



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021



City of
Tucker





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A Message From The Mayor



This past year has been one of great trials, but also great accomplishments. Our staff, our community and our elected officials persevered through some of the most daunting circumstances imaginable. We weathered a global pandemic. Times got as tough as they can get; certainly as tough as I've ever seen or ever hope to see. And yet here we stand, the City of Tucker, as united and successful and poised for future success as any city around.

It's no accident that we stand in this position. Our City had a vision and stayed laser focused on that vision at a time when we could have panicked. We could have shut everything down. We could have abandoned our businesses when they needed us most. In the same vein, we could have abandoned our neighbors when they needed us most. But Tucker is special. Shutting down wasn't in our DNA.



I've talked to so many Tucker business owners who, having watched thousands of businesses across the country shut down over the past year, feel their operations are on firm footing following the pandemic.

One of the reasons for that is our CARES Act program. The City of Tucker received more than \$4 million last fall from the federal government, the bulk of that money earmarked for supporting small businesses. We were able to get no-strings-attached grants to these companies in amounts as large as \$15,000, helping them to pay rent, meet payroll and even just keep the lights on. The CARES money extended to our neighbors in need. We worked with NETWorks Cooperative Ministries to provide rent and mortgage assistance, as well as groceries for those dealing with food insecurity. We also were able to support virtual learning programs at two of our community churches so that kids could be among their peers and so we could allow working parents to get back to the office.

One sector of our business community that has been through the ringer this past year is our restaurants. We as a city took note, encouraging residents to take advantage of takeout and delivery options even when the pandemic was at its worst. But we also got creative. Our Communications department and our Convention and Visitors Bureau teamed up to host Tucker Restaurant Week. This first-time event brought foodies from across metro Atlanta right here to Tucker to sample our restaurants. Judging from the reaction of our restaurateurs and

the enthusiasm and size of the crowds we saw in these restaurants, it was a smashing success. I promise our first Restaurant Week will not be our last.

One of the bright spots of the pandemic was it did not inhibit our ability to work outdoors. That is evident from the 62 streets that were repaved under our Special Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funded road resurfacing campaign. You can also see it in the beautiful improvements of the latest phase of the Tucker Streetscape. We have new traffic signals and intersection designs to enhance driver and pedestrian safety. All these things our contractors were able to do while following CDC guidance on masks and distancing, even as that guidance was changing.

Speaking of the outdoors, this was a banner year for Parks and Recreation in the City of Tucker. Realizing our residents needed an escape from the stress of COVID, our recreation staff went to work hosting youth baseball, youth basketball, pickleball and golf leagues, as well as community events like our annual Egg Hunt, a dive-in movie, Adult Field Day and many others. Peters Park saw a complete renovation, while both sides of Henderson Park received new restroom facilities. We also opened Tucker's very first dog park.

On a personal note, I was so proud to be a part of the dedication ceremony for Rosenfeld Park this past spring. We lost Bill Rosenfeld earlier this year; not just a loss for our City Council or for the Smoke Rise community, but a loss for the entire

City of Tucker. That park, with its swimming pool, tennis courts and beautiful nature, is a source of happiness for many in our community. I think it's only fitting that it be named for someone who brought all of us happiness for so many years, our friend Bill.

This report is full of our accomplishments from the past year, but I want to specifically call your attention to the updates from our Finance and Economic Development departments. Staff members in those departments have worked tirelessly on several fronts. What you'll notice is we are in better financial shape than ever before, which is quite an accomplishment coming out of a pandemic. Beyond that, we saw residential and commercial developers continue to flock to Tucker, taking advantage of our location, our workforce and our welcoming nature.

I could go on, but you get the point: Tucker has overcome tremendous obstacles in the past year and is poised for an even better year ahead. I am grateful for the opportunity to call this community home for so many years. I am grateful for the way this community shows its resiliency time and again. And I am grateful you have entrusted me to be your mayor. Thank you for sharing in our success. I look forward to seeing you real soon on Main Street.



