

	CITY OF JONESBORO, GEORGIA Agenda Item Summary	COUNCIL MEETING DATE: 08/03/26 Work Session
Requesting (Initiator): Councilman Alfred Dixon		Sponsor(s): Councilman Alfred Dixon
Item Title:	Council to consider establishing the City of Jonesboro Office of Community Life, the Office's organizational framework, Recreation Master Plan, and funding in the FY2027 budget to support phased implementation.	
Requested Action: Requesting approval.		
Requirement for Council Action: Approval.		
Is this Item Goal Related? Yes. This proposal advances the City's goals of enhancing quality of life, expanding recreational opportunities, strengthening community engagement, investing in youth and families, while improving organizational efficiency by coordinating community programs under one unified office.		
Summary and Background: Over the past several years, the City of Jonesboro has expanded its investment in residents through leadership development, education, recreation, volunteer service, public safety, wellness, and community-centered programming. These efforts have demonstrated that intentional investments in people strengthen neighborhoods, increase civic participation, enhance community connections, and improve the overall quality of life throughout the City. As Jonesboro continues to grow, the City has an opportunity to better coordinate these efforts through a unified organizational structure. The proposed Office of Community Life would provide centralized leadership for recreation, volunteerism, workforce development, wellness initiatives, community engagement, and strategic partnerships while remaining responsive to evolving community needs. By maximizing existing City resources and collaborating with schools, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, Clayton County, and community volunteers, the Office will help expand opportunities for residents, strengthen partnerships, improve organizational efficiency, and maintain fiscal responsibility.		
Fiscal Impact: \$95,000.00		
Exhibits Attached: Office of Community Life: Recreation and Community Development Master Plan		
Staff Recommendation: Councilman Alfred Dixon		

FOLLOW-UP APPROVAL ACTION (City Manager)	
Typed Name and Title:	Date:



Office of Community Life

A Recreation & Community Development Master Plan

Building a more connected Jonesboro.

Initiated by
Councilman Alfred Ray Dixon, III, MPA

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1. A MESSAGE TO THE JONESBORO COMMUNITY

Dear Mayor, Members of Council, City Staff, Community Partners, and Residents of Jonesboro:

Jonesboro's progress has always been the result of people working together. Our elected officials, employees, schools, businesses, faith communities, nonprofit organizations, volunteers, families, and residents each play an important role in strengthening the City we call home.

Over the past several years, Jonesboro has invested in its streets, parks, public safety, infrastructure, economic future, and public spaces. The City has also expanded opportunities for leadership development, education, community service, wellness, recreation, and civic engagement. These efforts have shown that Jonesboro is strongest when physical investments are matched by intentional investments in people.

As conversations have continued throughout the community, several shared priorities have emerged. Families want affordable recreation. Young people need safe places to learn, play, lead, and belong. Adults and seniors want opportunities to remain active and engaged. Volunteers want meaningful ways to serve. Schools, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and businesses want stronger opportunities to collaborate with the City.

The proposed Office of Community Life provides a framework for responding to those shared priorities. It would not replace the important work already being performed by City departments or community organizations. Instead, it would create a central point of coordination that helps connect programs, facilities, partners, volunteers, and resources around a common purpose.

The Office would bring recreation, wellness, volunteerism, workforce opportunities, community events, leadership development, and neighborhood engagement together under one coordinated structure. Its success would depend not on one person, office, or organization, but on the collective participation of the Mayor and Council, City staff, residents, families, coaches, volunteers, schools, businesses, and community partners.

This proposal should therefore be viewed as a starting point for collaboration. Program schedules, partnerships, staffing responsibilities, policies, and future investments would be developed through administrative review, community engagement, and continued direction from the Mayor and Council.

The ultimate goal is not simply to establish another City office. It is to build a stronger system of opportunities through which residents of every generation can learn, play, serve, connect, and thrive. Infrastructure builds cities. People build communities. Through shared leadership and collective investment, Jonesboro can continue building both.

Respectfully submitted for consideration,

Councilman Alfred Ray Dixon III, MPA
City of Jonesboro

2. Executive Summary

As Jonesboro continues to grow, so do the expectations of its residents. While the City has successfully expanded youth leadership, recreation, wellness, volunteerism, and community engagement initiatives, these efforts currently operate across multiple programs and partnerships without a centralized strategy. The proposed Office of Community Life will bring these efforts together under one coordinated

framework, maximizing the use of City parks, facilities, and community partnerships to expand recreation, leadership development, wellness, and civic engagement in a fiscally responsible manner.

This Master Plan recommends establishing the Office of Community Life as a division of the City Manager's Office through a phased implementation strategy supported by a proposed annual operating budget of \$95,000. That investment will provide the professional leadership, recreation equipment, field activation, seasonal staffing, and operational resources necessary to launch a coordinated recreation and community development program that serves residents of every generation.

