



## Resource Kit Contents

This kit is your guide to planning activities for Georgia Cities Week. Each kit should contain:

- Welcome Letter
- Mission Statement
- 2024 Georgia Cities Week Overview
- Sponsor List
- Sample Resolution
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Letter to the Editor
- Value of Cities Infographic
- Planning for Georgia Cities Week
- Ideas for Publicizing Your Activities
- Suggested Activities – Levels I, II and III
- Capitol Ideas
- Three (3) Georgia Cities Week Posters
- Georgia Cities Week Social Media Cover Images
- Georgia Cities Week Social Media Editable Canva Files
- Thirty (30) Georgia Cities Week Stickers
- Black and White Georgia Cities Week Artwork for Coloring Pages

If any items are missing or to request extra copies of any part of the Resource Kit, contact Dana Goodall at 678-686-6220 or email [dgoodall@gacities.com](mailto:dgoodall@gacities.com).

Most of the Resource Kit content can also be found on the Georgia Cities Week page at [www.gacities.com](http://www.gacities.com).

Hello Georgia Cities Week Participant!

On behalf of the Georgia Municipal Association, I'd like to thank you for your participation in this state-wide event. Your participation can help ensure the success of this program!



Enclosed are materials you may find helpful as you plan for your celebration. These materials are simply meant to be used as a guide. You may vary or alter the activities to create a celebration of city government that is uniquely yours. I encourage you to participate in any way your city can, even if it's as simple as adopting the resolution recognizing Georgia Cities Week.

In addition, if your city would like extra "hands on deck" for any of the events—from serving food to city employees to picking up trash—let GMA know. GMA staff enjoy getting out into the cities they serve and would love to be a part of your Georgia Cities Week activities!

With questions and for more information, please contact Dana Goodall at 678-686-6220 or via email at [dgoodall@gacities.com](mailto:dgoodall@gacities.com). Dana will also provide you with additional posters, stickers and the logo for reproducing if you need them.

Thank you again for your participation in Georgia Cities Week!

*Young Harris, Mayor, Andrea Gibby  
Chair, Georgia Cities Week*



**April 21 - 27, 2024**

**Our Mission:**

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is sponsoring Georgia Cities Week from April 21 - 27, 2024 to showcase and celebrate cities and the many services they provide.

Cities provide an elevated level of service than most governments, are generally rated higher by the public than any other level of government, and yet, many residents are unaware of how city services impact their lives. Through Georgia Cities Week, GMA and related organizations hope to heighten the public's awareness of city government's role in enhancing the quality of life in communities.

GMA's Georgia Cities Week is part of an ongoing effort to raise public awareness about the services that cities perform and to educate the public on how city government works. Cities are encouraged to involve their local schools, businesses, legislators, Chambers of Commerce, media and civic clubs in planning Georgia Cities Week activities.



**April 21-27, 2024**

Georgia Cities Week is sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association in cooperation with the following organizations:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Department of Community Affairs/Keep Georgia Beautiful | 404-679-4998 |
| Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police                | 770-495-9650 |
| Georgia City/County Managers Association               | 706-542-9525 |
| Georgia Chapter, American Public Works Association     | 404-375-6209 |
| Georgia Downtown Association                           | 678-686-6295 |
| Georgia Fire Chiefs Association                        | 888-488-4462 |
| Georgia Municipal Clerks Association                   | 678-686-6241 |
| Georgia Rural Water Association                        | 770-358-0221 |
| Georgia Recreation & Park Association                  | 770-760-1403 |
| Georgia Association of Water Professionals             | 770-618-8690 |
| MEAG Power   | 770-563-0300 |
| Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia                     | 770-590-1000 |

# THE VALUE OF GEORGIA'S CITIES

## CITIES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE STATE'S ECONOMY.



Georgia cities comprise only **9%** of the land area in Georgia.



Cities contain **44%** of the population in Georgia.



**73%** of Georgia cities have a population of 5,000 or less.



**Metro areas** account for **91%** of GDP in Georgia.

**46%** of the assessed value of all property in the state



**66%** of all commercial property in the state

**53%** of all industrial property in the state

**60%** of all tax-exempt property  
Cities are responsible for providing a variety of services to tax-exempt properties.

