



# NEWSLETTER

Q3 2024

## Inspired. Invigorated. Innovative



## City's Progression

### Evident at Midyear Mark

**New fiscal year budget funds innovative programs, infrastructure and more.**

July's arrival means we are halfway through a calendar year, but for Powder Springs and many cities and government entities, July 1 marks the start of a new fiscal year. And as the city enters into this new year, new and in-progress developments show how invigorated Powder Springs continues to be.

The \$14,159,048 general fund budget represents a 10.4% increase over the FY 2024 general fund budget of \$12,823,324. The fiscal plan took effect July 1 and runs until June 30, 2025, budgeting conservatively based on projections of continued but slower development with steady revenue increases, coupled with continued inflation and expenses expected to increase.

While maintaining six months of reserves via city policy, the budget accommodates continuation of community events put on by the city's Parks and Recreation department. Attracting and retaining businesses remains a priority in the fiscal plan, as it continues funding for city-held job fairs and procurement training, along with business recognitions ranging from the annual Business Appreciation Reception and videos highlighting the wide array of industries in Powder Springs. (See page 2 for more budget-related highlights.)

## Hearings Set for Millage Rates

The City proposes to keep its millage at the current rate of 9.5 mills. It will hold three public hearings this month prior to adopting the millage rate at the July 15 council meeting.

The public is invited to attend the hearings at the Patricia C. Vaughn Cultural Arts Center at 4181 Atlanta St. on the following dates: July 8 at noon and 6 p.m., and July 15 at 6 p.m.

## Crisis Hotline

Do you need help finding free or low-cost substance use or mental health treatment providers? Visit [FindHelp.org](https://FindHelp.org) or call 988. The Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) is available 24/7 at 800-715-4225 and via the MyGCAL app (free to download from the App Store and Google Play).

## DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

Adding to that array of businesses are new and incoming arrivals downtown.

Marietta Street received a much-needed jolt by the June opening of Sangster's Cafe, giving downtown visitors and residents a destination for fresh-roasted coffee and food items. Right across the street, meanwhile, crews work to renovate the front portion of what many folks know as the Boyd building, which upon completion will see new businesses join its two neighbors situated on the other side of the building, SGC Chicken & Seafood and Skint Chestnut Brewing Company.

The opening this year of Springside Apartments downtown, and Heartwood Powder Springs on Brownsville Road last year, are bolstering the city's tax base and also bringing new residents to enjoy city businesses and other offerings. And they and more seasoned residents will all be served by a new City Hall set to be open in early 2025, allowing city departments to return to downtown and operate under one roof. Construction remains underway on this new two-story facility, being built on the site of the former Municipal Court building.

Another downtown landmark, meanwhile, will remain standing, as the city evaluates the former Powder Springs Primitive Baptist Church on Jackson Way for public reuse. The city is in the process of acquiring that property, and passers-by may have noticed the barriers around the property in recent months — an effort to protect the site during the city's busy events season. Additionally, officials expect to analyze feasible facility use at the Ford Center campus.

Citywide, a traffic impact study will review and recommend improvements that could mitigate impacts from our growth. The study .

recommendations will be forthcoming this winter. Based on the truck route plan from last year, additional truck route signage will be installed in the upcoming fiscal year.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Powder Springs Police's efforts to protect visitors and residents continue to expand as part of the city's 2025 budget. It will be implementing in the coming months the FUSUS camera integration system, which combines live video and sensor data to quickly identify, locate, and apprehend any individuals causing harm to our city. Department leaders will host educational and outreach programs to introduce the FUSUS system to homeowner associations and citizens.

One component of department's CAP (Citizens And Police) Program will see distribution of a newsletter to citizens, businesses, churches, civic groups and others with information relating to events, community concerns and related information. Citizens are encouraged to work with the CAP Program to find ways to deploy their knowledge and experiences into community projects to enhance community-based programs.

The department recently added two new officers to its ranks, both with a combined seven years of experience. A crime analyst to assist the police department in reviewing trends in crime is one of three planned staff members to be added to the city payroll under the new budget. Other new roles to be filled are a chief information officer for the city's IT department and a park operations facilities coordinator.

