



**Strategic Planning Retreat:
June 2-3, 2017**

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Goals for Next Two Days

1. Decide on the Strategic Priorities for the City of Savannah for FY 2018-2025
2. Determine Measurable Strategic Results for each Priority (how will you know that you've achieved the Priority)
3. Develop Mission Statement and Vision
4. Discuss Next Steps



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Stakeholder Input

*Community Meetings, Focus Groups & Interviews
with Leadership*

Questions

Focused on the Primary Question

- ✓ What are the most important Issues your customers and the organization will be facing over the next 2-5 years?
- ✓ What results do you most want to be able to say have been accomplished 5 years from now?

Community Meetings

Public Safety

- Crime is an issue, from petty to larger violations
- The perception of crime is an issue
- Youth Violence is an issue, our youth are committing crimes
- Gangs are an issue. We need to Adopt a family (10 yr. olds in gangs)
- City has acknowledged Gang activity, but it is real and we need to do something
- We need to get our youth involved as they are our future
- Crime prevention for juveniles and work ethic, life skills = basic skills
- Crime, there is a cultural divide

Public Safety

- There are higher response times in certain areas of the City (ex: non-contiguous areas like Highlands)
- Island Precinct is shared with the Eastside
- There are no precincts in the 3rd district
- Police presence determination does not consider students and tourists
- We need officers to get out of the car --- Community Policing
- More officers needed in the neighborhoods, more on foot
- Need presence of officers, locals don't know them, they need to be seen in the neighborhoods
- Police don't always know how to talk with the community, talk with African Americans
- There is a lack of Patrol officers for traffic issues in Savannah and Chatham County.

Public Safety

- Recidivism, they commit crimes, get out and commit crimes again
- Recidivism rates need to decrease and we need to work on rehabilitating offenders so they are productive when they are released vs. going back into the system
- Cybercrimes is an issue especially with the elderly
- Property crimes is an issue in many neighborhoods
- Lack of neighborhood communication or notification (ex: Escapee from Transition Center). People don't have land lines, Robocalls need to go to cell phones
- Engaging all citizens in reducing crime, litter, raising quality of life, through coming together so we are all invested in improved quality of life for everyone, including tourists.
- Lower violence means greater economic development

Public Safety

- Police non-emergency line is not available after hours
- Counter Narcotics Team (CNT) wants more details than residents want to give

- Chatham Emergency Management Agency, closest communication facility we cannot hear warnings
- Don't feel we know about Hurricane Evacuation communication, routes, safety of our property
- Not certain of evacuation route communications

Public Safety

Traffic

- Traffic and speeding, should think about Public Service Announcements as people are getting killed
- People are driving too fast on secondary roads through neighborhoods to avoid traffic
- More designated crosswalks are needed
- School safety is a concern due to traffic
- Need more cops for traffic violations (“it is wild out there”) or other traffic calming measures
- Traffic is an issue and we need more planning for the future as we continue to grow
- Downtown traffic is not convenient for downtown residents and those from the other neighborhoods
 - Specifically tour buses and trolley cars
 - Driving and speeding on downtown streets
- Truck traffic an issue downtown and in other communities

Infrastructure

- Deteriorating public infrastructure (sanitary sewer system, stormwater, roads). Current rates of improvements and upgrades are not keeping up with the rate of deterioration.
- We have an aging infrastructure
- With growth and sprawl, we are stretching city services
- Poor Planning has led to lack of infrastructure, neglected roads and traffic
- Drainage/stormwater issues and flooding exists to varying degrees across the community
 - In some cases has existed for years
 - What exists is not maintained regularly, leads to poor drainage/clogs and wildlife
- Parks and Tree resources are lacking, neglect of our tree canopy
- Lack of Tree Maintenance, we have a huge backlog of tickets

Infrastructure

- Traffic is increasing on our streets and roads
- Need resurfacing and paving of roads
- We have lack of markings on street, street maintenance
- No sidewalks in many neighborhoods, lack of care/repair for those that exist
- Lack of contiguous sidewalks
- Lack of sidewalks near and around our schools
- Limited handicap access in our sidewalks and buildings

Infrastructure

- Currently most archaeological sites in Savannah have no protections, and they are being destroyed by development at an alarming rate.
- Losing historic buildings and not just the building. The fabric between the buildings, the streets and sidewalks
- Our historic preservation is limited, lack of architectural ordinance

Infrastructure

Parking

- Parking downtown is hectic
- City has extended parking fee hours and increased parking fees in the downtown area
- Parking Fee increases are impacting residents and their willingness or ability to come downtown
- Hard on folks and especially senior citizens
- Difficult continuing to try and park (and pay for parking with the rate increase) for low level jobs
- What are the options for residents and employers?
- Parking for employees at downtown businesses becoming a challenge
- Availability of street parking and resident parking is a challenge
- Lack resident passes or programs to offset fees
- What is the City's plan for parking? We need more garages and parking.