**47%** of housing structures in the state

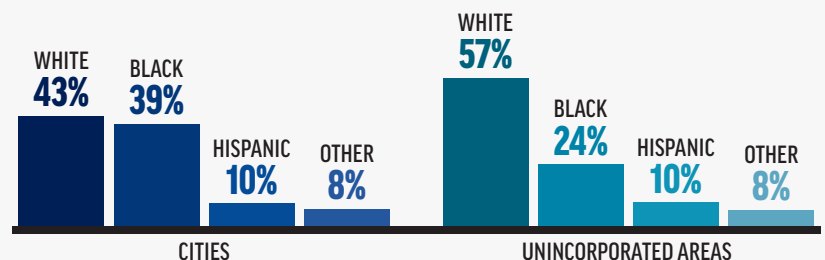
**42%** of single-family housing structures in the state

### CITIES ARE HOME TO:

**74%** of multi-family housing structures in the state

## CITIES ARE INCLUSIVE AND VIBRANT. THEY ARE HOME TO OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES FOR A MORE DIVERSE GROUP OF RESIDENTS THAN UNINCORPORATED AREAS.

### RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION



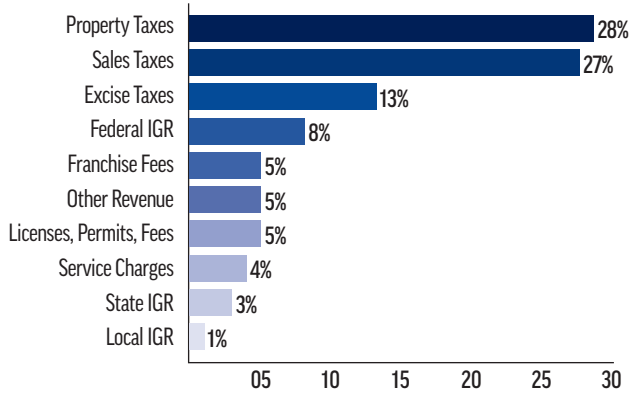
**24%**

Cities provide **69%** of jobs in Georgia.

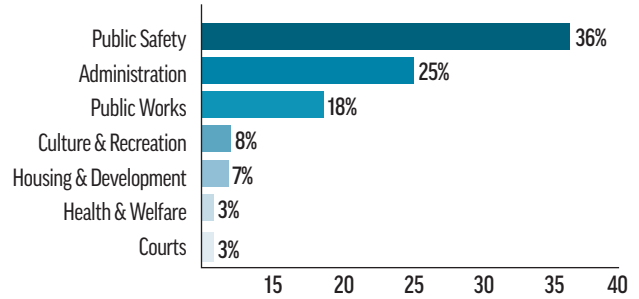
The population in Georgia cities increases during the daytime by **24%** due to commuting, and cities provide services (water, sewer, fire and police protection, etc.) to both daytime and resident populations.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE INVESTING IN THE FUTURE:



MUNICIPAL REVENUES BY SOURCE, FY2022



MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY, FY2022

## SPLOST AND TSPLOST REVENUES

94%

of SPLOST referenda have been approved by local voters since 2001.

9.5

billion dollars in SPLOST revenues were distributed to local governments to pay for voter-approved capital projects over the last 5 years (2019-2023).

42

Georgia counties have a Single County TSPLOST in place (as of January 2024).

106

counties are either in a Single County TSPLOST or TIA Region (as of January 2024).

4

regions have implemented a Regional (TIA) TSPLOST (as of January 2024).



Funds will not be enough - a strong, long-term partnership between local, state and federal governments is needed to address local infrastructure needs statewide.





## Planning for Georgia Cities Week

### **Getting Started:**

The first step, of course, is to block off the week of April 21-27 on the city calendar and to make sure key city officials and employees will be able to participate.

Designate one person at city hall as the contact for Georgia Cities Week. Circulate Georgia Cities Week information among city employees and ask for feedback on ideas for activities.

We also advise cities to create a Georgia Cities Week Planning Committee to help plan activities. Along with city employees, you may want to include representatives from the following groups:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Merchants
- Education
- Media
- Historical Society
- Garden Club
- Neighborhood Groups
- Civic Clubs
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

Develop a timeline for Georgia Cities Week, listing the dates by which certain tasks need to be completed.