At its core, the Office of Community Life is founded on a simple principle: local government should do more than deliver services, it should create opportunities. By connecting recreation, leadership, volunteerism, wellness, workforce development, and community engagement under one coordinated vision, the City can create a lifelong pathway of involvement for its residents. A child may first experience the City through a youth sports league, later participate in leadership and service opportunities, gain valuable work experience through seasonal employment, and eventually return as a volunteer, coach, mentor, or community leader. Families, adults, and seniors will likewise benefit from expanded recreation, wellness programs, neighborhood events, and opportunities that strengthen community connections throughout every stage of life.

The Office of Community Life is more than a new organizational structure. It is a long-term investment in the people of Jonesboro and a commitment to building a healthier, more connected, and more engaged community. By bringing recreation, leadership, service, and community partnerships together under one coordinated framework, Jonesboro will continue strengthening its greatest asset; its people. Infrastructure builds cities. People build communities. The Office of Community Life is Jonesboro's commitment to investing in both.

3. Community Needs at a Glance

Community Need	Current Opportunity	Office of Community Life Response
Affordable youth recreation	Limited City-operated sports programming	Launch year-round recreation leagues and clinics
Youth leadership development	JYCG exists but can expand	Coordinate all leadership programs under one office
Workforce readiness	Seasonal opportunities are limited	Create internships and youth employment pathways

Community engagement	Programs operate independently	Coordinate events through one office
Wellness programming	Existing parks are underutilized	Activate Lee Street Park with year-round wellness initiatives
Volunteer coordination	Volunteer efforts are decentralized	Establish the Jonesboro Community Volunteer Corps
Facility utilization	Parks and partners are not fully connected	Create the Jonesboro Recreation Network
External funding	Programs seek funding independently	Centralize grants, sponsorships, and partnerships

4. Vision, Mission & Core Values

Vision

To make Jonesboro the most connected, engaged, and active community in South Metro Atlanta by creating opportunities for every resident to learn, play, serve, connect, and thrive. This vision reflects the City's belief that community is built through opportunity. The Office of Community Life seeks to create a city where residents of every generation have meaningful ways to participate in civic life, build relationships, improve their well-being, and contribute to the future of Jonesboro.

Mission

The Office of Community Life exists to enhance the quality of life for every Jonesboro resident by coordinating recreation, leadership development, volunteerism, wellness initiatives, workforce opportunities, and community partnerships that strengthen neighborhoods and build lasting connections. Through collaboration, innovation, and responsible stewardship, the Office will create accessible programs and experiences that inspire residents to learn, play, serve, connect, and thrive.

Core Values

Community First

Every decision begins with one question: How does this improve the lives of the people who call Jonesboro home? The Office exists to serve residents by creating opportunities that strengthen neighborhoods, enrich lives, and improve the overall quality of life throughout the City.

Opportunity for All

Every resident deserves access to opportunities that promote growth, recreation, leadership, and community involvement regardless of age, background, ability, or income. The Office is committed to ensuring that participation remains welcoming, affordable, and accessible for everyone.

Partnerships Over Ownership

Strong communities are built through collaboration. Rather than duplicating services or constructing unnecessary facilities, the Office will maximize existing community assets through partnerships with schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith-based institutions, volunteers, and regional agencies.

Leadership Through Service

Leadership begins with serving others. The Office will cultivate future leaders by creating opportunities for residents to volunteer, mentor, coach, participate, and give back to the community they call home.

Health & Wellness

Healthy communities are active communities. Recreation, parks, wellness programming, and social connection improve physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life for residents of every generation.

Innovation

Jonesboro will continue to embrace creative ideas, strategic partnerships, and forward-thinking solutions that respond to the evolving needs of the community while positioning the City as a regional leader in community engagement.

Stewardship

Public resources deserve responsible management. The Office will operate with transparency, accountability, measurable outcomes, and continuous improvement to ensure every investment creates lasting value for the community.

Our Guiding Principle

Community doesn't happen by accident, it happens by design. The Office of Community Life is founded on the belief that local government should do more than provide municipal services. It should create opportunities that bring people together. By intentionally connecting recreation, leadership, volunteerism, education, wellness, community events, and strategic partnerships under one coordinated office, Jonesboro will cultivate a stronger culture of civic engagement where residents of every generation feel connected, valued, and inspired to contribute.