Frank Auman
Mayor

Greetings From Your City Council



Pat Soltys



Noelle Monferdini



Matt Robbins



Anne Lerner



Michelle Penkava

Pat Soltys

Last year challenged all of us to grow, learn and make some changes due to the pandemic. We learned new ways to show caring and compassion, deliver services and keep business going. We also learned how to manage with less and in new ways. District One felt the loss personally with the passing of Councilman Bill Rosenfeld.

The City did an excellent job managing COVID resources and CARES funds, as well as making sure that we were informed. Many businesses expressed appreciation for the support they received. Thankfully, life is starting to normalize.

Still, we accomplished a lot! The City acquired a new park in District One, recently named Rosenfeld Park. It is exciting to have a pool, as well as very active tennis and pickleball courts. Smoke Rise Park was renamed and is now Probst Park. The new elementary school just opened and a new light will help with traffic. The Marketplace at Hugh Howell shopping center has a projected opening of November 17. This includes new stores, eateries and a small park, plus a part of the trail system.

Elections will bring two new council people for District One with fresh perspective and energy. I will remain involved and supportive, thankful for the opportunity to grow and serve my community.



Bill Rosenfeld

Remembering Bill Rosenfeld

It is with heavy heart that we said goodbye to our dear friend Bill Rosenfeld this year. Bill was a leader in all senses of the word, from his work on the City Council to his work in the jewelry shop to his work out in the community. Bill will be missed by his wonderful wife Carmen, his kids and grandkids, his colleagues, and his constituents. Tucker is richer for having had Bill as a neighbor.

Noelle Monferdini

When asked what was the proudest accomplishment from last year, I would have to say that it came from the heart of our community. Even as our city allocated the CARES Act funding of \$4.1 million to our small businesses, offered food assistance, distance learning assistance, and provided for the public, our fantastic community took action in this crisis and helped where they could. Some made masks for sharing, some shared resources, while others supported their neighbor in any way they could. I could not be prouder to be a Tucker resident and a Tucker leader. Job well done, everyone!

Michelle Penkava

Reflecting on this last year, I recognize sorrow and loss, joy and success. Many people lost loved ones to COVID-19. We lost Bill Rosenfeld, a dedicated husband, father and friend. He loved Tucker and spent many years working for our community. He is deeply missed. We began our "political" life together as part of the inaugural City Council. As my time on Council comes to an end, I think often of Bill, our Council and the many residents and business owners that helped make Tucker's cityhood a reality.

Serving on Council has been a wonderful experience and our resilience in recent difficult times makes me proud and grateful. Our community and our staff coalesced to provide much-needed assistance throughout Tucker. Thoughtful planning ensured that the City emerged financially sound. Thank you to our Mayor for his leadership, our Council for their thoughtful decision making, our staff for their compassion and expertise and our community and government partners for their exhaustive work. As we continue to make progress there is a renewed sense of optimism and I am confident that the future of Tucker is bright. Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve!

Matt Robbins

The phrase that captures this year for me is "grace under pressure"; being able to keep city operations working while dealing with the pandemic.

The City continued to effectively and efficiently serve our people. We wrestled with our personal angst from COVID-19, yet continued to meet requests of Tucker residents and businesses. Added to these pressures came the move to a new city hall, a collapsed roof there within the first weeks, innovative programs at our parks and recreation center, new funding (CARES) with tight requirements and schedules, and complaint resolutions dealing with potholes, pavement, public safety — all were handled by city leadership and staff exceptionally well!

And they continue to be.

In January we were shocked by Council Rosenfeld's passing. This loss has seen the Council handle issues with heavy hearts and minus Bill's insights. We look to the November elections which will bring new members onto the City Council. We wish those electeds well, knowing they (as we did) will adjust to the realities of creating the City.

As you know, I complete my terms on the Council at year-end. It has been an honor for me to be your public servant. Thank you for your friendship and support!

