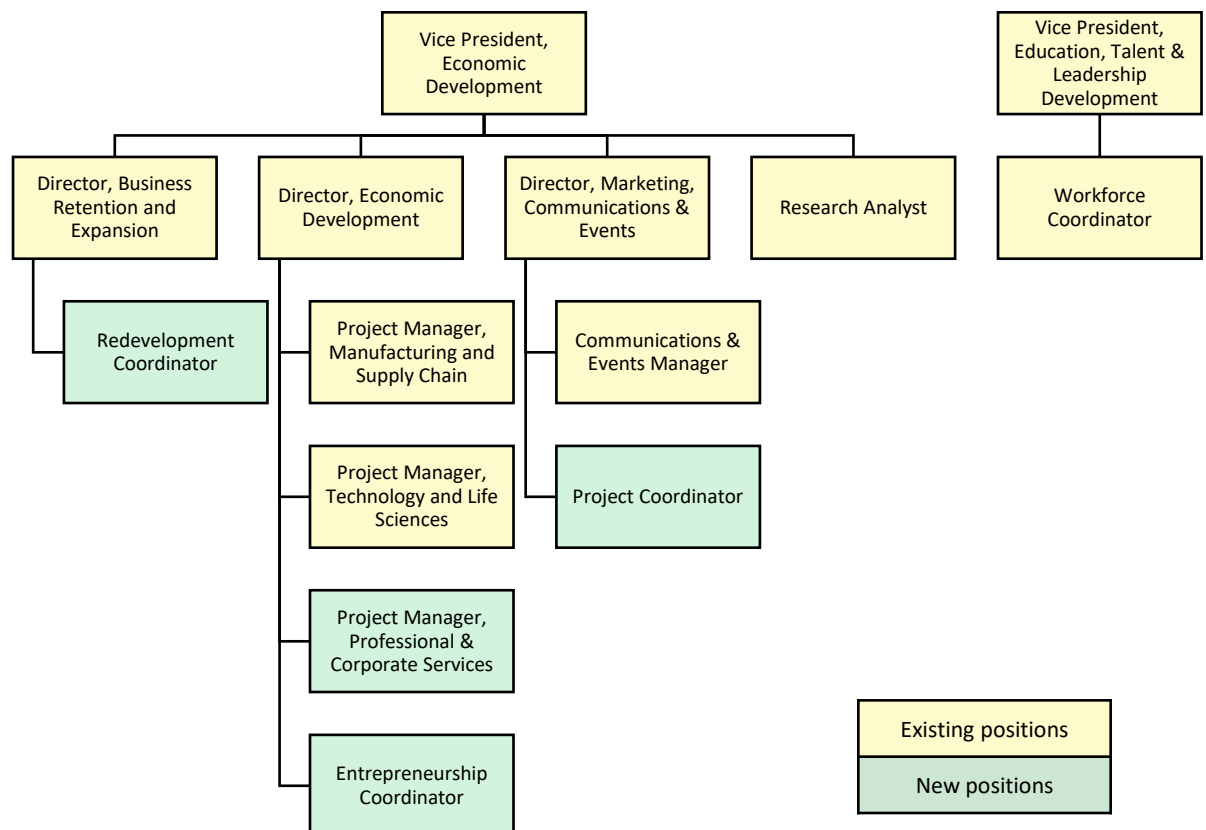
Partnership Gwinnett already has great connections with local, regional, and state leaders from public, private, and nonprofit sectors. These connections should continue to be leveraged as Partnership Gwinnett continues implementation. Even if a community partner is not directly involved with a strategy or tactic doesn't mean that it doesn't need to be involved. Community partners can also provide knowledge and expertise, share messaging from Partnership Gwinnett with a wider audience, and champion the strategy in the community. Community partners can help create widespread support for the strategy and its priorities in Gwinnett County.

Staff and resources

Fulfilling the recommendations in this report will require additional resources, particularly additional staff and funding to support new and expanded activities. The recommendations below are suggestions for additional staff positions and budget increases based on our national perspective of economic development organizations and research into the budgets of similarly sized community. These recommendations have been created with an understanding of Partnership Gwinnett's current budget and advocates for increases to resources that will have the greatest impact on Partnership Gwinnett and the community.

Staff

Partnership Gwinnett has a talented staff, but as new priorities arise the team may need to expand. In the organizational chart below the yellow boxes indicate existing positions at Partnership Gwinnett, while green boxes indicate additional positions that could be hired to take on the recommendations provided in this report. We have provided a brief summary of the position, the justification for the position, as well as a priority level to help Partnership Gwinnett focus on organizational activities during implementation that will have the greatest return on investment. These staffing recommendations are suggestions, and Partnership Gwinnett should hire new team members as it sees fit.