Poverty

- Poverty is a real issue, 25% population live in poverty,
- Poverty in our young people, 40% of children
- Generational poverty and the cycle of unemployment, leads to crime
- Class inequity exists as our communities are distinct from one another
- Low minimum wage nationally that is leading to poverty, harder and harder to become self-sufficient.
- Minimum wage increases are restricted by the state
- Hard for many to make a living, would like to see a living wage
- Lack of activities for youth related to healthy living
- Don't have healthy food choices in many of the poorer neighborhoods. We have food deserts in neighborhoods that only have convenient stores and no grocery stores
- Lack of poverty solutions/programs
- Poverty leads to homelessness which is also problem

Education

- K-12 education is lacking, lack of quality public schools in the area
- Lack of funding quality education
- 12 chronically failing schools in 2017
- Lack of literacy, we have High School graduates that cant read, they are not educated
- Lack of education programs, financial literacy programs, art options in our schools
- We have overcrowded schools
- Planning for schools is lacking , we have had overcrowded schools since before they opened their doors (ex: Highlands)

Education

- Need School "Choice"
- Two tiered school system, public and private
- Need to improve Savannah's education system for families and youth
- Parents need to be held accountable for children's actions
- Failing Schools equal no jobs

Economic Strength

Jobs/Workforce Development

- People want jobs and they are here, they simply need to be educated and/or trained for the careers that are available.
- We have a lack of trade skills, have to work together with our schools and tech colleges
- Need better job training for high schoolers
- More Summer work programs for residents, *Summer 500* was good but needs expansion
- Lack of work programs for youth that need it the most
- Need for re-entry programs for youth and others that make mistakes that cost them jobs and a path to make it right
- Youth employment within the neighborhoods, cant always come downtown
- Unable to find a job that allows for growth and will allow me to support myself.
- We need a living wage for those working a 40 hour week, can't make it in tourism industry

Economic Strength

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Jobs/Workforce Development

- Education, lack of quality education impacts development of economy and community
- We need to think about how we grow our market so we can attract new jobs
- Lack of Economic Development that provides higher wage jobs to also attract new residents
- We need trade jobs
- Have to have business partnerships for job growth (we can be the Silicon Valley of the East)
- Cost of living is high and not supported by job market, interrelated with affordable housing
- Grow infrastructure and jobs to support the average 31 yr. old

Economic Strength

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- We have a tech sector that is not present, yet we have opportunity with SCAD to boost tech industry
- Not sure city is doing enough to attract the right businesses, quality business to the community
- Lack of urban planning and proper use of public spaces so we attract the right kinds of uses/businesses
- More utility choice and competition
- Incentives for the right businesses, restricting the wrong businesses
- Need for economic redevelopment in neighborhoods seeing business flight/closing of retail centers, etc. Could be tourism related or other.
- Residents shopping in Pooler vs Savannah. How do we remain competitive for businesses?
- Expansion of our airport as city grows, expand carrier options, low cost carrier options. It is expensive to fly to Savannah.

Economic Strength

- Concern about the long-term viability of hospitals
- Need to expand the port and tax base
- Do we have a plan for clean air, water and solar energy industries in Savannah. Have to add clean industries
- In Victorian district, lack of mixed use businesses.
- Promoting Mixed Use land through the downtown district and increasing residential housing rather than chain hotels.
- Challenged in preserving the character and vibrancy of the community in looking at mix of large corporations, small business and start-ups.
- Visitor impact fees creating work for business owners on top of parking fees for local customers.
- The development process has to be made easier
- We are not business friendly- permitting as example

Economic Strength

Tourism

- Balance of Residential Growth & Tourism
- Balancing tourism with livability for Savannah residents
- Tourism is at a critical mass and competing against residents quality of life
- Preserving Savannah as a place for tax paying residents, with that as an emphasis, instead of a focus on tourism. "Nice places to LIVE are nice places to VISIT."
- Short Term Vacation Rentals impact our neighborhoods (ex: Downtown) and are impacting our residents re: public safety concerns, property maintenance and also the affordability of downtown living
- Low salaries in tourism industry, lack of living wage
- Uncontrolled/unplanned growth, and continued focus on tourism to keep us afloat is an issue.

Recreation

- Lack of recreational and after hours opportunities and space for our youth and others (ex: Seniors, Young Parents raising children, etc.)
 - Community/Recreational Centers, Parks and/or Playgrounds, Greenways
- Lack of Youth Community Programs, Recreation needed to get them off the street
- Expansion of supervised hours of the community center
- Community Center hours need to be extended. They are needed to keep children involved and out of trouble, our youth commit crime
- Community Centers not open after hours when kids need them the most
- Families working 2-3 jobs and these programs provide opportunity for their youth. Currently many of our children are walking the streets after hours
- Community Centers are not open long hours or on weekends when needed most
- Partnerships needed between Public Schools, County, City working together to open facilities longer during summer
- Kids are going back into a not always good home environment after getting help from School, Churches, etc.