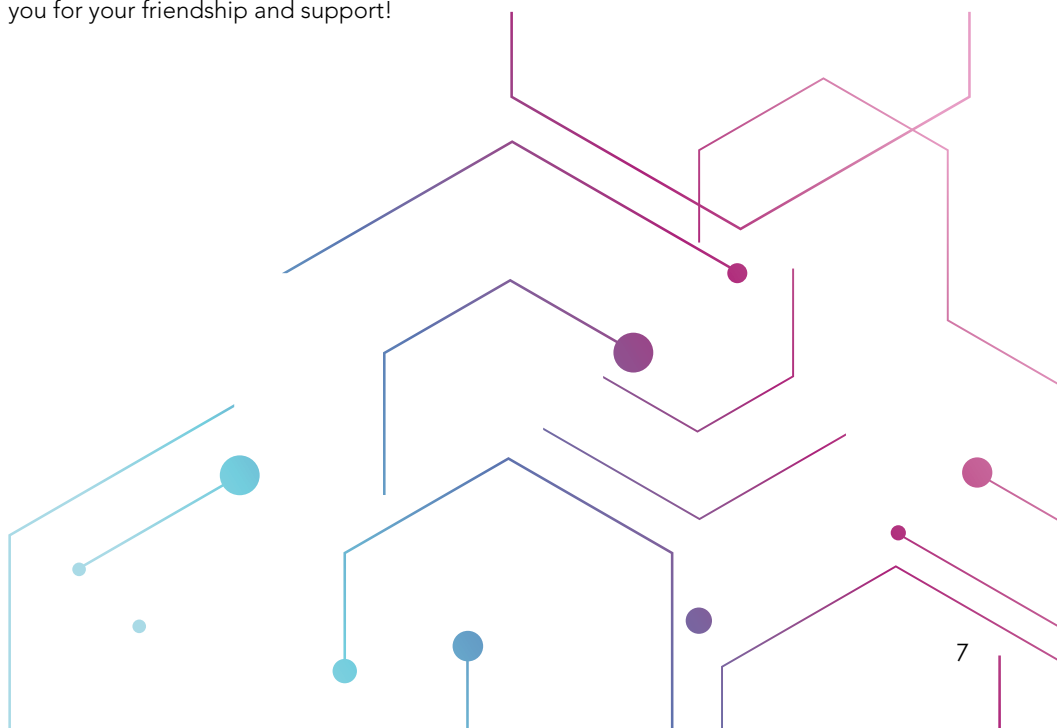
Anne Lerner

There was so much uncertainty in the world this time last year when I wrote my reflection for the Annual Report. The only thing I was certain of was that Tucker's resiliency, diversity and caring would allow us to learn, adapt and grow even in a year like no other. And, as you can see from this year's Annual Report, that is exactly what we did.

I am most proud of Team Tucker and our community partners who implemented a careful plan to administer our CARES Act funds to our neighbors, non-profits and businesses in need of support. I am also grateful for their efforts to ensure our small business owners, senior care homes and residents had masks. Through education and resources, we worked together, and our community was better off for it. The majority of our businesses not only survived, but many thrived and new ones even opened.

I applaud our Tucker Parks and Recreation staff for their efforts to provide safe places and programs for the community to enjoy physical activities whether it was swimming, hiking or pickleball during a time when it was more important than ever for our well-being.

Together, Tucker thrives! Thank you all!





A Message From The City Manager



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tami Hanlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tami Hanlin
City Manager

With crisis comes opportunity.

That's a very "glass half full" way of looking at the pandemic, but here in Tucker it is the mindset we adopted over the past year. You'll remember at this time last year much of our city was shut down; workplaces, restaurants, gyms, theaters. Here at City Hall we were temporarily shuttered, but our staff never stopped working. And that's saying something. We, like many other workplaces, had staff members who tested positive and had to battle against this terrible virus. Still, while concerned about the well-being of their friends and colleagues, this amazing staff kept its collective nose to the grindstone issuing business licenses, processing building permits and performing code inspections.