5. THE JONESBORO MODEL

The Jonesboro Model recognizes that no single program changes a community. Communities are transformed when opportunities are intentionally connected into a system that supports residents throughout every stage of life. Residents may enter that system at different points. Through early childhood and family programs, youth recreation, educational initiatives, leadership development, volunteer service, wellness activities, workforce opportunities, or community events. As individuals grow, they have opportunities to continue engaging with the City in new ways, creating a lifelong pathway of participation that can ultimately lead to mentoring, coaching, volunteering, or civic leadership. This continuous cycle of engagement distinguishes the Office of Community Life from a traditional parks and recreation department. It is not simply about offering programs, it is about creating a coordinated framework that helps residents learn, play, connect, serve, and thrive throughout their lives.

6. WHY COMMUNITY LIFE?

Communities are not defined solely by the roads they pave, the buildings they construct, or the services they provide. They are ultimately defined by the opportunities they create for people to connect, contribute, and build a shared sense of belonging. While public safety, infrastructure, sanitation, and economic development remain the foundation of local government, the long-term success of any city is equally measured by the strength of its people and the quality of life it provides.

Over the past several years, the City of Jonesboro has made intentional investments in both infrastructure and people. Capital improvements have strengthened our physical foundation, while community-centered initiatives have demonstrated the lasting value of investing in residents. Through youth leadership, recreation, volunteerism, educational partnerships, wellness initiatives, and civic engagement, the City has created opportunities that have strengthened neighborhoods, encouraged service, supported learning, and fostered a renewed sense of community pride.

As these initiatives have grown, so has the opportunity to bring them together under one coordinated vision. While each program has been successful on its own, they currently operate independently with different partnerships, objectives, and administrative structures. The proposed Office of Community Life provides a unified framework that aligns these efforts, making them easier to coordinate, expand, and sustain while creating a seamless experience for residents throughout every stage of life.

The Office of Community Life is founded on a simple belief: recreation, leadership, volunteerism, wellness, arts and culture, workforce development, and community engagement are not separate services, they are the experiences that define what it means to live in Jonesboro. By coordinating these investments under one strategy, the City can maximize existing resources, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that every public dollar invested creates a greater impact for residents.

This proposal is not about expanding government for the sake of expansion, nor is it intended to replace the outstanding work already taking place throughout our community. Instead, it establishes the City as a convener and partner, working alongside Clayton County Public Schools, Clayton County Parks and Recreation, nonprofit organizations, faith-based institutions, local businesses, healthcare providers, and community volunteers to build a stronger network of opportunities. By leveraging existing facilities, parks, and partnerships, Jonesboro can expand programming in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner.

Ultimately, the Office of Community Life is about creating a culture of community. It is about ensuring that children have opportunities to play, young people have opportunities to lead, adults have opportunities to serve, families have opportunities to connect, and older adults have opportunities to remain active and engaged. It reflects the belief that every resident should have a place within the life of

our city and that local governments should intentionally create the conditions where those connections can flourish.

Jonesboro has already demonstrated that investing in people works. The Office of Community Life represents the next step in that journey by bringing the City's community-centered initiatives together under one vision, one strategy, and one purpose: to improve the quality of life for every person who calls Jonesboro home. Infrastructure builds cities. People build communities. The Office of Community Life is Jonesboro's commitment to investing in both.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & STAFFING PLAN

The long-term success of the Office of Community Life will be determined not only by the quality of its programs, but by the strength of its leadership and its ability to build meaningful relationships throughout the community. While the Office will oversee recreation, leadership development, volunteerism, workforce initiatives, and community engagement, its greatest responsibility will be creating opportunities that improve the quality of life for every resident of Jonesboro. To accomplish this, the Office is intentionally designed with a lean, efficient organizational structure that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and fiscal responsibility.

Rather than creating a large municipal department with multiple levels of administration, the Office of Community Life will begin with one full-time Director and one part-time Recreation and Community Programs Coordinator. These two positions will be supported by seasonal employees, interns, volunteers, and strategic partnerships with schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and Clayton County. This structure allows the City to maximize its investment while maintaining the flexibility to expand programming as community participation and external funding continue to grow. The goal is not to build a larger government, but to build a stronger community by effectively coordinating existing resources.

The Office of Community Life will operate as a division of the Code Enforcement Office and will work collaboratively with every City department. Recreation programming, community events, youth leadership initiatives, workforce development opportunities, volunteer projects, wellness activities, and neighborhood engagement efforts will all be coordinated through this office, creating a single point of contact for residents while improving communication, efficiency, and accountability throughout the organization.

Director of Community Life

The Director of Community Life will serve as the City's chief administrator for recreation, community engagement, volunteer services, youth and family programming, workforce development, special events, and quality-of-life initiatives. Reporting directly to the Code Enforcement Director, the Director will provide strategic leadership for the Office of Community Life by establishing its vision, guiding its daily operations, and ensuring that City programs and partnerships support opportunities for residents to learn, play, serve, connect, and thrive.