Recreation

- Lack of supervised recreation, afterschool and in the summer
- Desire for across neighborhood interaction, meeting others from across city
- We have antiquated Recreational Centers that need upgrades. There is a funding challenge to not just build, but also staff these facilities
- Lack of our neighborhoods adopting these centers to make sure they thrive
- 3-5pm is the problem time and our centers need to provide those things that youth need
- Facilities are not well equipped
 - Lack of exercise equipment for youth and golden age
 - Sports and non-sports opportunities for boys and girls
 - Senior amenities lacking
 - Wi-Fi access and/or availability of technology
- These are also places for them to increase their educational aspects of their life
- Lack of affordable camp opportunities for families with multiple kids, larger centers (Grants might be available)
- No camp opportunities for older kids 16-20 who need to be involved

Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood blight continues to be an issue over the next 5 years
- Houses in dilapidated and blighted conditions
- Abandoned homes, in some cases houses vacant for years, condemned, no running water, but cant get action to get torn down
- Homeless are using blighted housing, causing fires and other public safety issues
- We have homeless living in vacant properties
- Vacant buildings are decreasing value of residents home and increasing insurance costs
- There is a lack of neighborhood ownership
- Short term vacation rentals are an issue with homes not being occupied year around

Neighborhoods

- Property Maintenance is an issue, owner accountability
- Property Maintenance issue with structures getting extensions and nothing done to improve them...never-ending cycle
- Lack of responsibility for blight, desire to put more responsibility on the owner
- Rental property concerns by homeowners. Absentee landlords who don't care about neighborhoods.
- Property values decline with poor conditions of homes
- Number of overgrown lots is increasing, lack of resources
- There is overgrown greenery and blocks on street views
- Lack of upkeep of City owned lanes and greenspace

Neighborhoods

- A lot of litter in our neighborhoods
- Lack of trash receptacles in our neighborhoods
- We have businesses not cleaning up after themselves.
- Neighborhoods are not cleaned up equally
- Business dumping tires on private property and becomes residents problem and cost
- Illegal dumping is increasing
- Playgrounds are not safe due to crime and litter
- Lack of Code enforcement officers
- Many times we have to deal with these issues after there is a problem vs. conducting inspections beforehand to prevent the problem from occurring

Neighborhoods

Affordable Housing

- Lack of affordable housing across the board
- Lack of affordable housing is an issue that leads to homelessness
- Housing is expensive, no working class housing, need higher pay to afford housing
- Rents are high but the income is low, have to have several families in housing to make it work
- Homesharing not allowed, but need to make income to be self-sufficient
- Property taxes are burdening full time residents
- Many families are having to leave
- Sad to see people leaving downtown after they have spent so much fixing up their homes
- A lack of downtown residential options.
- Adopt a New Zoning Ordinance promoting increased density and diversity of housing (like accessory dwelling units)
- With Short Term Vacation Rentals, young professionals are forced out of housing market
- Need planning strategies to promote long term residential development over hotel development.

Neighborhoods

Mobility

- Lack of mobility options across the City
- Safety/mobility is key re jobs for locals
- Lack of reliable public transportation from the neighborhoods downtown
- Lack of access to neighboring communities
- No completed network, specifically in addressing bike and pedestrian traffic
- Bike lanes are disconnected around the City (spread out and sparse)
- 15% of Savannah's arterials do have bike lanes
- Savannah has the highest Number of bicycle deaths in GA, 91 incidents in 2016. (1 fatality in 2016. 4 fatalities in 2015)
- Coastal GA Greenway is fragmented and not consistent (Savannah Ogeechee Canal Corridor)
- Concerned with the focus on cars and street widening rather than creating a safe city for bikes and pedestrians.

Neighborhoods

Mobility

- More and more seniors are not able to drive, or do not have a car
- City bus routes, we need more locations for pick-up and sidewalks to get to them
- Moving away from auto dependence, and encouraging walking, biking and transit is the key to making this happen

Neighborhoods

One City Approach

- We are not planning for growth (master plan, development, single traffic entrance)
- Conflicting postal codes for areas like the Highlands, and lack of city facilities due to non-contiguous annexation
- Lack of planning across the communities so there is not an understanding of how growth will occur
- Lack of development standards, with a focus on equity, affordable housing
- Residential Development, new construction is not consistent with existing property structures
- Residents vs developers mentality
- Investors buying up properties, building duplexes etc and flipping property
- Rate of development is impacting neighborhoods in terms of affordability
- Some of our neighborhoods are being gentrified
- Development occurring does not fit with the community's desires, does not compliment the community,
- Concerned with the type and quality of businesses brought into neighborhoods

Neighborhoods

One City Approach

- Neglect and lack of investment in neighborhoods for years
- Perception is that tax dollars are spent in downtown, perception is that many are paying City taxes but not receiving the benefits
- We are seeing disinvestment in many of our neighborhoods
- Need to attract families back to the neighborhoods, incentives

Good Government

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Vision & Focus

- We are working as districts instead of working as a city
- We are missing a mission statement for our Community, need to be able to identify who we are
- Need elected officials involved in solutions with citizens
- Its not all on the government, we as communities need to do our part

Implementation

- Lack of follow through on projects and promises
- Its a big revolving door, no fulfillment of promises
- Lack of transparency and communication between City and Residents
- Residents are tired of public input processes and then no action