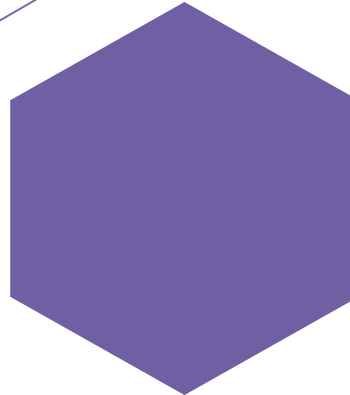
One particular source of pride was our ability to distribute more than \$4 million in federal CARES Act money to those in desperate need. Assistant City Manager John McHenry oversaw the effort, one that put our staff on a very tight timetable to disburse a large amount of money. Working with our Mayor and City Council, we got that money to small businesses that were hurting, to families struggling to pay their mortgages, to others who simply couldn't afford groceries or couldn't pay their utility bills. It was in working with community partners like NETWorks Cooperative Ministries and local churches that we were able to give our neighbors a small boost that helped them to sustain during the pandemic.

Knowing that sometimes people need a good distraction, we were able to keep several programs going to boost community morale. Our Parks and Recreation Department opened its city pools to limited capacity so that families could safely play throughout the summer. They organized summer camp-style programs for kids and parents who needed a little break. We as a city held our annual fireworks show virtually and, when it was safe, we hosted an in-person National Night Out celebration.

We took two big steps forward organizationally. One was expanding our court processes to include traffic offenses. Now if you get a ticket in Tucker, you're coming to court in Tucker. And as hard as it was to host court sessions during a pandemic, our court staff found ways to make it happen and to keep everyone safe. Additionally, we oversaw activation of the new solar roof at Tucker Recreation Center. From now on when the power goes out around town, you'll have a place to go to charge your phone or your tablet, and we will be able to maintain city operations despite tough conditions.

Financially, we are in strong position thanks to cautious spending and budgeting, not just this past year, but each year since we became a city. We will be able to deliver several highly impactful projects to the community this year including a new downtown greenspace, improvements to Fitzgerald Park, traffic calming and safety projects, trail construction and so much more!

I often compare notes with other city managers around metro Atlanta, around Georgia and around the country. Some cities have weathered this storm well. Others are hurting. I am proud of the efforts here in Tucker to ensure that our city is on firm footing as we head into post-pandemic life.



Communications

Tucker's Communications efforts were never more critical than during the past fiscal year. With a global pandemic raging, the Communications Department worked around the clock to provide information and guidance to the community across a variety of platforms. This included the popular #maskmovement effort, which encouraged Tucker residents and business owners to embrace mask wearing in public places, as well as a series of community mask giveaways.

Communications experienced tremendous growth and engagement across all social media platforms. This was driven in part by the work of the social media and video team which produced popular franchise pieces including What's Good, Tucker?, The Tucker Experience, Tucker Ribbon Cutters, Tucker Cares and many more.

Despite the pandemic, it was also a big year for city events. Last July, the Communications Department organized a virtual fireworks show and concert for their annual Celebration of Independence and Fireworks Spectacular. They also hosted a modified, in-person National Night Out celebration in October. In the winter, Communications collaborated with Discover DeKalb on the inaugural Tucker Restaurant Week, as well as a companion dining guide. This spring, they spearheaded a citywide Earth Day event, including distribution of "David and the Trees", a children's book written and illustrated by city Communications staff.

Fast Facts

- 4,513** Facebook followers (Up 2%)
- 880** Twitter followers (Up 13%)
- 2,570** Instagram followers (Up 24%)
- 556** Magazine mail subscribers (Up 10%)
- 392,249** Website page views (Up 8%)



Fast Facts

- 421** Building permits
- 863** Trade permits
- 90** Sign permits
- 1,374** Total permits issued

Community Development

The Community Development worked hard this past year to beautify Tucker by refining certain aspects of the City Code. They collaborated with the Mayor and City Council on text amendments pertaining to issues like litter control, illicit discharge, post-construction stormwater and urban camping. They also enforced key ordinances including abandoned and dilapidated signs to improve gateways into the City.

Community Development staff worked hand-in-hand with leaders in the Peters Park Community on a series of improvements, which included remediation of nuisance properties, improved signage and sign toppers to provide a better sense of location. They also implemented public participation plan meetings for land use applications. Looking ahead, they are working with the Atlanta Regional Commission on an Art in the Alley study that could bring public art to downtown Tucker.





