Transforming Tech Park from a Technology Campus into a Center for Innovation

Since the first businesses moved into the first buildings in Paul Duke's Technology Park Atlanta, the 500-acre business park has been drawing companies from around the globe that focused on developing and perfecting cutting-edge technology. Businesses like Hayes Modems, Scientific Atlanta and Quadram Corporation attracted top engineering minds in the 1970s and '80s to develop technologies for computers and communications.

Technology Park was responsible, in large part, for putting Peachtree Corners on the map even before our community became a city. It has been the driving force for our city's economic development with 7,000 employees and roughly 500 companies. Keeping it viable and relevant as we move into this increasingly high-tech world is important, not only for the business community but also for increasing commercial and residential property values.

Attracting the top minds to high-tech businesses has evolved. Today's workforce, many whom are millennials, are no longer interested in working in isolated campuses of low-rise buildings, parking lots and company cafeterias, but instead are drawn to areas that can offer conveniently located housing options, short commutes, either by foot or bicycle, and public places where they can meet and connect with other like-minded workers.

In re-imagining Paul Duke's vision, the city set out to create a connected space with walking and biking trails that wind around lakes and link with nearby housing, such as the new high-end apartment complex Echo Lakeside which was designed to appeal to a young workforce.

It's been well documented that one of the biggest challenges for many technology-based companies is attracting top-tiered talent. Adding these amenities gives Technology Park the competitive edge it needs to stay vibrant in retaining established businesses and attracting new businesses.

Today, Tech Park continues to draw companies in the technology and communications business that bring in top-paying jobs such as:

- CenturyLink: No. 1 ethernet provider in the world, with 39 percent of the world's internet traffic. It also provides communications and data services to residential, business, governmental, and wholesale customers in 37 states.

- **Alogent**: Maker of technology solutions that digitize and automate the financial services worldwide. The company was recently named among the Top 40 of innovative companies in Georgia for its innovation and financial impact by Technology Association of Georgia (TAG).
- **OneLogin**: A cloud-based identity and access management provider, based in San Francisco, announced recently that it would open a new East Coast Growth Center in Peachtree Corners bringing some 50 new high-paying jobs.

Another important element in transforming Tech Park into an innovation hub is Prototype Prime, a startup incubator for early stage software and hardware companies. It is supported by the city and is currently home to 14 new technology startup companies. The young businesses are supported with assistance from Georgia Tech's ATDC to ensure their businesses continue to grow and eventually establish their businesses here in the city adding to the job opportunities in Peachtree Corners.

Prototype Prime is also hosting a Georgia Tech computer coding boot camp. The classes are offered through GTPE, an academic division of Georgia Tech. Students receive hands-on training to master the hard and soft skills needed for web development, data science and analytics, and will finish the course with a wide set of technical skills and a portfolio of projects.

We're also entering an entirely new arena in technology by developing an intelligent vehicle test track which will be located on Technology Parkway. The 1.5-mile track will be a state-of-the-art living transportation laboratory that will allow new intelligent mobility technologies to be tested and evaluated in real-world driving conditions.

The city is partnering with Sprint which will make it possible to develop and test advanced technologies that can communicate with multiple devices simultaneously, a critical component for autonomous vehicles to operate.

The track will feature two dedicated lanes for testing autonomous and advanced vehicles and two lanes for regular traffic. Prototype Prime will be an important part of the city's test lab, which will be called Curiosity™ Lab at Peachtree Corners. Prototype Prime already houses an intelligent mobility accelerator program and is recruiting software and hardware technology startups who want to test its applications in a 5G-capable environment. The track is expected to be operational by early summer.

These are exciting times for Peachtree Corners – we've yet to celebrate our seventh anniversary as a city – but are well on our way to re-invigorating Technology Park, the economic cornerstone of our city and ensuring a bright future for all who call Peachtree Corners home.

Mike Mason, Mayor

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