



## **STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

The economic development arena is one of fierce competition and changing landscapes. The City of Johns Creek has hired Strategic Planning Group to create the city's first Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP). SEDP's serve as roadmaps for the city's economic development efforts with the goals of sustaining and increasing the city's tax base, increasing new private and corporate investments, increasing opportunities for public/private partnerships, job creation in appropriate business sectors and maximizing sustainable economic growth and vitality. The framework of the strategy is in three questions:

- Where are we? (Profile)
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there? (Strategic Plan)

The city's SEDP serves to answer these questions and provide the city with a plan and platform to drive its future success and foster its sustainability. The creation of an economic development strategy is the first step in the city becoming a true competitor in the world of economic development.

#### **Background**

Johns Creek's position in the economic development realm is unique in that it is primarily built out and predominantly residential in nature. As a community, it is affluent and highly educated. An important component to the SEDP is the recognition that economic development efforts must not threaten the quality of life that has made Johns Creek a premier residential community. The primary commercial uses are located along arterials, at intersections and within Technology Park Johns Creek. A suburban office park developed in the 1980's; Technology Park represents the largest concentration of commercial uses in the city. The city's current office inventory has over 3 million square feet of office space with a 12 percent vacancy rate. Most vacant office space is considered Class B space and is less than 20,000 contiguous square feet in size. Average rental rates for Johns Creek are among the lowest in the metro Atlanta market at \$17.92 per square foot.

The retail market is also very competitive with significant regional retail centers located in close proximity to the city. Johns Creek currently possess approximately 655,000 square foot of retail space with a vacancy of 12.3 percent. Lease rates average \$14.85 per square foot for retail uses. Due to the lack of inventory, aging nature of existing inventory and other factors, the city is facing a scenario of potential declining revenues with little prospect of improvement under the current trajectory.

## Targeted Industries

Targeted industries represent the business sectors that fit the profile of the city. These are the “value-add” businesses that the city should seek to retain and attract that benefit the tax base. The Targeted Industries section offers recommended industries compatible with the Johns Creek profile. These include:

- High Technology Industries
- Information Technology
- Software
- Financial Services
- Medical Technology
- Professional Services

Four tiers of target businesses for recruitment and retention are identified as part of the strategy. First Tier businesses represent prime uses of office space. First Tier Businesses include:

- Software Publishers
- Securities and Commodity Contracts Brokerage
- Computer Systems Design
- Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services
- Offices of Physicians

Second Tier targets represent businesses designed to fill existing vacancies in the city and primarily Technology Park. First Tier businesses would also fall under this category. Second Tier Businesses include:

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Legal Services
- Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping and Payroll Services
- Architectural, Engineering and Related Services
- Scientific Research and Development Services

Third Tier targets involve working with established national and international firms such as Novartis (Alcon) and Ebix to explore forward/backward linkages and expansion opportunities.

Fourth Tier Targets involve retail strategies; however, as the market analysis suggests, the current market is unlikely to bring significant retail investment unless a destination is developed that offers a different product and environment than the current economic climate. This strategy would likely be premature until further discussions about Technology Park redevelopment and potential catalytic developments conclude. Additionally, while Technology Park represents the city’s greatest commercial asset, the study indicates that its aging nature and a lack of available product hinders the city’s ability to compete for these targeted industries.

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis**

Through market research and stakeholder interviews a SWOT Analysis was developed to define the city's economy. The primary strengths identified were excellent schools, good neighborhoods, educated residents and quality of life factors. The greatest weakness identified was overwhelmingly traffic and transportation logistics. Opportunities identified include the development of a city center, entertainment, arts and cultural venues and promoting and growing medical and healthcare sectors. Primary threats identified related to traffic and lack of cohesive city policy and vision.

The SWOT Analysis is then transformed into overall economic development themes. These include:

- Business Climate/Image
- Growth Leadership-Infrastructure
- Position the City for Economic Development
- Develop Product
- Community Development

It is from these five themes that a strategic action plan is developed to implement the economic development strategy. The resulting action plan contains five goals, 19 objectives and 74 strategies. Successful implementation of the strategy will require commitment and collaboration with the responsible parties, primarily the city and Johns Creek Advantage, and will require additional resources to fully implement the recommended strategies.