### **Publicity Opportunities:**

Some ideas for publicizing your events include:

- Print Georgia Cities Week activities on utility bills or publish them on your local access cable channel
- Adopt a resolution recognizing "Georgia Cities Week"
- Write a letter to the editor about city government
- Write an op-ed piece for your local paper, telling your city's "story." This could be about its founding, parts of its history or the next chapter—where your city is going in the future or stories highlighting specific city projects or services
- Use the enclosed press release to let media outlets know of your plans
- Appear on local radio and television stations to educate the public about city government
- Ask your local paper to sponsor a coloring contest for younger children. Entries can be displayed in city hall.
- If you have a city website and/or social media, be sure to post all activities and information there as well.

# Ideas and Tips for Publicizing Your Activities



To enhance statewide media coverage of Georgia Cities Week, please inform GMA about your local activities so we can help spread the word. Contact Ashley Bailey, Senior Communications Associate, [abailey@gacities.com](mailto:abailey@gacities.com)

**Meet with the editor/publisher of your local newspaper(s), radio and television stations as well as the reporter(s) who typically cover city government, to brief them on Georgia Cities Week.**

1. Discuss the reasons for Georgia Cities Week and the activities your city will sponsor.
2. Explore opportunities to partner with the media to help promote your activities.
3. Encourage the newspaper(s) to publish stories on different aspects of city government. The stories can run before Georgia Cities Week and/or during the week.
4. Continue to keep them regularly informed about Georgia Cities Week activities.

***Timeline:*** *Begin in Mid-February to early March*

**Contact local radio/television stations (typically, the producers of news and talk shows) to schedule appearances for city officials to discuss city government.**

For best results, it's recommended to schedule appearances during Georgia Cities Week or the week before. Call the assignment editor at the radio/television station to pitch them on covering specific activities during Georgia Cities Week.

***Timeline:*** *At least three (3) to four (4) weeks in advance of the desired appearance date on talk and/or news show. Call the assignment editor one (1) to three (3) days in advance of a specific activity, as well as the day of the activity.*

**Write a guest editorial that talks about Georgia Cities Week and the importance of cities, and submit it to your newspaper(s) editor or opinion page editor for use during Georgia Cities Week.**

***Timeline:*** *Submit the guest editorial at least two (2) weeks in advance.*

**Send a media advisory to alert media of upcoming activities and a press release(s) to publicize your activities. (A sample press release is provided. You are encouraged to adapt it as needed.)**

***Timeline:*** *Send one (1) to three (3) days in advance of an event, subject to deadlines.*

**Place and highlight your activities on your website with a link to GMA's Georgia Cities Week webpage. Note: Be sure to put your website address on ALL communications with the media!**

***Timeline:*** *As soon as activities are formalized and announced*

**Take photographs and/or videos of your activities. Submit them to your local newspaper(s) and to GMA for Georgia Cities Week coverage.**

***Timeline:*** *During and after Georgia Cities Week*





## Suggested Activities

### Level I Activities

This category allows for **inexpensive, simple celebrations** of Georgia Cities Week. Cities may want to hold just one event or do several throughout the week.

#### Adopt a Resolution

City Council adopts a resolution (sample provided) announcing Georgia Cities Week at a regular council meeting.

#### Display City Equipment

Display city equipment, such as fire trucks, police cars, garbage trucks in one place (possibly a city park) where the public can view them.

- Have department head/mayor/councilmember on hand to answer questions
- Announce through local and social media when the event will take place
- Let residents know how city funds are spent by posting cost and years purchased on the equipment
- Set up poster board displays that indicate:
  - City staff (who they are, responsibilities; required education/training)

#### Tours

Arrange tours of city hall and facilities for school groups.

- Contact local elementary schools and offer tours
- Have a designated "tour guide" to lead tours through city hall
- Discuss ongoing projects and any upcoming projects

#### Visits/Guest Speakers

Department heads and city officials can visit local schools/civic clubs to discuss services the city provides or the value of cities in general.

- Contact local schools/civic clubs to offer to visit classes
- Firefighters, police officers may go to lower grades to explain fire/police protection service the city provides
- City officials, city manager/clerk may want to discuss city government in general with higher grades

#### Clean-up Day

A one-day litter pick-up throughout the city or limited to the downtown area

- Contact civic groups to ask for participation, particularly Garden Club or Keep Georgia Beautiful\*
- Announce through local and social media the dates and times
- Send out announcements on utility bills
- Post information at city hall
- Ask city officials to head up “divisions” based on their districts

### Facts Sheet

Create a one-page flier on facts about the city to give to students. You can also use GMA’s Value of Cities infographic.