The Director will oversee the day-to-day administration of the Office, including personnel management, financial oversight, strategic planning, program development, partnership cultivation, grant administration, sponsorship development, and performance evaluation. This position will work collaboratively across all City departments while serving as the primary liaison to Clayton County Public

Schools, Clayton County Parks and Recreation, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, local businesses, civic organizations, faith-based institutions, and other community partners to maximize existing resources and expand opportunities for residents.

In addition to administrative responsibilities, the Director will coordinate and support City-sponsored recreation programs, youth and family initiatives, community events, volunteer opportunities, wellness programs, neighborhood engagement efforts, seasonal employment opportunities, educational partnerships, and other quality-of-life initiatives approved by the Mayor and City Council. The Director will also prepare annual budgets, evaluate program performance, present recommendations to the Mayor and Council, pursue grant funding, cultivate sponsorships, and identify innovative partnerships that strengthen community services while minimizing the financial impact on the City's General Fund.

The Director must possess exceptional leadership, organizational, communication, and relationship-building skills. The ideal candidate will have experience in recreation management, community development, nonprofit leadership, education, public administration, local government, or a related field, with the ability to collaborate effectively across departments and with diverse community stakeholders. Because many community programs occur during evenings and weekends, the Director should maintain a visible presence at City events and activities while fostering meaningful relationships throughout the community.

The proposed annual salary for the Director of Community Life is \$55,000, reflecting the City's commitment to establishing professional leadership while maintaining fiscal responsibility during the initial implementation of the Office

Recreation and Community Programs Coordinator

The Recreation and Community Programs Coordinator will provide day-to-day operational support for the Office of Community Life by assisting with recreation programming, community events, volunteer initiatives, and resident engagement. Working under the supervision of the Director of Community Life, this part-time position will help ensure that City programs are well-organized, facilities are prepared, equipment is maintained, participants receive timely communication, and community activities are delivered in a professional and welcoming manner.

The Coordinator will support program registration, scheduling, facility and field preparation, equipment inventory, volunteer coordination, participant records, customer service, and administrative tasks associated with recreation programs, athletic leagues, wellness activities, educational workshops, community events, and other quality-of-life initiatives approved by the Mayor and City Council. The position will also assist with marketing, social media, program evaluations, and general office operations to help ensure residents have a positive experience with every City-sponsored program.

In addition to recreation support, the Coordinator will help coordinate community events, volunteer projects, neighborhood initiatives, seasonal festivals, special events, youth employment activities, and other community engagement efforts. Because this position works directly with residents, participants, volunteers, and community partners, the Assistant will serve as one of the primary public-facing representatives of the Office of Community Life and will be expected to provide exceptional customer service while fostering positive relationships throughout the community.

The ideal candidate will possess experience in recreation programming, event coordination, customer service, education, athletics, nonprofit organizations, or community engagement. Strong organizational skills, effective communication, attention to detail, and the ability to manage multiple responsibilities are essential. Because many programs occur outside of traditional business hours, the position requires

a flexible schedule of approximately 24 hours per week, including evenings and weekends as needed to support recreation programs, community events, and other Office activities.

The proposed annual salary for the Recreation & Community Programs Coordinator is \$20,000, reflecting a part-time position that provides essential operational support while maintaining the fiscal responsibility of the Office during its initial implementation.

Seasonal Staff and Community Volunteers

Recognizing that strong communities are built through collaboration, the Office of Community Life will rely heavily on seasonal employees and volunteers to expand programming without significantly increasing personnel costs. Seasonal positions will provide meaningful employment opportunities for local high school and college students while creating a pipeline of future community leaders. Preference will be given to Jonesboro residents, graduates of the Jonesboro Youth City Government, and students interested in public service, recreation, education, or community development.

Seasonal employees will assist with youth sports leagues, summer camps, recreation clinics, community events, facility preparation, equipment management, registration, scorekeeping, and participant engagement. These positions will provide valuable work experience while allowing students to earn income, develop leadership skills, and gain firsthand exposure to municipal government.

Equally important will be the establishment of the Jonesboro Community Volunteer Corps, a structured volunteer initiative designed to engage residents who are passionate about serving their community. Parents, educators, retirees, college students, civic organizations, faith-based institutions, business leaders, and JYCG alumni will all have opportunities to contribute as volunteer coaches, mentors, event assistants, tutors, workshop facilitators, and neighborhood ambassadors. Volunteers will receive orientation, training, and recognition, reinforcing the City's belief that meaningful community development is a shared responsibility between local government and the residents it serves.