**Johns Creek Strategic Economic Development Plan: 2016-2021 Implementation Matrix**

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMEFRAME				RESOURCES
		Ongoing	2016-2017	2017-2018	2019-2021	
<b>GOAL 1: PROMOTE CITY IMAGE, BUSINESS CLIMATE AND BRAND FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.1: Promote the business identity of the City</b>						
Strategy 1.1.1: Promote the City as a place for business (City is more than residential and education)	City, JCA, Chamber					City Resources
Strategy 1.1.2: Work with regional ED partners to establish a regional brand to market	JCA, City, Chamber					JCA, City
Strategy 1.1.3: Collaborate with regional partners through a comprehensive MOU to market the North Fulton region for economic development	JCA, City					Staff Time
Strategy 1.1.4: Develop a marketing plan to promote the City including print, video clips, social media, etc.	City, JCA, Chamber, CVB					Staff Time
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.2: Adopt a unified vision for Technology Park Redevelopment</b>						
Strategy 1.2.1: Determine the best location for key initial redevelopment	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.2.2: Determine the mixed use components for the Redevelopment	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.2.3: Develop a marketing plan to inform the community of the plan	City, City Council, JCA, Chamber					City (new resources)
Strategy 1.2.4: Develop a multi-year funding plan for the redevelopment of the Park	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.2.5: Develop a pro forma on one or more key redevelopment parcels to ensure its viability	City					City
Strategy 1.2.6: Update the Comprehensive Plan and LDR's to allow for mixed use development in Technology Park	City, City Council					City
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.3: Maintain proactive City government</b>						
Strategy 1.3.1: Continue to actively promote responsible growth	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.3.2: Continue to support and fund infrastructure needs for economic growth	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.3.3: Periodically review the Comprehensive Plan and make changes that support economic development growth strategies	City, City Council					City
Strategy 1.3.4: Inform development community of regulatory changes that impact business development, i.e. LDRs, Building Codes, Sign Ordinances etc.	City, JCA					City, JCA, Chamber

Yellow means implementation phase

Green means on going

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<b>GOAL 2: DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BALANCED GROWTH</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.1: Improve infrastructure to encourage business growth and expansion</b>						
Strategy 2.1.1: Continue to improve the area's roadway network and work with neighboring communities to resolve bottle necks	City, MPO					City, State, Federal
Strategy 2.1.2: Develop a funding plan to improve roadway deficiencies	City, MPO					City, State, Federal
Strategy 2.1.3: Collaborate with local and regional stakeholders to educate and advocate for a comprehensive regional transportation plan	City, MPO					City, State, Federal
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2: Develop broadband to encourage business growth and expansion to key development sites</b>						
Strategy 2.2.1: Inventory current broadband capacity	JCA, City, Broadband Providers					JCA, City
Strategy 2.2.2: Meet with providers to explore methods of expanding and increasing speeds and redundancy	JCA, City, Broadband Providers					JCA
Strategy 2.2.3: Ensure that the City especially the Technology Park, has competitive broadband speeds and redundancies	JCA, City, Broadband Providers					JCA
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.3: Develop water and sewer infrastructure to encourage business growth and expansion of key dev. sites</b>						
Strategy 2.3.1: Coordinate with Fulton County a water and sewer needs assessment when it relates to key development sites	City, Fulton County					City
Strategy 2.3.2: Develop a plan for addressing water and sewer deficiencies that deter business expansion	City, Fulton County					City, County

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<b>GOAL 3: POSITION THE CITY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.1: Promote available sites and buildings</b>						
Strategy 3.1.1: Identify key sites and buildings for economic development opportunities	JCA, City, Chamber					JCA, City
Strategy 3.1.2: Develop plan to market land/building assets	JCA, City					JCA, City (new)
Strategy 3.1.3: Collaborate with commercial real estate brokers and Johns Creek Advantage to establish a building and sites data base	JCA, City					JCA, City, Brokers
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.2: Create innovative partnerships to support existing businesses and new businesses</b>						
Strategy 3.2.1: Work with JCA to establish a MOU of responsibilities for the City and JCA	City, JCA					staff time
Strategy 3.2.2: Work with businesses to create, attract and retain target industries	JCA, City, Chamber					JCA, staff time, Chamber
Strategy 3.2.3: Develop a comprehensive existing industry program to include survey of existing businesses, visitations, quarterly meetings, etc.	JCA					JCA
Strategy 3.2.4: Explore options for public/private partnerships	JCA, City, Chamber					JCA, City (new)
Strategy 3.2.5: Increase the awareness of local, State and Regional resources to assist with retention, attraction and growth of value-added businesses	JCA, City					JCA
Strategy 3.2.6: Schedule regular meetings with commercial real estate brokers and conduct FAM tours	JCA, City, Chamber					JCA
Strategy 3.2.7: Work with regional and state partners to promote workforce readiness, education and training	JCA, Chamber, State of Georgia					JCA
Strategy 3.2.8: Create partnerships with healthcare providers to assist with identifying growth needs	JCA, City					JCA, City
Strategy 3.2.9: Conduct a pro forma and concept design for one or more parcels in TP to demonstrate viability of redevelopment	City					City (new)
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.3: Create a regulatory environment that embraces collaboration and cooperation</b>						
Strategy 3.3.1: Identify and revise regulations that inhibit business growth	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 3.3.2: Explore business friendly land development policies that encourage business attraction and retention	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 3.3.3: Formalize and promote the City's streamlined development process	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 3.3.4: Explore land development policies that will incentivize the development of more inventory on existing parcels (e.g. Technology Park) including mixed use concepts	City, City Council					City
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.4: Evaluate current City economic development toolkit</b>						
Strategy 3.4.1: Create a Johns Creek Development Authority	City, City Council, JCA					City
Strategy 3.4.2: Consider creating a Community Improvement District (CID)	City, City Council, JCA					City
Strategy 3.4.3: Develop and adopt guidelines for awarding incentives	City, City Council, JCA					City
Strategy 3.4.4: Develop incentives for existing and new businesses	City, City Council, JCA					City
Strategy 3.4.5: Conduct economic and fiscal impact analysis on land use and zoning changes	City					City New
Strategy 3.4.6: Develop comprehensive economic development incentive policies	City, City Council, JCA					City New
Strategy 3.4.7: Develop a comprehensive funding program for economic development policies and initiatives	City, City Council					City
Strategy 3.4.8: Conduct a fiscal and economic impact analysis on projects receiving incentives	City, City Council, JCA					City new