- Include information on the history of the city (incorporation date; how the city got its name, interesting facts, etc.); budget information, form of government; who to call at city hall for which services
- Make copies for students to take home to parents

### Move Council Meeting to School

Hold a regularly scheduled city council meeting at the local high school or junior high to show how council operates.

- Contact school principal to see if an assembly can be arranged for the designated day
- Notify public of meeting change (at least two weeks in advance)
- Notify all department heads and media of change of venue
- Be prepared to take questions from students following the meeting

### Town Hall Meeting

Invite the public to a town hall meeting at a location other than city hall, such as a recreation center or community center, to discuss the community in general, the plans the city has for the future and on-going projects and get community input.

- Find an appropriate location
- Set a time and a date for the meeting (evenings are usually better, allowing working people to attend.)
- Advertise the meeting through your local newspaper and social media. Include information on who from the city will be attending the town hall meeting (e.g. mayor and councilmembers, city manager, city clerk, public works supervisor, police chief, etc.)

### Invite Other Groups to City Hall

During the week, invite civic clubs to hold their meetings at city hall.

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\* Resource information on planning a clean up day available through Keep Georgia Beautiful

## Essay Contest

Conduct an essay contest around the theme “If I Were Mayor, I Would . . .” or create your own.

- Select a grade to write essays (recommend 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Set deadline for essays to be turned in
- Choose selection panel to select winning essay(s)
- Recognize student(s) and parents at council meeting and, if possible, award prizes

## Press Visits

Make appearances on local radio/television shows to discuss city government.

- Schedule appearances at least one week in advance
- Be prepared to discuss the importance of city government, services provided, city’s history, etc.

## Newspaper Coverage

- Submit a guest column from the mayor
- Encourage local paper to prepare a special series or section of paper on the city and services it provides or on the history of the cities in the area

***Be Sure You Notify Media Well in Advance of Your Activities!***

## **Level II**

These activities take a little more time to plan and employee/funding resources.

### Open House

Invite the public to an open house at city hall.

- Publicize event well in advance
- Have appropriate staff on hand to offer guided tours and answer questions
- Provide flyers summarizing city department responsibilities and a tip sheet on who to call within city government
- Provide cookies/punch for the public (may want to ask a local retailer or Chamber of Commerce to sponsor refreshments)
- If holding an art contest, (see next item) display art on walls during the open house

### Art Contest

Sponsor an art contest for children ages 5-12; display artwork at city hall.

- Ask local media to partner on this project
- Ask local businesses to promote the contest through posters/flyers
- Six weeks ahead, begin soliciting art in the paper
- Set a one-month deadline
- Use the enclosed black and white Georgia Cities Week art or create your own theme such as:
  - “How My City Unites”

- “How I See My City”
- “Historical Buildings in the City” (or designate a historical building)
- “Services Cities Provide”
- Select committee (city employees, business owners, media, etc.) to pick winners
- Select winners according to age groups
- Honor winners at City Council meeting

### Home Ownership Seminar

Sponsor a seminar on homeownership for residents.

- Invite banks/lending agencies, realtors and neighborhood associations to participate
- Invite local garden clubs/Extension Service agents to talk about seasonal plantings and creating attractive yards
- Hold the event at a central location
- Discuss how to become a homeowner and responsibilities of ownership
- Provide information on services the city provides (trash pickup, recycling, zoning, etc.)

### Parade

Hold a parade of city equipment, departments.

- Invite civic groups, schools to participate
- Publicize event well in advance
- May want to conclude with a picnic in a city park

### Trivia Quiz

Sponsor a City Trivia Quiz throughout the week

- Create trivia questions for the week; may want to include city’s history, form of government, budget, services, etc.
- Partner with local media—radio, newspaper or television—to ask questions
- Ask Downtown businesses to donate prizes for winners (line up prizes at least one month in advance)

### Use Social Media

If your city has a social media pages, use it to celebrate!