This combination of professional leadership, operational support, seasonal employment, and volunteer engagement creates a staffing model that is both financially sustainable and capable of delivering high-quality programs. More importantly, it reflects the philosophy that the Office of Community Life is not intended to grow government. It is intended to grow the community. By investing strategically in leadership while empowering residents to become active partners in service, Jonesboro can expand opportunities, strengthen relationships, and create a culture where every person has the opportunity to contribute to the life of the City.

8. RECREATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING MASTER PLAN

The Office of Community Life will serve as the City's central hub for recreation, leadership, wellness, volunteerism, and community engagement by coordinating year-round programming that reflects the needs and interests of Jonesboro residents. The goal of the Recreation & Community Programming Master Plan is not simply to offer activities, but to intentionally create opportunities that improve health, strengthen relationships, develop leadership, and foster a greater sense of belonging throughout the community.

Unlike traditional recreation departments that primarily focus on athletic leagues, the Office of Community Life will take a comprehensive approach to community development by integrating

recreation with education, leadership, volunteerism, workforce development, arts and culture, and neighborhood engagement. Every program offered through the Office will support the City's vision of creating a healthier, more connected, and more engaged Jonesboro.

Annual Programming Calendar

Programming will be organized around four seasons, ensuring that residents have opportunities to participate throughout the entire year while allowing staff to efficiently schedule facilities, volunteers, partnerships, and community events. This approach creates consistency for families, encourages long-term participation, and provides the flexibility necessary to introduce new programs as community interest grows.

During the winter season, the Office will focus on indoor recreation and leadership development. Youth basketball leagues will become the City's premier winter recreation offering, providing boys and girls with opportunities to develop athletic skills, teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. Leadership workshops, volunteer projects, financial literacy sessions, and family engagement activities will complement athletic programming to ensure that recreation is viewed as one component of a larger community development strategy rather than an isolated activity.

Spring programming will shift toward outdoor recreation and environmental engagement. Soccer leagues, track and field programs, tennis instruction, community garden activities, neighborhood beautification projects, and family wellness initiatives will encourage residents to become active while taking advantage of Jonesboro's parks and public spaces. Community volunteer opportunities will be integrated into the spring schedule, reinforcing the Office's belief that service and recreation can work together to strengthen neighborhoods.

Summer will represent the Office's most active season. Summer recreation camps, sports clinics, youth employment opportunities, the Jonesboro Youth City Government Summer Leadership Institute, volunteer service projects, wellness programming, and special community events will provide structured activities for children, teenagers, and families throughout the summer months. Seasonal employees and interns will assist with daily operations while gaining valuable work experience and leadership development through direct involvement in City programming.

Fall programming will focus on flag football, football skills development, tennis clinics, community festivals, wellness events, and neighborhood celebrations. Rather than operating a traditional tackle football league during the initial phase, the City will emphasize skills development, athletic conditioning, and partnership opportunities with existing football organizations. This approach allows Jonesboro to introduce football programming while minimizing equipment costs, liability exposure, and operational expenses.

Recreation programming will begin with five core athletic offerings that can be implemented using existing City assets and strategic partnerships. Basketball will serve as the City's flagship indoor sport through partnerships with Jonesboro High School and the Boys & Girls Club of Flint River. Soccer and flag football will utilize the multipurpose field at Lee Street Park following minor improvements, including field maintenance, striping, and portable goals. Tennis programming will utilize both the existing courts at Lee Street Park and partnership opportunities with Clayton County at Independence Park. Track and field programming will emphasize conditioning, speed development, community fun runs, and youth fitness activities while utilizing available park space and school facilities when appropriate.

The Recreation & Community Programming Master Plan is intentionally designed to maximize existing public assets rather than relying on expensive capital construction projects. Lee Street and Key Street Park will serve as the primary hub for outdoor recreation, while partnerships with Jonesboro High

School, Riverdale High School, Tara Stadium, Clayton County Parks and Recreation, the Boys & Girls Club of Flint River, and other community organizations will significantly expand the City's programming capacity. This partnership model allows Jonesboro to provide high-quality recreational opportunities without assuming the financial burden associated with constructing and maintaining new athletic facilities.

In addition to athletics, the Office of Community Life will coordinate a variety of programs that promote lifelong community engagement. Community wellness walks, outdoor fitness classes, family game nights, movie nights in the park, youth leadership workshops, volunteer service projects, neighborhood cleanups, cultural celebrations, holiday events, gardening workshops, financial literacy sessions, career exploration programs, and intergenerational activities will ensure that residents of every age have opportunities to participate in community life. These programs recognize that recreation extends beyond organized sports and includes any activity that brings residents together, encourages healthy living, and strengthens community relationships.

