



From the Mayor's Desk

February 2021

"People want to work on Great Projects with Great People in Great Spaces in Great Places."

I didn't coin this statement, but it really made me pause when I read it.

We have always enjoyed seeing companies move into the city that bring a lot of jobs with them. After all, workers spend money in the city at our local businesses, so jobs are important.

Prior to the pandemic, businesses struggled to find good workers. It didn't matter what kind of business. Good help was hard to find.

At this juncture, after such an unsettling year, we may need to view the attraction of workers through a wider lens. Economists predict at least 20 percent of workers will continue working remotely after the pandemic has subsided. Many companies are trying to aggressively reduce their office footprints, according to real estate analyst Mike Roessle, who said there has been a more than 40 percent drop in the office leasing market nationally.

We will have to compete not just for those daytime office workers in buildings, but for people in general—people to live here.

When I think of Peachtree Corners, I think this is exactly what we have been working to accomplish—enabling people to work (and live) in a great place. When it comes down to it, people are going to move to cities with amenities. They want sidewalks and walking trails. They want town greens. They want things to do.

It took some work to build the Town Center, but I think most would agree that it was worth it. Places give a community an identity, a sense of place. And an attractive place will draw people from near and far away.

It also appears that the way people look for jobs is changing because they don't have to choose to live in the adjacent suburbs. They can go wherever they want. The "Great Place" will be increasingly important, which means we, as a city, need to continue paying close attention to the things that matter to people, things like cleanliness, neat landscaping and proximity to public greenspace.

People want walkability, quality education, fast WiFi speed, a safe environment,

good cost of living and recreational options. They want arts and culture, and connectedness with others. As a city, we are paying attention to these things.

Prior to the pandemic, we witnessed the start of redevelopment in Technology Park, with Parkside Partners revamping the old Honeywell building on Technology Parkway, as well as the construction of contemporary residential space, known as Cortland. There may be more opportunities on the horizon for redevelopment and transformation of older office buildings in Peachtree Corners, as the demand for office space decreases and demand for residential space increases.

The quotation, “People want to work on Great Projects with Great People in Great Spaces in Great Places,” is from Richard Florida, an American urban studies theorist and professor who made the statement during a recent seminar.

Florida envisions a rise in neighborhood centers, as people vote with their feet. He expects to see more outdoor plazas and opportunities for smaller cities and towns, as the pandemic has made people value fresh air and being outside. It makes you think about your local assets. What does our city have that makes us better?

In April, the city will begin construction of the Botanical Garden Walk, a public, pedestrian walkway overlooking a creek just adjacent to the Town Center. The Botanical Garden Walk will start at the Town Center near the pedestrian bridge over GA 141 and connect with Peachtree Corners Circle, enabling a safe, and an aesthetically pleasing connection over the creek. It will be a nice addition to the Town Center and increase walkability throughout the area.

If finding talent has become the name of the game, we have thrown our hat into the ring.

Stay Safe,

Mayor Mike Mason