- Where in Your City photo contest—post a photo of some item in your city (a plaque, monument, etc.) and ask the city’s followers to identify the item
- Post trivia questions on Facebook and Twitter
- Promote all your other Georgia Cities Week Events

### Put the Spotlight on Your City History

Work with your local Historical Society to identify significant historic events or people.

- Ask your local media to do a series of articles or special section highlighting the tales of the city founders and events that shaped the city
- If your city has a cemetery, do historical tours where city founders “come to life” to tell their histories

***Be Sure You Notify Media Well in Advance of Your Activities!***

## Level III

This level requires more elaborate planning and/or funding.

### Shadowing

Work with a junior high or high school to allow students to “shadow” city officials at work

- Contact civics/government teacher to discuss using shadowing as an aid to teaching local government
- Pick one day where the students will be matched up with a department director (more than one student may be matched with city staffer)
- Week before date, provide students with job descriptions/requirements for city positions
- Begin the day with a briefing at city hall and have the student(s) follow the department director in his/her duties for the morning
- Meet again at lunch for a debriefing and a Q&A session

### Mock City Council Meeting<sup>±</sup>

One of the most common forms of participation, allows students to experience city government.

- Begin with an election among junior/senior high school students for positions in city government. Or, teacher may assign positions
- Students are given a real-life scenario and the various positions interested parties would have on the issue
- Public officials, business leaders, neighborhood associations may visit classrooms in the week before the mock council meeting to discuss how they would respond to the scenario
- The mock council meeting is usually held during a school assembly, with student “elected” officials conduct meeting, and participation of students designated as “department heads,” “public” and “press”
- City officials and city staff may want to be present for mock council meeting to add support, visibility.

### Mock City Council Meeting II

Another way of doing this is for elected officials to either go to the schools or invite students to city hall for a mock meeting conducted by the city officials.

- Cities may want to prepare an agenda that highlights some of the issues students are most concerned with, such as debate about a curfew or parks and recreation.
- Prepare the agenda well in advance and allow students an opportunity to review it (usually at least a week in advance of meeting)
- If students are to play the roles of department heads, the public and the press at the council meeting, give them job descriptions, what their roles at the meeting would be and concerns each group might have about items on the agenda

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<sup>±</sup> See insert on Mock City Council Meeting for timeline, design of Mock Council Meetings

## Storytelling Contest

Invite members of your community, or specific age groups such as 15-24-year olds, to tell their story of your city through video, pictures or in words. You can use the theme of Georgia Cities Week, "Cities in the Spotlight" as the theme for the contest, i.e., tell the story of a person who was instrumental in your city's development or tell the story of a place in the city that holds special meaning to the individual. Or you may choose a different or no theme for the contest.

- Feature the entries on your website and/or Facebook page
- For video entries, consider a "screening" party where the community can get together to view the entries.
- Decide how winners will be selected: An open community vote or judges?
- Celebrate the winners!

## Quiz Show

Host a quiz show for area teens.

May be used for junior high or high school students

Contact teacher to discuss the Quiz Show plan and format

- Select date/time and place for quiz show (maybe at school assembly, civic club meeting, etc.)
- Select emcee to read questions
- Develop questions, focusing on role and responsibility of city government and its services, city history and facts about the city.
- The format for the show may run as follows:
  - Two teams with three "contestants" each
  - Each contestant has a bell to ring to signify an answer
  - Emcee asks the question, first team to ring in can answer
  - Contestants may consult with team members, but can't go over 30 seconds
  - If the answer is incorrect, the other team has 30 seconds to answer
  - Points should be awarded for each correct answer; no points given for incorrect or incomplete answers
  - Winners are determined by the highest number of points
  - The winning team should be honored at the next City Council meeting
  - Local businesses may be willing to donate additional prizes for the winners and "runners up"
- May be aired on local access television station, where available

## Career Day

Introduce high school students to the career opportunities available in city government.

- Schedule a career day at the high school through the school counselor's office or find out if a career day is already scheduled for juniors and seniors and if the city may participate
- Work with City Manager or Human Resources Department to gather job descriptions/requirements for positions within city government
- Ask department heads/employees to be on hand at career day to answer questions concerning what they do, what education/training is required

## Scavenger Hunt

Send your residents on a scavenger hunt for information and history about your city.

