

City of South Fulton
Mayor and Council Retreat
Summary Report
June 30, 2017

Objectives of the June 19, 2017 Retreat

- Begin to build the relationships needed to support quality governance of the city of South Fulton
- Understand the implications of shifting from candidacy and campaigning to elected official and governing
- Consider the articulation of a mission for the city of South Fulton and identify core values for the City
- Begin to set norms for working together to guide discussions and decision making
- Begin to set 6-12 month priorities as South Fulton transitions to cityhood
- Begin to think through the city of South Fulton's strengths and limitations to address challenges facing the city

Facilitator Notes: The objectives were adjusted at the request of Mayor and Council to allow time for participants to talk about current group dynamics, clarify issues of conflict, and discuss how to move forward with the governance of South Fulton. As a result, the time allocated for the last two objectives was cut. These objectives, therefore, remain to be completed.

Making the Shift from Candidates to Elected Officials

There is a difference in being a candidate and running for office, and being elected and having responsibility for representing those who elected you. For both scenarios, participants discussed their role, relationships with the constituents, responsibility to the citizens of South Fulton and relationship with their colleagues.

Participants reported the need to be conscious of and intentional about making the following adjustments:

- Understand that we now represent the whole and can't focus on one group or district. Must balance interests
- Must take other opinions into account, can't make all the decisions alone or in isolation. Must be willing to give up control.
- Each of us has to help manage constituents' expectations
- Must now handle public opinion differently
- Must have tough skin
- Have to work with, and be sensitive to, everyone's passion

Getting to Know Each Other Better

With assistance from the facilitator, the group participated in an exercise to reflect on their individual styles, strengths and limitations. The group shared the impact of their similarities and differences on the communication between individuals and interaction dynamic of the body, with the goal of gaining a better understanding and sensitivity to creating better interaction and communication.

In reflecting on their personal styles and how they might improve communication and interaction with each other, members offered the following commitments to each other:

- Be attentive and understanding, hear each other out, even when styles clash
- Improve communication by being more diplomatic. Accept different styles of being direct.
- Be more empathetic and care in how I do communicate, how I say it. Think before I speak.
- Do not let things build up. Be more open and direct.
- Be more open to just asking, and believe and know I'll get the real/honest answer
- Be a more active listener. Be more patient. Care more.
- Take time to get to know those I don't know better
- Don't take communication personally, don't shut down

Mission Statement and Core Values

Mayor and Council, in preparation for the retreat and the task of generating a mission statement for the city, participated in a survey. The results were presented:

Most important outcomes South Fulton must achieve for it to be viewed as successful:

- Model for Integrity in Governance (Public Interest vs. Self Interest)
- Fiscal Responsibility, Financial Stability and Sustainability
- Transparency
- Outstanding Customer Service
- Enhanced community engagement programs and initiative
- Elected officials, staff, citizens and businesses work together for the common good
- Good zoning and land use plan
- Good code enforcement
- Economic development that
 - Is environmentally responsible
 - Accelerates neighborhood retail growth, including healthy food alternatives
 - Creates jobs and provides job training
 - Contributes to tax base to sustain city infrastructure and generate a surplus
- A safe environment
 - Good public safety with timely response
 - Police force that is altruistic, professional, highly trained and equipped
- A dynamic quality of life and social services for both youth and seniors
- Family programs and activities
- A healthy community

What constituents hope will be the three most important differences about the services they will receive as South Fulton residents

- Improved Public Facilities (Parks & Recreational Facilities, Fire Stations)
- Public Safety with timely police response, efficient service and community programs
- Economic development that provides quality dining, shopping, jobs
- Diverse housing
- Improved Code Enforcement
- Infrastructure Investment (street repairs, more lights)
- Timely sanitation services (removal of trash and debris)
- Clear Communication
- Consistent, cost effective services
- Prompt and efficient service delivery
- Customer Service excellence

The city of South Fulton exists to:

- Promote economic viability and innovation
- Ensure residents have local governance, are a part of policy making and have discretion on how their tax dollars are allocated.
- Provide excellent citizen-focused customer service
- Provide enhanced services to improve the quality of life for tax paying residents
- Respond to the needs of the people with sustainable solutions that address current and future needs
- To promote safe and healthy neighborhoods and provide for the public safety, health and well-being of the residents
- Ensure fiscal responsibility

Core values for South Fulton to embrace as it carries out its mission

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Openness and Transparency | • Resident Responsiveness | • Community Cleanliness |
| • Honesty and Integrity | • Community safety | • Innovation |
| • Ethical | • Customer Service | • Sustainability |
| • Trust | • Mutual respect | • Accessibility |
| • Professionalism | • Deference | • Clarity |
| • Altruism | • Forward Thinking | • Efficiency |
| • Fiscal Responsibility | • Accountability | • Youth Enrichment |
| • Data Driven decision-making | • Citizen Centric Service Delivery | • Collaboration and Communication |

I hope that as a city, we will develop a reputation for:

- Being a great place to raise a family, work and retire
- A great quality of life for our aging community
- Innovation, creativity and thinking outside a box
- Progressive politics
- Delivering high level, top notch services to our residents and guests
- Embracing sustainable solutions and technologies that reduce operating costs
- Great education
- Using teamwork to agree on and execute our mission, vision and core values
- Government friendly
- Having some of the best industries to be employed by
- Being an aesthetically appealing city
- Being a safe city
- Great commerce
- Constituent involvement that helps to achieve goals as partners
- Youth Centered

For purposes of generating discussion only, and based on the responses reflected in the survey, the following mission statement was offered:

To facilitate the development and growth of an economically viable, environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible City where responsive, professional services allow youth, adults and seniors to enjoy quality urban amenities, great public facilities and diverse, safe and healthy neighborhoods.

Participants, working in two groups were asked to use the above statement as a foundation for their discussions and to create a mission statement. Representatives from each of the groups then worked together to merge ideas of both groups and create a mission statement they could all agree to. The following statement was presented to the group.

To provide exceptional customer service that sustains an innovative, safe, progressive city for ALL people

Participants were asked to consider:

- Does the statement reflect your core mission?
- Is there anything missing?
- Is there anything that should not be included?
- Are there words or issues that require further discussion or refinement?

Various members offered suggestions and raised questions:

- Include economic, environmentally sustainable

- Seems generic and simplistic, doesn't speak to the characteristics of our City (accessibility, vibrant and safe neighborhoods)
- Do we want a more thorough/expansive statement or a concise one?

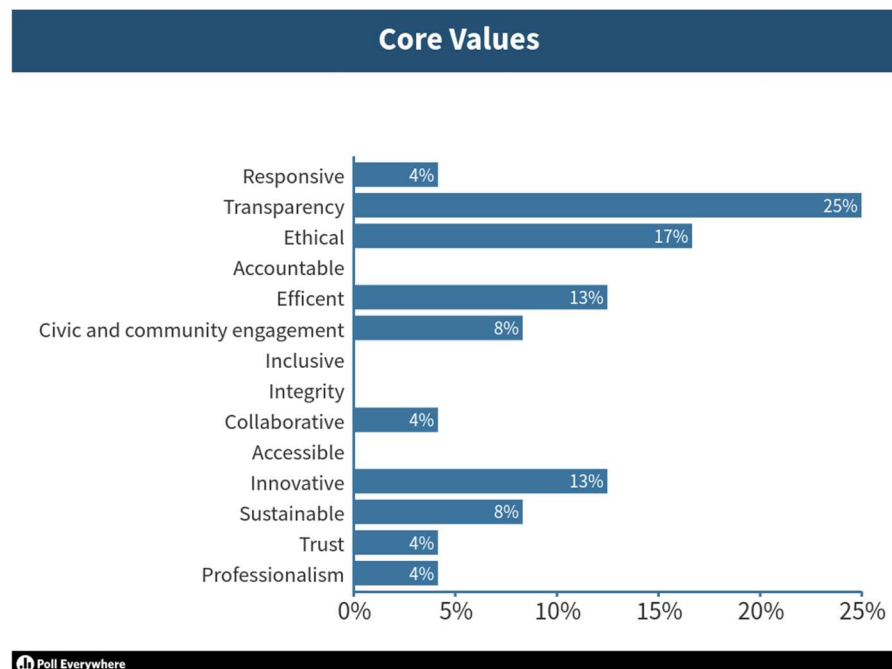
Members designated colleagues to take the point to work further on the statement and bring a final draft back to the Mayor and Council for consideration and approval.