Code Enforcement

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Tucker's Code Enforcement team stayed busy during the past year. While experiencing a slight decrease in cases and complaints, Code Enforcement dealt with an increase in illegally placed signs. They worked to raise awareness of the local code, including enforcement of emergency orders issued by Governor Kemp and Mayor Auman. Code Enforcement staff also conducted a pair of major apartment sweeps, enforced the City's dilapidated sign ordinance, conducted a sweep for abandoned signs and did educational outreach to numerous homeowners associations. They also updated their technology by transitioning to software by which e-tickets can be issued by phone.



Fast Facts

- 1,229** New cases
- 783** Notices of violation issued
- 406** Citations issued
- 1,264** Cases closed
- 986** Properties re-inspected
- 1,682** Signs removed from rights-of-way

Public Works

While much of society was shuttered away over the past year, there was no stopping the progress happening on Tucker's streets. The City's Public Works efforts, led by City Engineer Ken Hildebrandt and Superintendent Sam Durrance, and performed in cooperation with DeKalb County, yielded significant and very visible improvements throughout the community.

Using money largely from the DeKalb County SPLOST, Tucker saw more than 60 streets repaved in its fourth annual road resurfacing campaign. The immediate result was fewer potholes, road drainage issues and an overall smooth ride for drivers in Tucker. They also worked on driver and pedestrian safety measures, which led to intersection improvements, traffic signal improvements and new sidewalks.

Team Tucker also oversaw the newest phase of the Tucker Streetscape project, a multi-year endeavor to beautify and enhance Tucker's downtown on Main Street and beyond. New sidewalks, decorative streetlights and plantings all will create a sense of place and encourage the growth of new activity to areas like First Avenue, 2nd Street and 4th Street.

- 7,200** Linear feet of sidewalk installed on Elmdale Drive, Cowan Road and Lynburn Drive
- 2** Traffic signal safety improvements
- 1** Intersection improvement – Hugh Howell Road at the new Smoke Rise Elementary School
- 62** Streets resurfaced
- 16** Centerline miles resurfaced
- 33,000** Tons of asphalt poured
- 7,900** Linear feet of sidewalk on First Avenue, 2nd Street and 4th Street
- 60** Decorative streetlights installed in downtown streetscape
- 77** Trees planted in downtown streetscape
- 169** Shrubs planted in downtown streetscape



Fast Facts

City Clerk

City Clerk Bonnie Warne executed the Herculean task this past year of coordinating and conducting virtual meetings for the Mayor and City Council in compliance with Governor Kemp's pandemic orders. In addition to overseeing a busy meeting schedule, she processed nearly 300 open records requests and managed procurement of 20 invitations to bid on city projects. Most significantly, she implemented a new agenda and minutes software for use by the City's six boards.



Fast Facts

- 286** Open records requests received
- 39** Mayor and City Council meetings conducted
- 44** Oaths administered
- 7** Proclamations administered

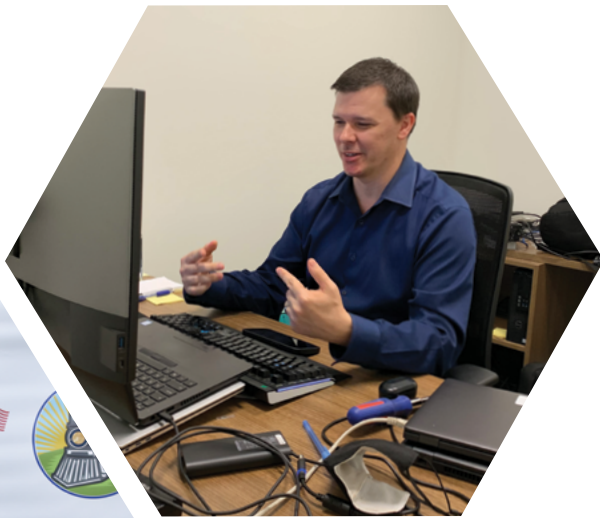
Court

The 2021 Fiscal Year was one of monumental change for Tucker's court staff. The biggest change was to the court venue; proceedings moved from Tucker's City Hall Annex to the newly renovated courtroom at the new City Hall. Additionally, solicitors began prosecuting traffic infractions, cases which had previously been adjudicated through DeKalb County. Maybe the most important accomplishment was the ability to conduct court sessions with minimal interruption throughout the pandemic, while abiding by all state guidelines to keep staff and other court participants safe.