- Create a form with questions for residents to answer, such as “According to the monument in the town square, where did General Whatshisface go after founding the City of Celebration?”
- Locations to send them to can include city cemeteries, utility departments, recreational facilities, etc.
- Ask for a signature from a downtown merchant on the form
- Make forms available at a central location, such as city hall or visitors center or at several merchants
- Correctly completed forms should be turned in to the city and a drawing held to award a prize or prizes.

## On-Line Scavenger Hunt

If your city has a website, you may want to adapt the scavenger hunt to help educate your residents about the website and accustom them to finding information on your site.

- Create a form that can either be picked up in a central location or downloaded from the website.
- Ask questions such as, “What is the City of Celebration’s average police response rate?” and give information on where to find the information on the site.
- Be sure to ask for a signature on the form from a downtown business!
- Forms should be turned into city hall and a winner drawn from the correctly completed forms.

## City 5K-Fun Run

Get your people moving! Organize a fun-run and/or 5K that shows off your downtown and your Parks and Rec. Department. Invite local clinics or hospitals to provide wellness screenings after the race and information on good nutrition, proper exercise and the importance of seeing a doctor regularly. If your event ends in a city park, you may want to combine this with an equipment display or city festival.

***Be Sure You Notify Media Well in Advance of Your Activities!***

# Capitol Ideas

Georgia Cities Week also allows city leaders to show state legislators what's going on in their hometowns. Here are some activities specifically designed for legislators that you may want to incorporate into your Georgia Cities Week events:

## ***City Tours***

Take your senator and representatives on a tour of your city. Show them how grant funds have been used and progress the city has made; point out how your city addresses issues such as annexation, police and fire services, redevelopment and infrastructure improvements. While you will want to focus on the positive, don't be afraid to also indicate where your city needs the state's assistance. If there is more than one city in your county, you may want to team up to take your legislators on a tour of all the cities—make sure you coordinate in preparing an agenda, so you don't duplicate efforts! Also, invite someone from GMA's Governmental Relations Staff to accompany the tour.

## ***Legislative Appreciation Luncheon/Dinner***

Host a lunch or dinner as a "thank you" to your legislative delegation. Point out some of the ways in which the state and local governments have partnered together to improve the community (through streetscapes, GEFA loans, DCA grants and loans, etc). Thank the legislators for any specific piece of legislation that they have sponsored or supported that has helped your city or cities in general. GMA Governmental Relations staff can give you some ideas for this if needed.

## ***Special Invitations***

Send special invitations to your state leaders to include them in your other Georgia Cities Week events as well. If you are honoring city employees or community volunteers, your legislators may also want to be present to express their congratulations as well. Also invite them to facility tours, equipment displays, open houses or any other event that will help them better understand how cities operate, and the many services cities provide. **Be sure to include GMA as well! GMA's Government Relations staff should attend events with city officials and legislators.**



**Sample Resolution**

**GEORGIA CITIES WEEK  
APRIL 21-27, 2024**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ RECOGNIZING  
GEORGIA CITIES WEEK, APRIL 21-27, 2024, AND ENCOURAGING  
ALL RESIDENTS TO SUPPORT THE CELEBRATION AND  
CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES.**

WHEREAS, city government is the closest to most citizens, and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents; and

WHEREAS, city government is administered for and by its citizens, and is dependent upon public commitment to and understanding of its many responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, city government officials and employees share the responsibility to pass along their understanding of public services and their benefits; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Cities Week is a very important time to recognize the important role played by city government in our lives; and

WHEREAS, this week offers an important opportunity to spread the word to all the citizens of Georgia that they can shape and influence this branch of government which is closest to the people; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Municipal Association and its member cities have joined together to teach students and other citizens about municipal government through a variety of different projects and information; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Cities Week offers an important opportunity to convey to all the citizens of Georgia that they can shape and influence government through their civic involvement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
DECLARES APRIL 21-27, 2024 AS GEORGIA CITIES WEEK.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
ENCOURAGES ALL CITIZENS, CITY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND  
EMPLOYEES TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THIS WEEK  
IS RECOGNIZED AND CELEBRATED ACCORDINGLY.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City of \_\_\_\_\_.