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<b>GOAL 4: DEVELOP PRODUCT-LAND and BUILDINGS</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.1: Increase available Shovel-Ready sites for Office Uses, Advanced Manufacturing, Research &amp; Development</b>						
Strategy 4.1.1: Work with landowners to develop sites for office, advanced manufacturing, research and development	City, JCA					City, JCA, Private Partners
Strategy 4.1.2: Work with developers to redevelop Technology Park	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 4.1.3: Coordinate with Technology Park to revise the master plan	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 4.1.4: Explore creation of a Community Improvement District (CID) for Technology Park	City, City Council, JCA					City
Strategy 4.1.5: Establish design and density options for Technology Park	City, City Council, JCA					City (new), JCA, Private Partners
Strategy 4.1.6: Utilize the Johns Creek Development Authority to create a land bank	City, City Council, Johns Creek Dev. Authority					JCDA
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.2: Identify key parcels that can be readily converted to shovel ready sites</b>						
Strategy 4.2.1: Compile inventory of land and ownership of properties zoned and ready for detailed master site planning	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 4.2.2: Meet with landowners/developers of parcels greater than 2 acres to determine action needed to develop shovel ready sites	City, JCA					City, JCA
Strategy 4.2.3: Develop land development regulations that incentivize increased density/mixed use development on remaining vacant land	City, City Council					City new,
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.3: Encourage development of Class "A" office and R &amp; D space</b>						
Strategy 4.3.1: Create policies that will expedite infrastructure for Class "A" office and R & D investment	City, City Council, JCA					City new, JCA
Strategy 4.3.2: Lead in the creation of public/private partnerships to prepare the City to attract business investment	City, City Council, JCA					City, JCA, Private Partners
Strategy 4.3.3: Develop ways the City can partner with developers to creatively structure financing for infrastructure needs and reduce impacts of regulatory demands	City, City Council, JCA					City, JCA, Private Partners
Strategy 4.3.4: Develop a Hospital Overlay District to protect and allow for future expansion	City, City Council, Emory Hospital					City
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.4: Conduct a Hotel Feasibility Study</b>						
Strategy 4.4.1: Determine funding partners for a feasibility study	CVB, City, JCA					CVB
Strategy 4.4.2: Determine under met hotel and meeting space needs	CVB, City, JCA					CVB
Strategy 4.4.3: Partner with CVB to identify potential sites for hotel/conference meeting space	CVB, JCA, City					CVB

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<b>GOAL 5: MAINTAIN QUALITY OF LIFE-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.1: Develop a list of unmet amenities for the City to pursue</b>						
Strategy 5.1.1: Examine gaps in services i.e. theatres, bowling alleys, skating rinks, and other evening activity generating uses	Chamber, CVB, City					Chamber, CVB, City
Strategy 5.1.2 Explore opportunities for arts and crafts, and other cultural events and venues	CVB, Chamber, Arts Alliance, City					CVB, Chamber, Arts Alliance
Strategy 5.1.3: Promote the Central Business District as a regional performing arts venue and cultural asset	Chamber, CVB, Arts Alliance, JCA					CVB, Chamber, Arts Alliance
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.2: Maintain a range of housing product</b>						
Strategy 5.2.1: Promote a full range of housing products in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan review	City					City new
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.3: Use parks and recreation facilities as economic development drivers</b>						
Strategy 5.3.1: Adopt the Recreation and Parks Master Plan	City					City
Strategy 5.3.2: Implement the Recreation and Parks Master Plan	City, City Council					City new
Strategy 5.3.3: Promote sports tournaments	City, CVB					City new, CVB
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.4: Enhance arts, culture and performing arts</b>						
Strategy 5.4.1: Conduct a Performing Arts Civic Center Mixed Use Feasibility Study	City, City Council					City new
Strategy 5.4.2: Use performing arts, cultural venues and events as economic development drivers	City, City Council, CVB, Chamber					City, CVB, Chamber
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.5: Expand retail, restaurant, entertainment offerings</b>						
Strategy 5.5.1: Promote the development of destination entertainment and destination retail	JCA, City					JCA
Strategy 5.5.2: Explore redevelopment of under-performing shopping centers (40% or higher vacancy)	City, JCA					City/JCA
Strategy 5.5.3: Explore working with the private sector to recruit a Cinebistro type movie/restaurant product	CVB, Chamber, City					CVB, Chamber

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