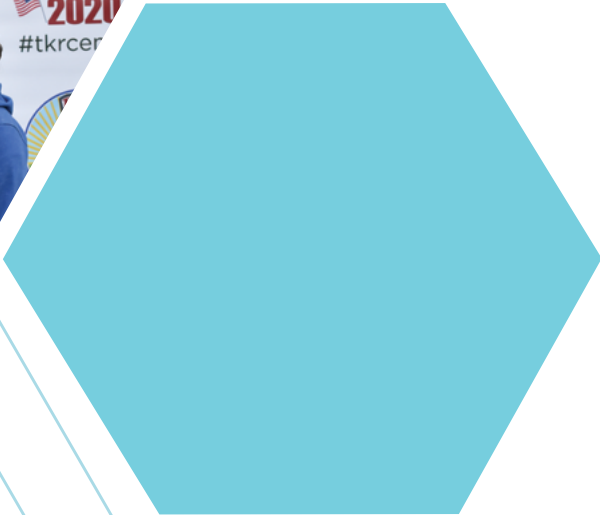
Fast Facts

- 1,943** Traffic cases
- 463** Code Enforcement cases
- 100%** Georgia Crime Information Center court audit score



IT/GIS

Tucker's Information Technology (IT) and Geographic Information System (GIS) team had its hands full during the past year. In addition to maintaining the day-to-day technological operations for city staff, they had to quickly adapt to new realities of the pandemic, including remote working and Zoom meetings. GIS worked closely with the U.S. Census effort, ensuring that all Tucker residents could be counted.



Fast Facts

- 8 Servers managed
- 64 Computers managed
- 269,465 Files backed up
- 106,632 Spam emails blocked
- 76 Public Zoom hybrid meetings



Parks & Recreation

Tucker's Parks and Recreation staff was a bright spot for the community during an otherwise challenging year. They kept parks and playgrounds clean and open for families to use during a time when social distancing was a must. Park trails and even a dog park were maintained to get residents of all stripes out and active. They made countless improvements to parks across the City, enhancing safety and the user experience. That includes a total renovation of Peters Park, complete with installation of the largest playground in Tucker.

The improvements did not stop with Tucker's parks. Staff oversaw the installation of UV lighting filters and an ionization system inside Tucker Recreation Center in response to the global health crisis. These improvements helped provide peace of mind as they reopened the building to Summer Camp and other activities. The past year also saw installation of solar paneling on the roof of the Recreation Center. The solar energy will help cut down on power bills, while also giving the community an emergency charging center in case of natural disasters.

Demand for Parks and Recreation services were at an all-time high. Pool pass purchases surpassed all previous standards at each of our public pools. Tucker's basketball league nearly tripled in participation from the previous winter. The City also launched its first youth baseball league to great fanfare. Golf, pickleball, tennis and other activities saw commensurate spikes in participation thanks to the hard work of the Parks and Recreation staff.

Most importantly, in the past year two Tucker parks were renamed to honor longtime fixtures in the community. City Councilman Bill Rosenfeld, who passed away in January 2021, had long been a champion of Tucker's parks. Accordingly, the city rededicated Smoke Rise Bath & Racquet as Rosenfeld Park, presenting a commemorative plaque to his family. Around the same time, Smoke Rise Park was renamed Probst Park in honor of the recently deceased Bill Probst. Probst, a longtime resident of Tucker's Smoke Rise community, was a visionary who made countless contributions to this and other communities around metro Atlanta.