Throughout every program, the Office will prioritize affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity. Jonesboro residents will receive reduced registration fees or free participation whenever possible, while nonresident registration fees will help offset operational costs and generate revenue that can be reinvested into City programming. Scholarships, sponsorships, and community partnerships will further ensure that financial barriers do not prevent participation.

Resident & Non-Resident Fee Schedule

The Office of Community Life is committed to ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent Jonesboro residents from participating in recreation and community programs. Registration fees will be structured to reward City residency while generating supplemental revenue from participants residing outside the City limits.

Program	Jonesboro Resident	Clayton County (Outside City)	Outside County
Youth Basketball League	Free–\$20	\$60	\$80
Soccer League	Free–\$20	\$60	\$80
Flag Football	Free–\$20	\$60	\$80
Football Skills Academy	Free–\$15	\$50	\$70

Tennis Clinics	Free	\$35	\$50
Track & Field Club	Free	\$35	\$50
Summer Sports Camps	\$25	\$75	\$100
Wellness Classes	Free	\$10 per class	\$15 per class
Leadership Workshops	Free	Free (Space Available)	\$20

9. Facilities & Partnership Strategy

The Office of Community Life is founded on the principle that successful community programming does not require the construction of new facilities. Instead, the City of Jonesboro will maximize the use of existing public assets while establishing strategic partnerships with schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and neighboring agencies to expand recreation opportunities in a fiscally responsible manner. This collaborative model allows the City to deliver quality programming while minimizing capital expenditures, reducing operational costs, and strengthening relationships with organizations that are already serving the community.

Rather than viewing these organizations as separate providers, the Office of Community Life will position itself as a coordinating partner that aligns resources around one common goal: improving the quality of life for Jonesboro residents. This strategy creates greater flexibility in scheduling, expands access to facilities, and allows the City to introduce programming immediately without waiting for future capital projects.

The Office will begin by utilizing facilities already owned by the City whenever possible. As participation increases, additional partnerships will be formalized through memorandums of understanding and facility use agreements that clearly define scheduling responsibilities, maintenance expectations, insurance requirements, and program operations.

Basketball programming will be developed through a proposed partnership with First Baptist Church Jonesboro's ROC (Recreation Outreach Center). The City will pursue an agreement to utilize the ROC as the primary home for its winter basketball season, which is anticipated to operate from January through March. Because the ROC already serves families through organized athletics, this partnership presents an opportunity to complement, not compete with, existing programming. Depending on facility availability, the City may reserve designated practice and game times, coordinate league schedules around existing church activities, or explore a jointly branded community league that expands

participation for Jonesboro families. This partnership would allow the City to provide a high-quality basketball experience without the expense of constructing or maintaining an indoor gymnasium.

Outdoor athletic programming will be centered at Key Street Park, located adjacent to Keystone Apartments. This park has the potential to become Jonesboro's primary neighborhood athletics complex through modest improvements rather than major capital investment. The City will prioritize field maintenance, irrigation as needed, mowing, field striping, portable goals, player benches, and storage solutions to support soccer, flag football, football skills development, and youth track and field programming. By activating Key Street Park with consistent programming, the City will not only expand recreational opportunities but also increase positive activity within one of its neighborhoods, encouraging greater use of public spaces and strengthening neighborhood pride.

Football programming will initially emphasize youth flag football and football skills development rather than full-contact tackle football. This phased approach reduces equipment costs, minimizes liability, and creates a natural feeder system for local middle and high school athletic programs. As participation grows, the City may explore additional partnerships with area schools for practice or game-day facilities while continuing to utilize Key Street Park as the primary location for instruction and player development.

Track and field programming will also be coordinated from Key Street Park and surrounding green space. Early programming will focus on running clubs, youth conditioning, sprint instruction, agility training, community fun runs, and introductory field events. As interest increases, the Office will work with local schools and community partners to provide participants with access to regulation tracks for clinics, competitions, and special events.

Wellness programming will be anchored at Lee Street Park, which already provides an ideal environment for outdoor fitness, walking, yoga, stretching classes, health education workshops, senior wellness activities, and family recreation. The park's walking trail, open green space, and welcoming atmosphere make it an ideal location for year-round health and wellness initiatives designed to encourage active lifestyles among residents of all ages.

Tennis instruction will also be centered at Lee Street Park, utilizing the City's existing tennis courts to introduce youth and adult tennis clinics, beginner lessons, family play days, and instructional programming. The Office of Community Life will explore partnerships with local tennis professionals, volunteers, and regional organizations to provide affordable instruction while maximizing use of the City's existing courts.

The Office of Community Life looks to build partnerships before buildings. By coordinating programming across existing community assets, Jonesboro can immediately expand recreational opportunities while remaining financially responsible. As participation grows and demand is demonstrated, the City will be better positioned to pursue grants, sponsorships, and future capital improvements supported by measurable community need rather than speculation.