Good Government

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Business Practices

- More communication among Bureau Chiefs
- More collaboration among departments. Multiple employees in same area but work not coordinated. Ex: Picking up trash on side of roads, but not in ditch. "That is for someone else."
- Business permitting and site-plan review issues. Hard to navigate the process.
- Need more contracts or % of contracts awarded to local businesses as a requirement. Low percentage of City jobs went to African American contractors (1% was mentioned)
- Public meetings held during middle of day are inconvenient for many who cannot participate due to working, ex: Metropolitan Planning Commission
- The body of zoning, planning and resource ordinances--is outdated

Good Government

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Intergovernmental Relationships

- Need our jurisdictions and organizations to work together
- More collaboration between City, County and Board of Education
- Have to get together on items like education
- More community partnerships with City, County and School Board and faith based community
- Different levels of Government working together and not duplicating services

Good Government

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Communications & Managing Expectations

- Need to do better job of communicating programs through multiple channels, not just the website (Strategic Plan, Program Offerings, etc.)
- Better communication with residents
- Publicize positive events, we don't promote our City Assets
- Don't know who to call when we have a concern or need an answer to a question
- Public Information has to be easier to access
- Lack of information about the funding status or progress of projects underway but not yet finished. "When are CIP projects going to begin?"
- Better outreach to the community by City Council and City Employees
- Would like to see Alderman participating more at Neighborhood Meetings

Focus Groups

Public Safety

- Non-contiguous annexation impacts response times
- Non-contiguous annexation is causing a lack of continuity in Fire response. We cannot provide equal levels of service because we can't get there.
- EMS response times can be 20 minutes in some cases because of the arrangement we have with the County, etc.
- City land up 36% since 2000, but we have not fully recovered from the recession in terms of our workforce and resources to devote to demand
- 8-10% increase in 911 calls for service, and technology, texting, will be causing that number to go up even more
- Difficult to maintain industry standard of 3 rings or less

Public Safety

- Crime has an impact on everything
- Public Safety impacts other issues like mobility, attracting business and families to our community
- Crime is an issue, but crime is more concentrated in 15 square miles of the City
- Perception "Savannah is way too dangerous..."
- Crime and the perception of crime are both issues
- We have not leveraged the State and Federal resources in our fight against crime
- Per capita crime rate is higher and resources devoted are lower

Public Safety

- Youth violence, our youth are committing crimes
- We have to do something for youth and for youth offenders that have been involved in Justice system
- Public Safety interrelated with issues like education, workforce, poverty
- Youth exposed to drugs and there is a lack of drug awareness
- Youth don't know how to interact with authorities, need that type of education
- Because a fear of crime, youth are asking for self defense classes
- Conflict resolution is important because a fight is not just a fight anymore
- Have to be resourced and have to have a focus

Infrastructure

- Over last 13-14 years, we have not been putting in adequate resources to address infrastructure demands/needs
 - Buildings, Streets, Sidewalks, Tree Maintenance, Cemeteries, Water, Storm water, Sewer, Traffic, Technology, etc.
 - Currently in Savannah, a road can expect to be repaved once every 75 years
 - 1,500 backlog in tree requests, and yet planted 300 new trees and have vacant FTEs
- We are not investing on the front end, and we are paying for it on the back end (ex: Tree lawsuit)
- We are not a 21st century community in terms of our infrastructure
- Quality of City facilities is poor and our ability to provide maintenance is lacking
- Have been decentralized in our facility planning and maintenance vs. being a centralized function and having a plan to address needs. We don't have a facility planning and maintenance agency
- Parks Facilities and facilities in general are being neglected and are aged

Infrastructure

- City is growing and there are opportunities for us to be more proactive in our planning or it will be out of control
- With annexation, we are growing and also expanding services. It is necessary, but how do we make it work?
 - We are challenged trying to meet the demand for services
- Benefits of annexation and tax dollars, but challenged in expanding services to those areas, some non-contiguous areas (Ex: Highlands)
- In many cases, we are going after the tax base which is important, but we are neglecting the corridors and don't have infrastructure to support
- Good at saying what we want but not at acknowledging the infrastructure that needs to come first
- Technology needs are real, core systems need to be in place.
- IT has to be a part of our growth planning as IT infrastructure has to support that growth

Poverty

- One in every four lives in poverty in Savannah, and the poverty rate has been around 25% for 30 years
- Poverty is a generational issue in Savannah
- Crime and fear of crime, it is all related and goes back to poverty and homelessness. What is the game plan to address the pre-cursors to crime?
- How we treat and pay some in our community works to continue the cycle
- Key to poverty is education
- Some non-profits work with pre-5 yr. olds
- Reaching the parents is critical as it touches education and poverty, etc.
- We have to look at successful models, Lady Bamford Center, Parent University
- Early Childhood foundation is \$200,000 away from having a program in every school

Education

- K-12 education is the elephant in the room as it impacts every other issue
- Lack of quality in our education system
- We are not doing a good job preparing our youth for the future
- We have the right tools in place, but need parent and teacher involvement, they are KEY INFLUENCERS
- Have to reach these influencers even in Middle School
- Challenge in reaching the parent of the student. Family influences even if unintentional often keep a youth on a certain path, and they are not motivated to do more
- Problem is not the choice of Technical School vs a 4 year college. The issue are those that do neither in our community. Leads to crime
- Need to show our youth role models that make sense, not just celebrities. You can be more than a rapper or athlete.
- 75% military live off base, concerned about hospitals, housing and schools. Schools are the biggest worry and if military personnel cannot afford private schools, they move out of Savannah and take the commute.

