



# Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

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May 2009

## ATL: Mayor Franklin and City Council

*Focus on Root Causes rather than Symptoms  
to Treat Atlanta's Financial Crisis*

### Introduction:

Atlanta is experiencing the worst deficit in the City's history. Mayor Franklin's response is to propose raising property taxes by 3 mil. This "financial engineering" tactic supposedly will raise \$56 million to cover the revenue shortfall during 2010. On a home valued at \$500,000, this increase would mean paying approximately \$600 more per year in city property taxes. The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation strongly opposes this increase because it does not address the *root causes of the problem*.

### Getting at the Root Cause:

The City of Fort Wayne, Indiana is an example of how the city leaders have addressed inefficiencies and waste by attacking the root cause. In 2000, Fort Wayne suffered many of the same symptoms of Atlanta:

- Budget Shortfalls
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Increases in demand for services

Under Mayor Graham Richard in 2000, Fort Wayne recognized the problem and established a Roadmap: "Building a High Performance City". The roadmap consisted of developing a Strategic Focus for the city and an Action Plan to address the gaps. A key component of the action plan was the adoption of a proven process improvement methodology known as Lean Six Sigma.

Lean Six Sigma has been effectively used among businesses to streamline and improve the delivery of products / services while significantly reducing costs. Lean Six Sigma is a business improvement methodology that maximizes shareholder value by achieving the fastest rate of improvement in Cost, Quality and Customer Satisfaction. It focuses on reducing waste by streamlining operations and reducing defects (i.e., services not delivered on-time or within budget). One of the key foundations of Lean Six Sigma is to identify the most significant root causes of a problem before implementing solutions.

Over the past 6 years, Fort Wayne has realized \$33M in savings by applying Lean Six Sigma across the city's entire value chain (Water, Parks & Recreation, Police & Fire, Planning & Zoning, Public Works). Below are some examples of how Fort Wayne improved their services and reduced costs:

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### Fulton County

### Taxpayers Foundation

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Reducing time to fill pot holes from 48 to 1 ½ hours

Streamlining the permitting process from 42 days to 12 days

Reducing city engineering plan time from 7 hours to 2 ¼ hours

Reducing late trash pickup by 50%.

What is most remarkable is the fact that Fort Wayne – with a population of 251,247 – employs approximately 950 workers. This compares to Atlanta that has a population of 519,195 and 7,928 employees.

The effectiveness of each city's use of resources is shown in the table below. The key metric is Number of Employees per 10,000 Residence. Based on the analysis below, Fort Wayne is four times (4x) more efficient than Atlanta.

City	Population	Employees	Employees Per 10,000
Fort Wayne, IN	251,247	950	38
Atlanta, GA	519,195	7,928	153

## Conclusion & Recommendation:

An outgrowth of the Fort Wayne's success is the High Performance Government Network – a non-profit group whose mission is to improve municipal services in the State of Indiana, [www.hpgnetwork.com](http://www.hpgnetwork.com). Many of the current HPGN staff were formally with Mayor Graham Richard. These professionals are experienced in identifying and eliminating areas of waste in municipalities.

Atlanta would be well-served by visiting Fort Wayne and contacting the High Performance Government Network without delay!

John Sherman



President

## Unite the Fight To Bring Better Government to Atlanta and Fulton County!

I enclose my annual membership of:

\$50 Family \_\_\_ \$100 Patron \_\_\_ \$200 Corporate Member \_\_\_ \$500 Corporate Sponsor \_\_\_

In addition, I enclose a **tax-deductible** contribution of: \$100 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

If you prefer, you can charge your membership or a donation online at [www.fctf.org](http://www.fctf.org)

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