



# **OFFICE OF THE CITY SOLICITOR**

## **FY21 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

**Raines F. Carter**

**City Solicitor**

**June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**



# SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

## MISSION:

*The mission of the Office of the City Solicitor is to persuasively represent the interests of the citizens of Atlanta in all matters brought before the Atlanta Municipal Court in a manner that is consistent with the special responsibilities of prosecutors outlined by the State Bar of Georgia.*

## CORE FUNCTIONS:

**Prosecution of General Traffic, Criminal and Code Enforcement Cases:** Investigate and initiate criminal and quasi-criminal actions against any person or entity where appropriate and in keeping with public safety; and, represent the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia in all criminal, civil, and special proceedings in Atlanta Municipal Court.

**Prosecution Support Services:** Sustain case screening, record restriction, records management, investigative support, and legal support. These activities provide pre and post adjudication services which include, but are not limited to, reviewing charging documents to determine whether the charge can sustain prosecution before filing the case in the Atlanta Municipal Court system or whether non-traditional resolution is more suitable.

**Community Prosecution:** Collaborate with law enforcement, community leaders, public and private organizations to solve problems to improve public safety and enhance the quality of life in our communities.

**Diversion and Alternative Prosecution Programs:** Provide individuals an alternative to prosecution and possible conviction. These programs are utilized to resolve traffic, minor criminal offenses and city code violations in an efficient manner with accountability, while avoiding the expense of the full operation of law related to traditional court proceedings. These programs assist with reducing the footprint in Atlanta Municipal Court.



# FY20 Adopted vs. FY21 Proposed Budgets

## *FY20 Budget*

**87 FTE - \$6,703,644**

### **FY20 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Successfully resolved over **90%** of cases brought before Atlanta Municipal Court through traditional and non-traditional processes in a fair and balanced manner
- Expanded code enforcement initiatives by identifying and tackling blight and other community concerns using civil actions, judicial in rem, and condemnation and nuisance abatement
- Participated in strategy meetings addressing nuisance petitions and lien foreclosures. APD Code Enforcement Division referred **178 + cases** for nuisance petitions
- Expanded case screening, enabling the pre-trial negotiation and resolution of cases. **More than 26,000 cases** were resolved through diversion, alternative prosecution and pre-trial negotiations
- Collaborated with other city departments and community groups to address specific problems in the community; attended **150+ NPU and community group meetings**; participated in **more than 50 community outreach initiatives**
- Provided **more than 96 training hours** to the Atlanta Police Academy and other law enforcement agencies through recruit and in-service training

## *FY21 Budget*

**87 FTE - \$6,703,644**

### **FY21 Key Priorities**

- Leverage technology to efficiently resolve cases in a fair and balanced manner through case screening, pre-trial negotiations and use of diversion and alternative prosecution programs
- Continue code enforcement initiative by identifying and tackling blight and other community concerns using civil actions, judicial in rem, condemnation and nuisance abatement
- Continue collaboration with other city departments and community groups to address specific problems in the community through assertive presence and engagement
- Continue to support the Atlanta Police Academy and other law enforcement agencies through recruit and in-service training to improve ticket writing skills and courtroom presence to sustain successful prosecution



# COVID-19 IMPACT

- ❖ Retooled and redeployed personnel to participate and partner with other city departments in community outreach, such as food distribution for those with food insecurities and providing activity bags to several senior care facilities.
- ❖ Actively participated in strategy meetings addressing nuisance abatement and lien foreclosure. The Office of the City Solicitor was able to commit staff exclusively to these efforts and vetted over 178 Code Enforcement cases that are ready for nuisance petition actions.
- ❖ Adjusted operations to support social distancing while presenting daily in-custody court calendar (with the exception of Saturday), and conduct case screening, record retrieval, pre-trial negotiations, plea-in-absentia, diversion and other critical functions.
- ❖ Leveraged technology to allow defendants to resolve their cases and avoid the negative impact of receiving a conviction on their driving and criminal records for minor offenses.

# OFFICE OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

## *Administrative Leadership Team*

**Raines F. Carter, *City Solicitor***

**Ronda Graham, *Deputy Solicitor***.....General Traffic & Criminal Litigation and DUI

**Erika Smith, *Deputy Solicitor*** .....Code Enforcement and Community Outreach

**Andrew Taylor, *Deputy Solicitor*** .....General Traffic & Criminal Litigation

**Catherine Holden, *Operations Manager***.....General Office Operations and Accounts Payable & Receivable

**Sandra Thomas, *Manager of Business Operations***.....Human Resources and Budget

**Jennifer Y. Johnson, *Manager of Special Programs***..... Diversion and Alternative Prosecution Programs and Technology