Education

- Savannah youth desire those skills that are not always taught in the classrooms that will help them prepare for the future:
 - Help learning how to study and prepare for tests
 - How to always fill out applications, preparedness for collect, testing prep
 - Assistance with AP courses, scholarships
 - Youth applications, W-2s, etc.
 - Interview preparedness
 - Financial education
 - Budget and Credit training, money management
 - More availability of public speaking classes
 - Teaching social skills to youth
 - Conflict resolution assistance
 - Etiquette classes for students, 8th and 9th grade transition
 - Teaching young men to tie their ties, shake hands, etc.
 - Assistance with the arts so we know what is available for us
 - Lessons on how to take care of the community (litter, pollution, more)
 - Choosing our friends wisely
 - Classes on knowing the laws of our community



Economic Strength

Jobs/Workforce Development

- Businesses are frustrated having to go outside of Savannah to get qualified workforce.
- Lack of a skill set pipeline
- We have a local workforce that needs jobs but often can't meet the standards (education, drug tests)
- We have industry in need of workforce development, and we don't have the people power to support
- All of the scholarly skills are important, but we need to the soft skills
- Youth are asking for these skills
 - Skills to be employable, internship opportunities
 - Technical and vocational trade skills
 - “real life experience education”
- Need business collaboration at job fairs, job exposure
- Disconnect with opportunities and placing youth in those opportunities



Economic Strength

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Jobs/Workforce Development

- Have great public/private programs but getting folks motivated to get into the workforce programs is a challenge (189 Work Programs)
- Partnerships are helping but need more around workforce development
- Communication is weak between non-profits and agencies that are working together on issues like mentoring, etc. As a result, we are not strategically deployed.
- Lack of integration between service delivery and providers
- There is a perception that technical jobs are not great jobs
- Perception of technical education needs to be changed. Youth can go get core subjects and still move on if desired.
- *Move on When Ready* at Savannah Tech has capacity when programs are full in the high Schools
- *Summer 500* is making a difference, but lets do more
- What skills do we need to make sure our students have? Business and education need to continue to collaborate

Economic Strength

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- We have to attract people to come live and open businesses here
- In competition everyday with other communities to attract businesses and commerce, that typically goes to unincorporated areas
- As a City we are competing against Charleston but also Nashville, Memphis, etc. every single time a business is looking.
- Manufacturing is moving west. They are in Statesboro, etc.
- We have to attract people and jobs and they have to stay. We have a large student and military population but they are transient unless they have a reason to stay.
- The first way businesses cull the list of attractive Cities is to look at crime rate, then intergovernmental relationships

Economic Strength

- We don't have a balance of tourism and community
- If we lose communities , we will be left with a donut in the middle with a historic district and then areas of poverty.
- We have been successful in tourism, manufacturing and military but have to do more. Have to diversify and into other areas of community.
- Tourism pay does not allow many to make a living. Math does not work.
- The rules and standards we have set really only incentive hotel development as they can get value out of their development
- Our real City competition is Pooler. Very easy to go just over the line and do businesses
- Businesses want to see the City of Savannah to succeed and businesses want to partner with the City
- A lot of the downtown assets are able to survive because manufacturing, students, etc.
- 2% vacancy in office space downtown

Economic Strength

- Its not about the amount of money needed to bring industry. That is important but industry has to be able to hire a workforce and it has to be an attractive place for them to live and relocate to.

Neighborhoods

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Neighborhood Blight

- Neighborhood Blight and vacant houses are an issue in our neighborhoods
- Imminent Domain has helped but must be intentional and resourced
- Blight impacting property values, maintenance concerns, public safety

Affordable Housing

- Affordable housing and workforce housing, not just in lower socio-economic areas. It is expensive to find a home
- Workforce having to move further and further out of town
- Current ordinance prevents ability to build urban living apartments. As a result, businesses like Hotels come in because that is the most financially beneficial model
- Savannah is a college town and students want to live in college housing, no housing that has quads
- Students are going to Pooler and Richmond looking for housing
- Conditions of our housing stock is an issue



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Neighborhoods

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One City Approach

- Investment in our neighborhoods does impact crime
- Disinvestment is happening in neighborhoods along commercial corridors
- National trend is that folks are moving into downtown areas
- A focus on this community as a whole vs just downtown

Mobility

- We are a beautiful City but a City designed to be able to get around, bikes, sidewalks...it is a challenge
- We lack mobility options
- dot Express Shuttle is not being utilized by tourists as 50% of current ridership is homeless. It is paid for by hotels in the historic district, and they are wanting to pull out because they cannot recommend that their customers use that mode of transportations
- Aging population that needs options
- Lack of mobility and transportation options for the disabled