Fast Facts

- 125 Youth baseball participants
- 75 Youth basketball participants
- 75 Summer Camp participants
- 5 New park bridges
- 425 Annual pool passes
- 200 Pickleball league participants
- 50 Golf league participants
- 2 Acres at Henderson Park dog park
- 2 Parking lots constructed for community parks
- \$350,000 for park renovation completed
- 2 New restrooms added at Henderson Park
- 4 Outdoor pickleball courts added at Rosenfeld Park
- 3 New park/picnic pavilions
- 120 Solar panels added to roof of Tucker Recreation Center

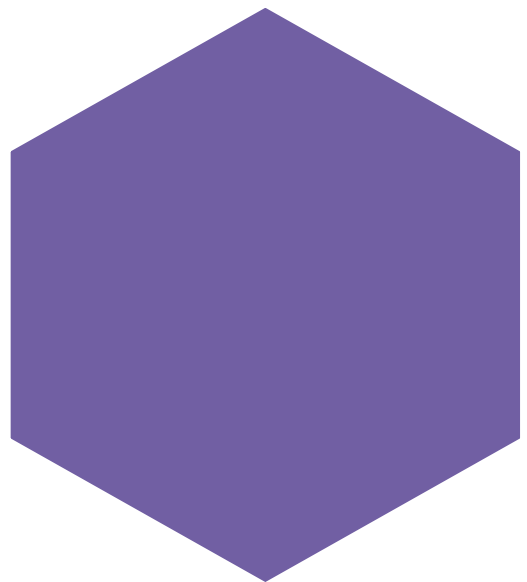




Finance

Fiscal Year 2021 was a banner year in terms of collection of various revenues due the City of Tucker. Several revenue streams significantly outperformed the budget, most notably Occupational Tax Certificate revenue and SPLOST revenue. Both revenue streams rebounded from the lean months during COVID-19. Hotel-Motel taxes recovered to pre-pandemic levels, highlighting the economic recovery in Tucker.

The Finance Department has received a clean, unmodified opinion on its last two audits. Additionally, the City of Tucker received the Certificate of Achievement for Financial Excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association for 2018 and 2019. The department expects to win the award again for 2020.



Fast Facts

Expenditures	\$7,854,147
Transfer to Capital	\$4,114,807
Revenues	\$17,183,289
Property Taxes	\$1,851,094
Franchise Taxes	\$2,708,351
Business Taxes	\$4,419,704
Insurance Taxes	\$49,820
Excise Taxes	\$497,674
License & Permits	\$899,628
Other Revenues	\$1,299,004





Economic Development

Economic Development continues to flourish in the City of Tucker. Staff assisted businesses during the crisis of the COVID pandemic, connecting them with valuable federal, state and local resources that helped keep doors open and people employed. That includes dispersal of nearly \$3 million in CARES Act money to small businesses in the form of forgivable grants. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the City saw several exciting new businesses open in Tucker including Briggs & Stratton, Georgia Furniture Mart, Hot Betty's Breakfast Bar and Ford's BBQ. Tucker's industrial base continues to thrive, as manufacturers like Lindner, sonnenBatterie and Bo Phillips chose to expand their businesses here in Tucker, rather than moving elsewhere.

One downside of the pandemic was the nationwide staffing shortage. The City of Tucker proactively worked with partners at the Tucker-Northlake and Tucker Summit Community Improvement Districts to host a job fair with more than two dozen employers in attendance. The Downtown Development Authority commissioned a comprehensive broadband study to ensure the City is investing adequately in its digital future. The reimagining of the Northlake area is continuing with \$51 million in capital investment coming to the old mall. About 2,000 Emory Healthcare employees should be calling Northlake home by the end of the year. Across town, a new power center is under construction to be anchored by Publix Supermarket and feature brand new high-end dining options.

From a residential standpoint, construction is underway on homes across all parts of the City and at a range of price points. The arrival of hundreds of single-family homes, townhomes and apartments further prove just how desirable Tucker is as a top destination in metro Atlanta.



Fast Facts

- 73 New Occupational Tax Certificate Applications – Home Based
- 278 New Occupational Tax Certificate Applications – Commercial
- 351 New Occupational Tax Certificate applications received
- 855 Meetings and outreach calls to business community