## ***Sample Press Release for Georgia Cities Week***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(DATE)

CONTACT: (YOUR SPOKESPERSON'S NAME AND PHONE NUMBER HERE)

### **(CITY/TOWN) OFFICIALS CELEBRATE GEORGIA CITIES WEEK**

(CITY/TOWN—Date) \_\_\_ officials announced the city will be celebrating “Georgia Cities Week” April 21-27. The city will hold a variety of events throughout the week, including (LIST SOME ACTIVITIES HERE). The theme of this year’s Georgia Cities Week is “Soaring to New Heights”

“We’re very proud of our city and the services we provide that make it attractive to residents and visitors,” said Mayor (INSERT NAME HERE). “Cities provide the services and infrastructure to help businesses grow and set the stage for events where families and individuals can gather as a community.”

Events planned for the week are: (LIST ACTIVITIES, DATE, TIME AND LOCATIONS).

Cities across Georgia will be celebrating Georgia Cities Week, sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), to showcase and celebrate cities and the many services they provide. Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit and consulting services to its 538 member cities.

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*Note: Please enter specific information about your city, keeping information to the point and brief. Press releases are more effective when limited to one or two pages. Also, you may want to follow up with phone calls to your local media representatives to personally invite them to your city’s events.*

## ***Sample Letter to the Editor for Georgia Cities Week***

To the Editor:

During the week of April 21-27 (CITY NAME) will join other cities across Georgia in celebrating Georgia Cities Week. This week has been set aside to recognize the many services city governments provide and their contribution to a better quality of life in Georgia. Our theme, "Soaring to New Heights reflects the role cities play in the state's history, economy and culture.

City government is truly government of, by and for the people – the people who are making the decisions about our community are your neighbors, business owners and community leaders. We are in this together, and we want our city to thrive.

We recognize that throughout our lifetimes, the average person will have more direct contact with local governments than with state or federal governments. Because of this, we feel a responsibility to ensure that the public knows how the city operates and feels connected to their city government.

During this week, we want to recognize the role city government plays in our lives: from historic preservation to trash collection to public safety to promoting the area's culture and recreation. We hope you will join us in this celebration and learn more about your city and how it operates for you.

Sincerely,

Mayor

***Note: If you are doing additional Georgia Cities Week Activities, you will want to include an invitation to the public to attend those events.***

# Preparing for Mock City Council Meeting

*Suggested age group – Junior or Senior High School students*

If there is more than one school in a municipality, establish criteria to select the school. You could also start with a random selection of those schools that are interested.

The Mock Council meeting will be held at school assembly (30-40 minutes). If possible, have the council meeting videotaped.

Invite the participating students to the next regular city council meeting, where the students will be presented with a certificate of participation by the mayor.

Teachers may also want to use this as an opportunity to teach students about the voting process, using the “Notice of Candidacy and Affidavit” and “Voter Registration” information from the Georgia Secretary of State’s Office.

## **Two weeks prior to your event, do the following:**

- Provide students with handouts explaining Georgia’s city government overall
- Provide students with information on your city’s government structure
- Discuss with students:
  - Federal, state and local (county and municipal) levels of government
  - The roles of elected city government positions and appointed positions
  - Your city’s organizational structure
  - Budget
  - Types of issues with which the council deals
  - Municipal departments and how they affect citizens' lives
- Read and discuss the scenario, including some of the possible responses of citizens, business, elected and appointed officials
- If students are running for offices, hold an election at least one week before the mock council meeting

## **Other Options:**

- Students may be encouraged to visit city hall and the city departments for a better understanding of how the city operates
- Invite representatives from throughout the community—including homeowner associations and local businesses—to discuss the scenario and how they might represent their perspectives on the issue.

## **The Meeting**

### **Municipal Roles**

*Mayor:* In a council-manager form of government, the mayor is the ceremonial head of the city, presiding over meetings and making appointments to city boards. The student assigned to this role will preside over the meeting, ensuring that it moves along and

runs smoothly. The mayor will have the same authority and voting privilege as other council members.

*Councilmembers:* Councilmembers set policy for the city, using input from the city administrator/manager, department heads, citizens and other groups. The students in this role will analyze the situation, ask questions of city staff, get input from other groups and citizens and make a decision based upon their vision of the city and what is right for the community as a whole.

*City Manager:* The city manager handles the day-to-day operations of the city. He or she is called on to present facts, do research, make recommendations and carry out the policies set by the council. The student in this role will be responsible for presenting the overall view of the city and calling upon the city department heads for input into the issue.