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Good Government

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Vision & Focus

- Lack of vision, don't know what to expect, not communicated well over last 10 years
- Multiple changes in leadership over the last 10 years has caused the direction to constantly shift. Makes it hard for operations to align to deliver
- It is important for this to be a City plan
- We have to focus on what is most important. Vocal minority tends to get their issues addressed
- Our issues are not all equal across the City, we need to be targeted
- Can't do everything that everyone asks us to do
- We are not operating as a sustainable government
- What is the responsibility of our local government vs. just societal needs that we may or may not be able to afford
- City has been reactionary vs. proactively focusing on the big issues and results
- Increased expectations exceed resources available. It takes money to deliver more and more results

Good Government

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Vision & Focus

- We are just putting out fires, too busy doing that to do the job at hand
- Hard to do the basic things during our work day
- Tough for City to make trade-off decisions so that we are able to manage expectations, tough making those decisions that are unpopular
- Historically we have just rearranged resources, but to deliver expected results, we need to have the resources to make it happen
- We often don't see or look at the long-term opportunity
- City has to see a change take place in order for it to get better
- How do we measure resiliency when the next natural disaster or event occurs?
How do we bounce back

Implementation/Follow-Through

- We commit to plans that we cannot finalize
- Lack of trust and that our government will follow-through
- Promises are made that cannot be accomplished

Good Government

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Business Practices

- We are not up-to-date in our business practices, lack of innovation
- City systems are outdated, the use of technology is behind. Example: Still running paper timekeeping, not effective or efficient (\$180,000 settlement because of paper system with lack of documentation)
- We have some exceptional folks, but we are not selling a good product. We are antiquated in our practices
- Often don't know how to get from A to B within our own operations and workforce to get something done
- Mixed interpretations from some City staff about what they can and cannot do
- A lot of inefficiencies, for example, there are (8) City departments needed to currently get through the permitting process. City had an Ombuds person in inspection area. (1) Point-of-Contact to help navigate process. That position has been vacant for months now.

Good Government

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Business Practices

- We are not getting quality and # of bids because we are burdensome to deal with as a City
- We are doing the same thing and expecting a different result
- Takes 15 months to design and begin a process--- takes too long to get started
- City abandoned performance budgeting when we needed it the most during tough times of the recession

Good Government

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Council Involved in Ops

- Ability of Council to come directly to departments is causing agencies to be pulled in many directions
- Elected Officials are programming and those programs have to become operational and funded

Intergovernmental Relationships

- Cooperation between governments is essential. Have to work together to get things done
- We are getting better working with School Board and County, but must continue
- Intergovernmental relationships. Perception is that we are a fragmented community from business perspective, hard to get City and County to work together
- "Can't always have unity of command, but can have unity of effort."
- Intergovernmental relationship challenges, ex: Relationship with County re Police Department



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Good Government

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Workforce

- We are not preserving institutional knowledge
- Harder to recruit, retain due to compensation constraints, there is a lack of equity in pay
- Have not been competitive in our salaries for many years. We don't have a long-term plan
- High turnover in critical functional areas of the city (example: 17% annual attrition rate in Police Department for years, hard to maintain consistency)
- Losing skilled City workforce to outside opportunities
- We spend thousands of dollars to train and then they leave
- We are losing institutional knowledge, folks are leaving City workforce
- We have not concentrated on the growth of our employees, lack of succession planning, training. Succession Planning is critical as our Top Managers will be retiring soon
- Assistant Directors are important as they are often prime successors but often these areas are where efficiencies are realized when cuts take place



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Good Government

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Workforce

- No Employee Performance Management process in place to evaluate and grow our workforce
- Institutional issue where folks feel that have an expectation of employment
- Some folks bounce around from one department to another, need accountability
- Issue with the quality of City employees dealt with by businesses. Unless you have a “go to person”, you likely will deal with attitude or not have a consistent experience
- How do we recruit and retain the next level of workers?
- Millennials and work/life balance is challenging us to think about future of our workforce. We have to be fresh in looking at what we do and how we hire
- Not retaining millennials and they are the future

Good Government

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Workforce

- We have not recovered from deep cuts of the recession
- Have been cut, but demand and expectations have not been adjusted accordingly and continue to rise
- 16 FTEs to take care of 200+ buildings, 1 painter and 1 plumber for the City
- Park & Tree was a best practice department, but we have vacancies now and don't pay competitive wages
- Employee morale is low and that impacts our interactions with customers
- Employees feel they are not being rewarded for efforts and results and that is impacting performance and ultimately perception of City by public
- Low public opinion is often what we hear

Good Government

Communications & Managing Expectations

- Not managing expectations in terms of what the City can and cannot do
- Public expectations are not be managed against reality
- We need to clean up and cull out our CIP list. It is currently not realistic
- Lack of communication of expectations, internally and externally
- Not good internal communication across workforce about what is going on
- Customer expectations continue to rise, but increased resources are necessary at a certain point for increased results
- Struggle to address rise in social media and impacts that has on addressing customer concerns in an effective way
- How do we effectively engage the community?
- Residents don't always know the distinction between City and County services/roles
- The perception when we are not telling our story is that we are more concerned with horses than kids