10. Community Programs & Signature Initiatives

The Office of Community Life will serve as the City's coordinating office for programs that strengthen recreation, education, leadership development, volunteerism, wellness, arts and culture, neighborhood engagement, and community partnerships. While many of these initiatives currently exist independently, the Office will bring them together under one coordinated vision, allowing the City to better align resources, expand participation, strengthen partnerships, and create a more seamless experience for residents.

The Office will intentionally develop and coordinate programs that support residents throughout every stage of life. Young children will have opportunities to participate in recreation and healthy activities. Youth and teenagers will be encouraged to develop leadership skills, civic responsibility, and personal growth through educational and engagement opportunities. Young adults will benefit from workforce development, internships, and career exploration. Adults and families will have greater access to volunteer opportunities, community events, wellness programs, and neighborhood initiatives, while older adults will benefit from lifelong learning, recreation, and opportunities to remain active and connected within the community.

The Office will coordinate a diverse portfolio of programs and services that respond to community needs and advance the City's quality-of-life goals. These may include recreational athletics, youth and family programming, leadership development, educational partnerships, workforce readiness, volunteer initiatives, health and wellness activities, arts and cultural programming, environmental stewardship, neighborhood revitalization, community events, seasonal celebrations, and public engagement opportunities. Programs will be developed and expanded through partnerships with schools, Clayton County, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations, and community volunteers.

As community needs evolve, the Office of Community Life will continue to evaluate existing programs, identify service gaps, and develop new initiatives that reflect the priorities established by the Mayor and City Council. This flexible, partnership-driven approach ensures that the Office remains responsive to residents while maximizing the City's existing resources and creating opportunities that improve the quality of life for every person who calls Jonesboro home.

11. Revenue Generation Strategy

The Office of Community Life is designed to operate through a diversified funding model that combines municipal investment, strategic partnerships, grants, sponsorships, recreation revenue, and community support. While the City will provide the initial investment necessary to establish the Office, the long-term objective is to reduce reliance on the General Fund by generating supplemental revenue that can be reinvested directly into community programming.

Rather than relying on a single funding source, the Office will pursue multiple revenue streams that support recreation, youth development, wellness initiatives, and community engagement. This diversified approach improves financial sustainability while allowing the City to expand programming without placing unnecessary strain on municipal resources.

The first revenue source will come from recreation programming. Jonesboro residents will receive free or significantly reduced registration fees as a benefit of City residency. Non-residents, including residents of unincorporated Clayton County and neighboring communities, will pay market-rate registration fees that help offset operational expenses. This structure prioritizes City residents while recognizing that regional participation can strengthen leagues, increase competition, and generate additional revenue.

Corporate sponsorships will serve as another major funding source. Local businesses will be invited to sponsor athletic leagues, community events, scholarship opportunities, uniforms, recreation equipment, wellness initiatives, and youth leadership programs. Sponsorship recognition may include field signage, event branding, program materials, social media promotion, and community recognition opportunities.

The Office will actively pursue state, federal, and private foundation grants supporting youth development, recreation, education, public health, workforce development, environmental stewardship,

and community engagement. Dedicated grant writing and partnership development will become an ongoing responsibility of the Director of Community Life, ensuring that Jonesboro remains competitive for external funding opportunities.

Additional revenue opportunities may include community fundraising events, charitable donations, tournament hosting, concession partnerships, vendor participation fees, specialty camps, instructional clinics, wellness classes, and seasonal merchandise. As participation grows, these revenue sources will allow the Office to reinvest in equipment, scholarships, facility improvements, and expanded programming.

The long-term goal is not to generate profit, but to establish a financially sustainable office that continually leverages public investment to attract outside resources while maximizing opportunities for Jonesboro residents.

12. Performance Metrics

The Office of Community Life will evaluate its success through meaningful outcomes that demonstrate accountability, community impact, and responsible stewardship of public resources. Regular performance updates will be provided to the Mayor and Council and will help guide future planning, budgeting, and program development.

During its initial years, the Office will establish baseline performance measures that evaluate community participation, program accessibility, partnership development, volunteer engagement, operational effectiveness, and financial sustainability. As programs expand, performance measures will continue to evolve to ensure City resources are being invested where they produce the greatest benefit for residents.

Success will be measured through both quantitative and qualitative outcomes, including increased participation in City programs, expanded partnerships, stronger volunteer engagement, greater utilization of parks and public spaces, improved access to recreation and wellness opportunities, enhanced neighborhood connections, increased civic participation, and expanded opportunities for leadership development, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning.