*City Clerk:* The city clerk is responsible for taking minutes at the meeting and maintaining records and archives for the city. The student in this role will take and transcribe the minutes of the meeting.

*City Attorney:* The city attorney serves as a legal advisor to the city, giving legal opinions on issues affecting the city. The city attorney also drafts ordinances for the city and keeps the council informed on any laws or rulings that may affect the city. The student in this role will be responsible for ensuring that parliamentary procedures are followed in the mock city council meeting.

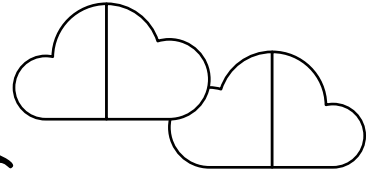
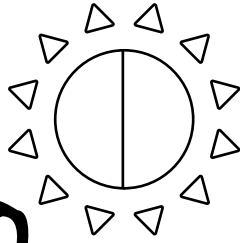
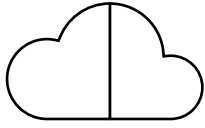
*Other Appropriate Staff*

### **Audience Roles**

*Residents*

*Reporters*

Residents can present self-interest type issues or complaints under a Public Forum item on the agenda.

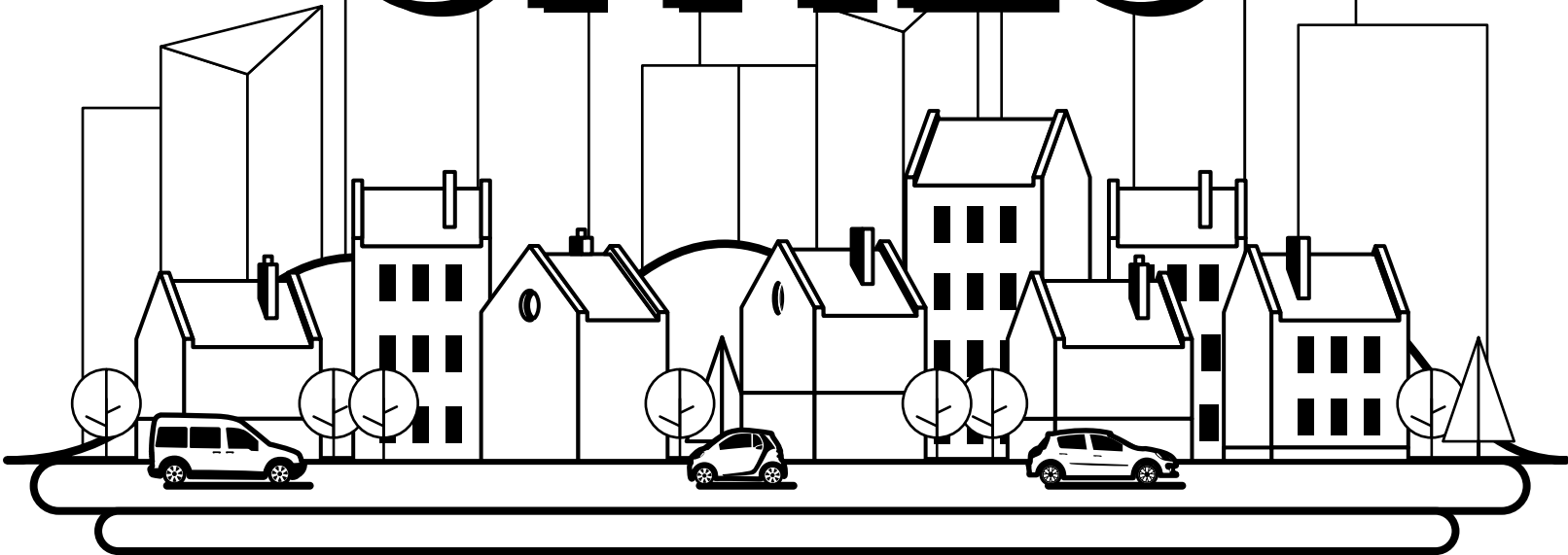
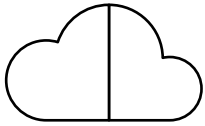
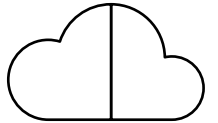


*Soaring*  
TO NEW HEIGHTS



# GEORGIA

# CITIES



**April 21-27, 2024**