Staff, continued

- **Redevelopment Coordinator** – Redevelopment of existing properties was often cited as a top concern of stakeholders throughout this strategic planning process, but currently there is not a staff member at Partnership Gwinnett (or other organizations) that focuses solely on redevelopment opportunities. A new Redevelopment Coordinator would promote and oversee redevelopment projects, manage the Redevelopment Peer Tour, and work with the Redevelopment Task Force to identify and prioritize projects.
- **Entrepreneurship Coordinator** – While Partnership Gwinnett already has staff dedicated to business growth, retention, and expansion, adding an additional team member that is solely focused on small businesses and entrepreneurship could round out Partnership Gwinnett’s support for local businesses. The County’s economy is already very successful but could become even more competitive if small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly in underrepresented communities, receive more support.
- **Project Manager, Professional & Corporate Services** – Partnership Gwinnett has a project manager for all its target industries except for Professional and Corporate Services. Filling this position would round out Partnership Gwinnett’s economic development staff and demonstrate that Gwinnett County is truly supportive of all its target industries. This person’s role would be to support current and prospective professional and corporate firms grow in Gwinnett County.
- **Project Coordinator**– An additional full- or part-time team member to support marketing efforts and enhance investors relations could be beneficial. This role could include responsibilities such as supporting the communications team, helping develop new marketing materials for target audiences, particularly investors, and work with investors to determine their needs and demonstrate Partnership Gwinnett’s value to investors, their businesses, and the entire County.

Budget

To complete all the strategies and tactics listed in this report and the implementation plan, Partnership Gwinnett will need additional funding. The most pressing needs for Partnership Gwinnett are funding a position and programming for two new staff members: one focused on redevelopment in Gwinnett County and another focused on small business support and entrepreneurship.

Budget, continued

Prior to joining EY Economic Development, the team facilitating this strategy led an annual ED Index survey of economic developers at our previous firm, Avalanche Consulting. According to past responses from 2018 and 2020, economic development organizations that oversee an area with a population at or above one million residents typically have budgets ranging from \$1 million to almost \$5 million. In the 2020 ED Index survey, respondents with populations larger than one million averaged an annual budget for their organization or department of \$4.2 million. Organizations or departments that oversaw an area with a population of 500,000 – 1 million people had an average annual budget of \$1.8 million.

Partnership Gwinnett's budget has ranged from \$1-\$1.5 million over the past five years. In order to be on par with economic development organizations that oversee similar population sizes, Partnership Gwinnett would need an additional \$300,000 in funding per year at least. Increasing Partnership Gwinnett's annual budget would allow Partnership Gwinnett to hire new staff and implement new programs and activities that will make Gwinnett County a more competitive businesses location. For example, tactics for this report recommend that Partnership Gwinnett invest in search engine optimization to improve the Partnership's website ranking on Google. A local marketing firm estimates that a SEO campaign can take four to six months to complete and cost between \$1,200 and \$3,800 per month.

To estimate the costs of implementing this strategy we have estimated the low and high-cost ranges of hiring staff and implementing programs in four areas: redevelopment, entrepreneurship and small business support, business development for the professional and corporate industry, and investor relations. As noted on the previous page, redevelopment and entrepreneurship are of higher priority, so we've added those staff and operations costs to year one of implementation. An additional project manager and new investor relations role are not as high of a priority, so the costs of hiring those two additional staff members and the cost of implementing programs to support them have been added in year three of implementation.

Budget, continued

Over the course of the next five years of strategy execution, and driven by the goals of this strategy, Partnership Gwinnett will need to increase its budget by approximately \$1.5 million at least. If Partnership Gwinnett funds these four positions and their programming it could cost over \$2 million over five years. In order to fulfill the strategy recommendations in this report Partnership Gwinnett should see an annual budget increase of \$300,000 - \$450,000 per year. This budget increase would also put Partnership Gwinnett's budget closer in line with competitor communities according to benchmark research.

Year	New staff		New programs	
	Low estimate	High estimate	Low estimate	High estimate
2022	\$150,000	\$180,000	\$45,000	\$90,000
2023	\$154,500	\$185,400	\$49,500	\$99,000
2024	\$260,680	\$317,816	\$124,450	\$198,900
2025	\$271,107	\$330,528	\$130,672	\$208,845
2026	\$281,951	\$343,749	\$137,205	\$219,287
Total	\$983,238	\$1,357,493	\$486,827	\$816,032

Moderate estimate total - \$1.47 million

High estimate total - \$2.17 million

Please note that these budget numbers reflect the estimated costs required to implement the PG 4.0 strategy, and does not take into consideration any hiring, events, or activities outside of the recommendations in this report. Actual costs of additional staff or program may vary throughout implementation.

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