Public safety improvements also include the second phase of a lighting assessment and implementation of additional lighting when needed, as well as changing out outdated lightbulbs to more efficient LED models.

## Mobility SPLOST Set for November Ballots

County commissioners in June approved the placement of a Mobility SPLOST, or MSPLOST, on the ballot, and voters in the Nov. 5 general election will decide if Cobb will implement this proposed 1-percent sales tax levied for 30 years to help fund transit, trail, and other mobility-related projects in the county.

For Powder Springs, revenues from the tax's first five years would be put toward implementation of "microtransit" service within the city limits. Microtransit, as defined by the American Public Transportation Association, is "small-scale, on-demand public transit services that can offer fixed routes and schedules, as well as flexible routes and on-demand scheduling."

MSPLOST funding could also be put toward intersection improvements that would benefit transit operations, which would also improve travel times and safety for other vehicles. Bicycle and pedestrian/trail projects that allow people to walk or bike to transit from a nearby location would also be eligible for MSPLOST funding. Cobb officials and city leaders would work together to determine which projects in these categories would be preferred for implementation through MSPLOST.

Within 10 years, according to MSPLOST proposal documents, Cobb would implement countywide microtransit service, expand local bus routes, and construct a South Cobb Transit Center near Powder Springs.

Cobb County Department of Transportation has more details on the MSPLOST proposal online at [cobbcounty.org/transportation/msplost](http://cobbcounty.org/transportation/msplost).



## We Want Your Sorted Recyclables

The City of Powder Springs' Drop-off Recycling Center operates Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 3006 Springs Industrial Drive. Materials cannot be brought or dropped off at Public Works outside of its weekend operating hours.

Residents are urged to separate their recyclables before dropping them off at the center. This ensures speedy intake of recyclables for both staff and other citizens bringing their recycling, and that materials are properly sorted and processed among like materials.



## Stormwater Repairs Following Crucial Infrastructure Assessments

The Mayor and Council directed a portion of the funds from the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant to fund stormwater infrastructure needs, an important investment in the City's future. The purpose of the project was to provide an accurate picture of the condition of the stormwater system, providing the information needed to accurately prioritize repairs, and more importantly, to maintain the system to prevent expensive failures.

Proposals were solicited and Lowe Engineering was selected to inventory and assess the stormwater infrastructure, update the GIS system, and create a multi-year capital improvement plan. To facilitate accurate estimates for capital outlay, Lowe developed a Cost of Replacement (COR) tool. The COR is a database of unit costs contracts from municipalities across metro Atlanta. The COR was used to import the City's stormwater infrastructure data to create valuations and replacement data and to develop recommended annual maintenance budgets and identify needed investments to meet the City's long-term operations goals.

Lowe Engineers completed its comprehensive inventory and assessment of the City's stormwater system last year.

In preparing the budget, the City used the amount identified by the Lowe assessment for repairs that needed to be completed in the next five years. The use of ARPA, maintenance budget and stormwater repairs will be supplemented by a fee increase in order to complete the repairs within the specified time. The CIP fee will increase by \$1 this year, and then a \$0.50 increase for two more years.

The work will complete the immediate needs as an important investment in the future of the City and set a foundation for a proactive, planned approach for long-term maintenance.

In June, the city council approved agreements with Inliner Solutions Inc., Federal EC LLC, Vortex Services LLC, Site Engineering Inc., S.H. Creel Contracting LLC and HD Excavations and Utilities LLC for on-call services to perform repairs and maintenance to the city's stormwater system.

## Why Has My Sanitation Bill Increased?

On July 1, rates for sanitation services will increase to \$29 per month.

The increase is needed to cover higher costs across board. To attract and retain drivers and collectors, the City has increased salaries. In recent years, public works departments and private garbage disposal companies around the country have been short staffed. The only way to ensure the City hires and retains drivers and collectors is by offering competitive salaries and benefits. Also increasing are disposal costs paid at private facilities, along with fuel prices.