Council Interviews

Public Safety

- Crime is our #1
- Crime is getting some better, but too early to be comfortable or trust that this is not just a hiccup
- We are taking 2 steps forward and 1 step back
- Don't have to be #1, but we should strive to be top tier City
- Our integrity in Public Safety is top notch
- Making progress on structure, staffing of Police- off to a good start
- We have to pay for results and we are working on it, have to be competitive in pay
- We have the Berkshire Study, now what do we do about it? We still need according to study 131 FTEs officers

Public Safety

- There is a perception and reality of crime in Savannah. Involves Police, lack of recreation, educational opportunities, traffic, etc.
- Crime is real and impacting those that can least afford it and are least prepared to handle it
- Crime is happening for those that are marginalized. Murders, robberies, drug use, etc.
- Lack of Patrol in lower socio-economic areas is an issue
- Creep of crime from gentrification
- Youth Violence is an issue, kids are being recruited and are committing crimes
- The majority of our crime is coming from kids, murder suspects are kids

Public Safety

- We have to stick with something that works. We cannot make progress and then pull back or abandon it when things get a little better. Building trust in our communities has to be earned
- Community Policing, we have to invest in the training and time required to make it work

Infrastructure

- We are a 300 year old City with 300 year old perks & problems
- Infrastructure has been on hold
- We have to begin to start addressing the demand for infrastructure
- Stormwater control is a problem
- There is flooding and we need to deal with it, but we have to invest in other infrastructure and maintenance of that infrastructure as well
- Poor job of repairing, marking and maintaining streets
- Sidewalks, drainage and flooding are an issue
- We have neglected our stormwater upkeep --- in many communities they experience frequent flooding

Poverty

- A lot has not changed over time...poverty rate
- The poverty rate is at 26 to 27%, been that way for years
- Poverty is a complex issue and is interrelated with workforce development, housing and education
- It is real in Savannah and a serious issue because it is also directly related to crime.
- Also hidden poverty with rich neighborhoods directly next to poor neighborhoods so average is above official statistics
- In the poorer neighborhoods we have a migrating homeless population and mental illness is a reality

Poverty

- There is a lack of access to Healthy Living- food choices, recreation, facilities, etc. in many of our neighborhoods
- We know where the pockets of poverty are located
- We can influence poverty through certain actions that have an impact on making a living

Education

- We do have failing Schools in Savannah
- If a child can read and do math at an average level at 3rd grade, we know they have a 90% chance of graduation
- Education of 6 months – 4 yrs. old is important
- Of the 100% that graduate, only 17% go to college. What is happening with the rest --- apprentice, savannah tech, vocational, other?
- Education is important, but we have School Board and are not the School Board
- We have to develop our workforce and they have to be proud to be working

Economic Strength

Jobs/Workforce Development



- Reality is that you can't find qualified people to work
- People are not trained to work
- People don't have the soft skills
- Many don't know responsibility
- We have thrown a lot of money at this problem
- *Summer 500* was successful, but we have to keep going

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Economic Strength

Jobs/Workforce Development

- People want jobs and opportunities but not all take the initiative
- People need to understand the value they bring
- Hard to find people who want to work
- Need to develop drive, or sense of responsibility to drive
- City will have 2,000 openings for employment to work in tourism, but folks are bringing in workers rather than hiring local
- We need a workforce that is ready vs. businesses bringing in a workforce from out of town
- Hear people say "we need better paying jobs!"



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Economic Strength

Jobs/Workforce Development

- Misperception about jobs in the hospitality industry
- There is opportunity, but we have to show folks what is available and help them understand how to be qualified, how to get them in the door
- Not everyone is going to college - we are providing technical education more and more

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Economic Growth

- We are known for our tourist driven economy and manufacturing economy
- We are not diversified to support varied incomes
- We need manufacturing and also need intellectual based businesses
- Looking for land to build warehouses for port
- Now creating regional agreements through Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)
- Have to find ways to work with our community, example: Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)
- There is a serious issue in our neighborhoods and that is where Economic Development is lacking. One example, need economic development/redevelopment in areas seeing flight of businesses to Pooler or other communities
- Not there yet with Minority and Women Business Enterprise

Recreation

- Our facilities are in bad shape, especially around Parks and Recreation
- This recreation is really the only time some of these kids have to interact and recreate with others in a positive manner. If they don't have that opportunity, they are more likely to fall into trouble
- Without the activities, leads to crime, leads to poverty
- Need something so our community and our young people have access to activities
- We have lack of after school programs

Recreation

- We have to get recreation going
- No organized sports or teams sponsored by city --- this happens now when individual residents pay for it themselves and try to make it work
- We have focused our efforts on senior citizens in the past
- There is a lack of recreational opportunities for all, but see it more in poorer parts of town