The Office will also evaluate resident feedback, program quality, operational efficiency, and community impact to ensure services remain responsive to changing community needs. These performance measures will support continuous improvement while providing the Mayor and Council with meaningful information to guide future investments and strategic priorities.

Ultimately, the success of the Office of Community Life will be measured not only by the number of programs offered or participants served, but by its ability to strengthen community connections, improve quality of life, and create opportunities for residents of every age to learn, play, serve, connect, and thrive.

Community Return on Investment (ROI)

City Investment	Expected Annual Return
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\$95,000 Office Budget	300–500 recreation participants
Community Partnerships	Shared facilities and reduced capital costs
Volunteer Corps	1,000+ volunteer hours annually
Sponsorships & Grants	\$25,000–\$50,000 in outside funding
Seasonal Employment	10–15 paid youth positions
Recreation Programming	Increased park activation and healthier residents
Community Events	Stronger civic engagement and neighborhood pride

13. Five-Year Implementation Plan

The Office of Community Life will be implemented through a phased approach that allows organizational capacity, programming, and community partnerships to grow alongside resident participation. This strategy minimizes financial risk while providing flexibility to evaluate outcomes, respond to community needs, and expand services in a fiscally responsible manner.

Phase One will focus on establishing the Office, hiring staff, developing operational policies and procedures, formalizing strategic partnerships, coordinating existing community programs and events, strengthening volunteer engagement, and expanding opportunities for recreation, wellness, education, and community involvement.

Phase Two will focus on enhancing programming, strengthening community partnerships, expanding volunteer and leadership opportunities, increasing access to recreation and wellness initiatives, pursuing grant funding and sponsorships, and continuously evaluating programs to ensure they meet the evolving needs of residents while maintaining responsible fiscal stewardship.

Phase Three will position the Office of Community Life as a long-term driver of community engagement and quality of life by broadening programming for residents of all ages, expanding regional partnerships, attracting external resources, supporting community-wide initiatives, and evaluating future

opportunities for facility improvements and other strategic investments based on community priorities and demonstrated need.

Through each phase, the Office will remain adaptable, allowing the Mayor and Council to respond to changing community needs while building a sustainable framework that strengthens partnerships, maximizes existing resources, and improves the quality of life for everyone who calls Jonesboro home.

14. Budget Summary

The proposed annual operating budget for the Office of Community Life is \$95,000. This investment is designed to establish the organizational capacity, staffing, equipment, and operational resources necessary to launch a coordinated recreation and community development program for the City of Jonesboro.

Rather than investing in new facilities or expanding government through multiple departments, this proposal prioritizes professional leadership, strategic partnerships, recreation equipment, and year-round programming that activates existing community assets while delivering measurable value to residents.

The recommended budget reflects a lean, fiscally responsible approach that allows the Office to begin operations immediately while maintaining flexibility for future growth as participation, partnerships, and external funding increase.

Proposed FY2027 Operating Budget

Category	Proposed Budget
Director of Community Life (Full-Time)	\$55,000
Recreation & Community Programs Coordinator (Part-Time)	\$20,000
Recreation Equipment & Field Activation	\$10,000
Seasonal Staff & Program Support	\$5,000
Marketing, Volunteer Development & Administrative Operations	\$5,000

Total Annual Budget	\$95,000
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15. Recommendation & Council Action

The Office of Community Life represents the next chapter in the City of Jonesboro’s commitment to investing in its greatest asset, its people.

As the City continues to grow, so do the opportunities to strengthen recreation, wellness, education, volunteerism, neighborhood engagement, and community partnerships. The Office of Community Life provides a coordinated framework for bringing these efforts together under one unified vision, ensuring that City resources are aligned, partnerships are strengthened, and residents of every age have meaningful opportunities to learn, connect, serve, and thrive.

Rather than creating a traditional recreation department, this proposal establishes a comprehensive quality-of-life office dedicated to enhancing community well-being through recreation, community engagement, leadership development, volunteerism, workforce opportunities, cultural enrichment, and strategic partnerships. By coordinating existing services while creating opportunities for future growth, the Office will help build a stronger, healthier, and more connected Jonesboro.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Mayor and Council:

1. Establish the Office of Community Life as a division of the Code Enforcement Office.
2. Approve the proposed organizational structure and Recreation & Community Programming Master Plan.
3. Authorize the phased implementation of the Office beginning in FY2027.
4. Include \$95,000 in the FY2027 operating budget to support implementation.
5. Direct staff to pursue grants, sponsorships, intergovernmental partnerships, and other external funding opportunities to expand programming while reducing long-term reliance on the General Fund.

Approval of this proposal will establish a sustainable framework for coordinating community programs, expanding recreational opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. By investing in people alongside infrastructure, Jonesboro will be well-positioned to build a more connected, engaged, and resilient community for generations to come.