Service levels will remain as is, with curbside trash pickup frequency remaining unchanged and the city continuing to offer Monday brush and limb pickup, drop-off recycling on weekends and the Reside With Pride bulk trash pickup, which is held twice annually during customers' normal pickup days.

Current fee rates would not generate sufficient revenue to cover projected operating and capital costs over the next 10 years, and shortfalls not covered by the city's Sanitation Fund, the fund would be depleted by Fiscal Year 2026.

The monthly fee for city residents of \$29 in Fiscal Year 2025 is expected to increase to \$34 and remain there in Fiscal Years 2026 through 2029 — a rate needed to cover projected operating costs, new equipment purchases, and maintain sufficient contingency in the Sanitation Fund.

In its efforts to control costs, the City has revisited collection routes to increase efficiency and thus delaying the need to add routes as the number of households in the City grows. A new side-loader garbage truck added to the city's fleet reduces labor costs as it requires just one crew member to operate it versus three crew members on a typical garbage truck. Eventually, the side-loader model will replace all existing collection vehicles.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

All events held at Thurman Springs Park.

- July 4:** 4th of July Celebration, 6-10 p.m.
- July 11:** Family to Park Day, 6:30 p.m.
- July 25:** Family to Park Day, 6:30 p.m.
- July 27:** Sounds of the Springs Concert, 7 p.m.
- Aug. 14:** Powder Springs Marketplace, 5-9 p.m.
- Aug. 24:** Sounds of the Springs Concert, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26:** Fall Brown Bag Lunch Concert, 12-1 p.m.
- Oct. 1:** National Night Out, 6 p.m.
- Oct. 12:** Hispanic Heritage Fiesta, 4-9 p.m.
- Oct. 19:** Trunk-or-Treat, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Locations and details can be found at [cityofpowdersprings.org](http://cityofpowdersprings.org).



Photo by Liz By Design Photography

## Summer Concert Series Returns

Three great bands are coming to Thurman Springs Park for the fourth-annual "Sounds of the Springs" Concert Series. All three concerts are free and open to the public.

The series kicks off July 27 with **Bumpin' The Mango**, an Atlanta funk & soul band boasting "a fiery five piece horn section, a rock solid rhythm section, and an incredible lead vocalist." Aug. 24's event will feature **Kasper and the 911 Band**, a dance and party band that will keep the crowd fired up throughout the evening. Closing out the series on Sept. 28 will be **Guardians of the Jukebox**, performing fan-favorite hits of the 1980's that will get audience members on their feet.

All concerts start at 7 p.m.

Food and drink vendors will be on site at all three events, with both non-alcoholic and alcoholic options available.



The 911 Band!



## Annual 'Bash' to Supply Students Before School Start

Powder Springs Community Taskforce in collaboration with LinkedUp Church will present the 23rd-annual Back2School Bash on Saturday, July 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ron Anderson Center, 3820 Macedonia Road.

In addition to backpack and school supply giveaways to registered attendees, the event will feature fun activities, a DJ, bounce house and more.

Registration prior to the event is required to reserve school supplies and may fill up quickly. Registration details will be posted on the City's Facebook and Instagram accounts and on the city's website, [cityofpowdersprings.org](http://cityofpowdersprings.org).

# Service Delivery Strategy Update

Leaders of six of Cobb's cities and of the County continue discussions about an updated Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) but appear headed to mediation.

Georgia requires cities and states every 10 years to agree on a new SDS agreement, which aims to minimize competition between or duplication of local services. For residents, it ensures that they are not taxed for services they do not receive, or taxed twice for the same government-provided service.

The cities of Acworth, Austell, Kennesaw, Marietta, Powder Springs and Smyrna and the county have been under a service delivery agreement since 2004; it is set to expire on Oct. 31, 2024. Discussions that began in early 2023 to renew the agreement have stalled because the county wishes to reduce payments or make no payment currently paid to the cities to offset the taxes the city residents pay to the county for services it does not receive from the county. Cities do not agree with this.

