

Greensboro's Water Resources Department takes Regional Cooperation to the next level to help drive Economic Development in the Carolina Core

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Abstract

The Triad region of North Carolina experienced a profound economic downturn for decades, reeling from the significant loss of its foundational industries: textiles, tobacco, and furniture manufacturing. Once pillars of the regional economy, the decline of these sectors led to widespread job displacement, economic stagnation, and a pervasive sense of uncertainty.

However, over the past 5 to 10 years, the Triad has orchestrated a remarkable economic comeback, driven by a diversified influx of major investments. Companies like Toyota, with its massive battery manufacturing plant, Honda Jet, expanding its aerospace footprint, and Boom Supersonic, poised to revolutionize air travel, have brought thousands of high-paying jobs and billions in capital investment, transforming the region into a hub for advanced manufacturing and aerospace.

The Water Resources Department of the City of Greensboro has played a major role in enabling the current momentum of economic development successes. This presentation will focus on how the City of Greensboro has intentionally and strategically transitioned from a locally focused utility service provider to a regional partner extending utility services far beyond its corporate boundaries to major industrial sites as well as surrounding incorporated municipalities.

The shift in approach has been enabled by working closely with the elected representatives both from within the City of Greensboro and other municipalities to revise existing water and sewer services extension policies and establish Interlocal Service Agreements. The presenters will detail and discuss how previous water and sewer extension policy within Greensboro most often required annexation or specific economic development justifications.

The new policy, however, is deeply rooted in the City's GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan and its more focused on regional growth. The new extension policy also provides for the establishment of "Interlocal Government Agreements (ILAs)" which signifies a proactive stance towards regional partnerships and sets a framework for ILA agreements, which signals that the City explicitly aims to be a "major regional partner for mutually beneficial economic development in the Piedmont-Triad region"