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From the Mayor's Desk

City's Economic Development Climate Remains Strong

Since March, all our lives have been turned upside down. From the state's mandated shelter-in-place to businesses and schools being forced to close – we are operating in a completely different environment and trying to cope in our new COVID-19 dominated world.

Despite the current health crisis, the city's economic development is still strong. CarMax, which had opened a Customer Experience Center just last year bringing 300 new jobs to our city, recently announced it was expanding its center and adding over 200 new positions.

Additionally, Soliant Health, a health care job and staffing business, will be moving into the former Career Builder building later this year and bringing 400 employees.

This is certainly promising news. Fortunately, our city has seen a steady stream of businesses moving or establishing their headquarters in Peachtree Corners ever since our city was incorporated just eight years ago. This speaks volumes about the quality of life in Peachtree Corners and the pro-business environment we work hard to maintain in our city. The fact is that Peachtree Corners is still considered a regional job hub for a myriad of technology and life sciences companies and is the regional headquarters of large, national and international companies including Comcast, Crawford & Co., and Hapag-Lloyd.

To help ensure both our large and small businesses can weather the storm during these unprecedented times, the city has recently relaxed requirements on several fronts. In June the city council passed a resolution to allow restaurants to erect temporary outdoor dining tents to allow expansion of their seating ability which had been reduced during the state-mandated COVID-19 restrictions. And in July our council voted unanimously to waive the city's temporary sign permit to make it easier for retailers, restaurants and other businesses to let the public know they are operating and open for businesses. The temporary sign permit usually limits the display of banners to 21 days. Both these actions will be valid through the end of the year.

Each of us living here benefit from a robust economic development environment through increased property values and quality of life improvements made since 2012 when Peachtree Corners was incorporated. When a city experiences low economic growth, it causes a chain reaction that can negatively impact the welfare of the people living there. Our city's zero

millage rate is a considerable impact on a business's decision to locate here which positively affects each and every one of us.

Another economic development driver is the city's Curiosity Lab and Innovation Center. Opened just a year ago, it is experiencing continued interest from a number of entities interested in using the 1.5-mile test track and smart city laboratory as a testing site to test vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communications. The track is equipped with intelligent traffic cameras and traffic signals along with smart streetlights and data sensors which provide video coverage and data collection that can be monitored from a central network operations center.

Curiosity Lab is located in Technology Park and is one of the only 5G enabled smart city living labs in the world and already has produced partnerships and collaborations with Fortune 100 companies such as Cisco to Silicon Valley startups including Tortoise and Go X. This spring the world's first teleoperated e-scooters made its debut at Curiosity Lab to test its technology. You can view the list of companies on the Curiosity Lab's website at curiositylabptc.com.

Recently Curiosity Lab hosted a virtual car show. The show was shot at Curiosity Lab's Innovation Center and picked up by local TV stations throughout the country. Following is a link to one of the shows: <https://gooddaysacramento.cbslocal.com/video/4653138-curiosity-lab/>

Throughout the pandemic, we've heard the stories of businesses helping businesses, businesses helping residents, residents supporting businesses and all of us helping each other. I, along with the city council, are taking all steps at its disposal to support our business community during the COVID-19 pandemic. A thriving business community ensures Peachtree Corners will continue to be the best place to live, work, play and learn. Our business community thanks you for your support.

Stay safe, stay strong. Together we will all get through this.

Mike Mason, Mayor