Because discussions have stalled, the cities and county have agreed to move to mediation, scheduled for 9:30 a.m. July 17 and 18 at the Marietta Conference Center. Failure to reach an agreement will result in sanctions by the State, which will have a negative impact on citizens and businesses impacted by loss of state and federal funds and permits. For example, the cities and county would not receive state matching money for road improvements, road improvement loans, water and sewer infrastructure loans, and community development block grants, permits for water and sewer projects, permits for installation of traffic signals, curb cuts, and installation of utilities under state and federal highways. Additionally, radar certifications for police would be withheld while sanctions are in place.



Photo by Liz By Design Photography

# Staying Connected to the City — and to Health and Safety Initiatives

Did you know that this newsletter goes out to more than 6,000 property owners? It's just one way the city shares news and information about city programs, projects, schedules and events.

We are in our second year of conducting 2-to-3 citizen surveys annually of our community, which has provided valuable feedback about issues



important to the community. We conduct quarterly town hall meetings that are live-streamed and shared via Zoom and on our Facebook page. The public can also access our city council hearings via Zoom, with the digital platform enabling us to reach approximately 5,500 viewers in 2023. Streamed access to city council meetings increased 34% and townhalls by 16% last year.

The City's app, meanwhile, has generated over 12,000 interactions and is at the fingertips of over 6,000 users.

Finally, we have experienced success with HOA and community meetings in neighborhoods — meeting residents where they are. Contact us if your neighborhood is interested.

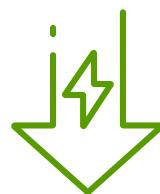
Additionally, our human sustainability efforts include adopting a co-response program between our police department and mental health providers. The city received a community health partnership grant from Cobb Douglas Public Health to reduce the number of calls to 911 that result in arrest by diverting those calls to a behavioral health specialist. The city agreed to participate in the county PATH program as part of that grant, and while the project is just in the beginning stages, in a period of six months, 42 calls were diverted from arrest to behavioral health specialists.

The City is partnering with Cobb Collaborative to offer employees a tool to learn about resiliency and how to better handle stressors the employee encounters whether in the workplace or at home. The city plans to extend this Community Resiliency Model to the larger community later this year to share tips on how others can help themselves and others within their social network.

In May, the City on its Facebook and Instagram accounts shared tips from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as part of Mental Health Awareness Month. SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. The City has and will continue to share public service announcements to promote a healthy and safe community for our residents and visitors.



# How to Manage Energy Usage During Hottest Months



Georgia Power – which along with GreyStone Power and Cobb EMC provide electric service in various areas of the city — offers these tips for all homeowners to reduce their energy usage and the potential for sticker “shock” every month:



## Change Air Filter:

Change standard air filters once a month, or pleated filters once every three months. A clogged filter makes your A/C work harder, increases wear on your unit, and uses more energy.

### Unblock Air Vents:

Keep air vents clear of obstruction to help your heating and cooling system operate more efficiently.



## Think Thermostat, and Fan On:

Set your programmable thermostat to 78°F in the summer for energy-efficient results. Using ceiling fans can make your space feel 4 or 5°F cooler, and during moderately hot weather, ceiling may allow you to avoid using your A/C altogether.



### Tune Up that A/C:

Have your A/C professionally serviced to ensure it's running efficiently. Trim nearby plants around the A/C units so they can receive proper air flow. Nearly 20 percent of monthly energy use may be attributed to cooling your home in the summer. Inefficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems can also amount to hundreds of dollars in additional energy costs every year.



## Turn Off Lights:

Turn off the lights when you leave a room. To help you remember, try leaving eye-catching reminders next to light switches and doorways.



### Utilize Natural Light:

Cleaning windows or dusting blinds? Close draperies, blinds, or shades to reduce extra heat caused by direct sunlight. Consider opening windows, and turning off your A/C, when cooler weather allows.



## Wash Clothes Cold:

Wash full loads of clothes with cold water and avoid over-drying. Also, clean the lint trap before every load to increase efficiency.



### Focus on the Fridge:

Proper cleaning and maintenance of the refrigerator, such as dusting the dirt from refrigerator coils and removing food to allow air to circulate, can reduce energy consumption.



## Fire Up the Grill:

Reduce the temperature inside your home by using an outdoor grill or smoker instead of indoor ovens and stoves.