Core Values

The group considered the core values lifted in the survey responses and in an effort to narrow them, offered the following priorities:

Responsive	Integrity
Transparency	Collaborative
Ethical	Accessible
Accountable	Innovative
Efficient	Sustainable
Civic and community engagement	Trust
Inclusive	Professionalism

Of this list, the group polled themselves and agreed on the following as most important to lift as a part of South Fulton's stated mission and core values



Open Discussion re Communication Dynamics

With a goal of re-committing to better communication, participants engaged in a facilitated discussion about current group dynamics, clarified issues of conflict, and discussed how to effectively move forward with the governance of South Fulton. All agreed the discussion was productive.

Defining Norms

Participants began this discussion by identifying things they had experienced or done that have been a barrier and prevented the group from working together:

- Negative buy-in
- Un-professionalism
- The boogeyman creating wedge
- The Chatty Pattie syndrome (gossip) - creating it and stirring it up
- Getting too emotional
- Setting unrealistic time frames to discuss items on the agenda
- No roadmap
- Talking over each other and out of turn
- Not knowing or respecting our lanes
- Talking about another Council member in their absence
- Believing that decisions are based on honoring alliances
- Failure to talk to one another
- Listening to the streets
- Avoiding contact because we disagree
- Perceived notions about some or about their motives
- Getting caught in the weeds

The following suggestions were made and agreed upon as behaviors the Mayor and Council would work to honor to eliminate these barriers:

- Get to know each other
- Be open and talk openly even if you don't agree with each other
- Stay off of social media
- Do not look at Facebook or Watchdog
- Champion/defend your colleagues when they are right
- Respect your colleagues and play off of their strengths since you can't be the only smart one in the room
- See Council colleagues like your siblings - fight with each other inside the house, but fight together outside of the house
- Deal with issues with the Mayor and the Council as a whole, understanding that sometimes it will be necessary to agree to disagree - and move on with no baggage
- Work on behalf of your constituents and remove your personal feelings
- Wait to be recognized by the Mayor to speak

- Watch how we speak to each other
- Practice deference
- Begin with the belief that all Council members love South Fulton and want the best for our city
- Address each other directly about concerns and issues and believe each other when a response is given
- Just ask colleagues where they are on an issue
- Stop bringing items to the discussion that are not on the agenda
- Take the role and responsibilities class at GMA
- Direct the City Manager to provide a detailed six-month transition plan by July 9th

Envisioning the next 12 Months

In three small groups, participants began to identify:

- What they want to achieve over the next 12 months
- Anticipated challenges
- How they hope residents will perceive the city 12 months from now
- How they hope the media will describe the Council from now

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Hope to Achieve	Hire a permanent city manager Hire more police offices Successfully transition county employees	Transition 80% of county employees Hire a permanent city manager Fulfill all transition actions	All departments are fully transitioned and provide improved service Complete updated comprehensive plan Basic commitments are fulfilled (roads, sidewalks, parks)
Challenges	Scheduling meetings with departments heads Slow communication with county employees re transition process Communicating as one voice	First class personnel who bring innovation to the city Getting a handle on actual revenues and expenses outside of IGA	Cash flow challenges Educating ourselves and our public about our roles Fighting negative development

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
How residents describe South Fulton	Attentive Responsive and progressive Transparent Ethical Financially viable Exciting Eventful Challenging	Efficient Ethical Forward thinking	Responsive Understand our needs We care Exciting place to be
How media describes Council ability to work together	Council has proven themselves - ability to weather the storm	Council is professional; agree to disagree and move on; defy stereotypes; includes a core of strong women working together	After a bumpy start, they came together and delivered results

Setting Priorities

Time did not permit the setting of 6-12 priorities for moving to action to actualize the hopes for achievement.