Neighborhoods

Maintenance and Upkeep

- We have to bring our neighborhoods back
- Many of our neighborhoods don't look good, we have to keep our neighborhoods clean
- Feeling of neglect and that City is not taking care of communities
- Blight is a problem in our neighborhoods
 - We have properties that are all boarded up
 - They are prime locations for trouble in the form of drug sales, sex houses, etc.
 - Very hard to find property owner in many cases
 - Passage of Imminent Domain is a positive
- Lack of property maintenance and property maintenance enforcement leads to litter, trash and a declining situation
- We have a problem with yard parking, property maintenance and littered lots

Neighborhoods

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Maintenance and Upkeep

- In apartment complexes for low income families/residents there is:
 - Trash and litter than no one attends to
 - No one is accountable - landlord, city, other, etc
- Infrastructure is an issue in our neighborhoods
 - Street maintenance
 - Drainage
 - Sidewalks
- High number of Liquor Stores and pawnshops in some communities. This does not happen in affluent neighborhoods and is interrelated to issues like poverty, crime, etc.
- Class issues within our community, very much related to economics

Neighborhoods

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One City Approach

- We focus a lot on downtown due to tourism, which is important, but we need to address all neighborhoods (remember downtown is also a neighborhood)
- Feeling that the focus on crime, infrastructure and services is on downtown
- People refer to "We are in the nice part of the City" or vice versa...we don't act like ONE City.

Neighborhoods

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One City Approach

- Have to balance tourist and resident focus, too tourist focused now and rest of community feels isolated
- Tourism is important but, there is more...we have to come together to deliver results
- Tourism is a good thing, but there is more to see than just old town
- We focus on tourism, Charleston focuses on Quality of life through crime, blight and economic development. They get the results by focusing on the underlying issues
- How do we spread out tourism?

Neighborhoods

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One City Approach

- National trend is that more folks are moving into the urban areas, downtowns
- Downtown is an historic area, but also a neighborhood where folks want to feel like they have a say and can provide input
- It is an historic area where there is a feeling of being overrun by tourists
- Vacation rentals are an issue in the downtown area as they are not occupied year-around

Neighborhoods

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Traffic/Mobility Options

- Traffic in the neighborhoods, related to crime
- Traffic calming is an issue
- Secondary thoroughfares are being used as speedways to get around congestion in many neighborhoods
- Mobility is an issue, needs vary based upon neighborhood
 - bikes, vans, buses, pedestrian friendly
- We have to look at our options
- Traffic is an issue, but we need to look at what is the cause, and then think about how we fix it

Good Government

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Vision and Focus

- There has been instability in the bureaucracy for a number of years
- No one really knows where the City is going
- Need something to guide our decisions
- Need a City Strategic Plan, but we also need a Master Plan
- Slow down, focus and then move on to the next thing
- We have to have a shared vision and that vision has to be community wide
- We have to make progress and make wins for our community
- Its all about Vision and Leadership
- Everything can't be a priority

Good Government

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Vision and Focus

- We often have conflicting Council Agendas
- Have had “We can’t do that,” mentality. Why can't we? We can...
- Not a lot of accountability, real accountability
- We have to address the balance sheet and the delivery of services per what is stated in our charter and constitution
- We have to do the things that make sense and think about what is affordable
- Not being as fiscally responsible as we should
- We have not managed our assets, and that has impacted residents
- History of who yells the loudest or brings in the most folks, gets their need met

Good Government

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Implementation/Follow-Through



- We can't follow through as a Government
- Our implementation is lacking, takes too long to get things accomplished
- Some skepticism about government and our ability to deliver
- Poor management of SPLOST (ex: 31 years to build SPLOST project)
- Decisions should lead to resources needed to implement and if not there, implementation is in question
- Taxpayers are holding us accountable and they should

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Good Government

Workforce

- Institutionalized workforce to some degree at the City
- They need to know we are serious about performance and will reward creativity and innovation that produces results
- Those that are just coasting along de-motivate the good folks. "Why do I even try?"
- Very siloed, inefficient in our processes
- "Not my problem, but your problem" type mentality
- Not a lot of collaboration, duplication across departments and agencies
- Over time has led to a culture of mediocrity



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Good Government

Workforce

- Unintentional City Culture where we are content being just "good enough"
- Not using technology like we need to, it helps get things done
- We need to keep our good employees and show them we are striving to be the best...show them light at end of the tunnel, opportunities for advancement
- Some employees have the attitude, "that's not my department, that is someone else's issue."
- We want dedicated employees who take pride and value in their work vs those who just go through the motions
- Employees have historically not been paid a competitive wage

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Good Government

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Communication

- Poor job of communicating, internally and externally
- City does not communicate in a way that relates to youth, Social Media outlets, etc.
- We don't do a good job telling our story
- People are too friendly sometimes
- City needs to report on the good things, and we don't do that well
- If we don't publicize the good things better, people are not going to know, and we hear that feedback
- Folks need to know what is a Strategic Plan and how other plans interact with the Plan
- Folks are leaving the City, taxes are somewhat high and the perception is that the quality of city services is poor

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Making Decisions