



Court of Appeals

Memorandum

To: All Judges, Bill Martin, Holly Sparrow, Jan Kelley, and John Ruggeri

From: Chief Judge Ruffin 

Subject: 2005 Strategic Plan

Date: July 27, 2005

By this time each of us has had an opportunity to reflect on our planning session of last week. Initially, let me express my appreciation to those of you who were in attendance. I would also like to express my appreciation to Bill Martin, Holly Sparrow, Jan Kelley and John Ruggeri for their assistance and presentations.

As you know, we are to present our strategic plan to the Governor by September 1, 2005. It appears as though we will meet that deadline, thanks to each of you as well as to our preparers and presenters.

Our strategic plan must ultimately be judged on its merits by how well it is implemented. Proper implementation depends upon the same team work we displayed last week, and I am again counting on each of you.

Most of you were present five years ago when we devised a strategic plan and will

readily recognize that the strategic plan of 2005 simply built on the strategic plan of 2000.

The plan of 2000 was not implemented, and we should not repeat that mistake.

Again, I thank each of you, and I look forward to your continued cooperation.



Court of Appeals

Memorandum

To: Jan Kelley
Director, Fiscal Services

From: Holly Sparrow *HS*

Subject: COA Strategic Plan

Date: June 9, 2005

Jan, Attached is the draft Plan. Please feel free to do anything you want to it. Judge Ruffin asked that I show if material was pulled from the last planning session. That information is in brackets and shaded.

I have tried to put the Goals and the Objectives within them into a priority order as I see it. You and Bill, as well as the judges, may have a different and more informed view, so let me know if I should change the order.

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The last page shows the Year 1 Objectives and the Means for Measuring Achievement which should tie back into your budget process.

cc: Bill Martin

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FY2006 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Vision: Timely justice to parties and clear and sound guidance to Georgia trial bench and practicing attorneys.

Mission: [Refined from 2000 Mission Statement]

1. To review decisions of trial courts and correct errors of law which have been properly brought before this Court.
2. To assist litigants to achieve final and just resolution of their disputes and contribute to the orderly development of Georgia law through orders and opinions based on logic, reason, persuasion and precedent.

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Process and decide cases filed in the court by parties (attorneys and pro se litigants) by well written and well reasoned orders and opinions.

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- Impartiality of Decision Makers
- Independence of Judicial Decision Making
- Accessibility to Process by Public
- Integrity of Judicial Process
- Well Reasoned and Articulated Decisions

Environmental Scan:

External Factors:

1. The increasing diversity of the Georgia population and the numbers of persons filing as pro se litigants requires more information be available to the public on the ~~appeals~~ ^{appeals appellate} process. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that Georgia now has 7.1% of its population that are foreign born. This is an increase of 4.4% since 1990. In 2000, almost 10 % of the population over 5 years of age speak a language other than English at home. (Can Bud get us numbers of pro se parties in 1995 and 2005?)

Thursday
IV.

2. Changes in technology are altering the expectations of the parties for more timely case processing and multiple types of access to court records and information. By 2001, the last published Census survey data of computer ^{use}, 52% of Georgia households had a computer. In 1989, only 15% had a computer. The first Census survey of internet use, in 1997, indicated that 22% of Georgians used the internet at work, home or school. By the 2001 survey, this figure had more than doubled to 47%. Public institutions such as libraries and schools have computers with internet access and these machines are well used by the public. Computer use has been taught in the elementary school for several years.

*i immigrated
births
35% '04
2% '70*

A Some Courts in Georgia and other states have already placed dockets and records on-line. Moreover, some Georgia trial courts are storing records in electronic format by scanning or imaging them. Georgia trial courts are also experimenting with e-filing pleadings while almost all transcripts are finalized in word processing formats and stored on electronic media. The U.S. District Court, Northern District, Georgia, has required all attorneys practicing in that court to obtain e-filing passwords and has been receiving e-filed pleadings for over a year.

3. The amount of record storage space and the cost can be reduced by use of electronic records rather than paper records. *For example,* A single compact disc can hold over 216,000 pages of black and white text. In contrast, it takes almost 85 standard storage boxes ^{4 boxes} 12"x12"x12" to hold the same number of paper sheets which would take up 85 cubic feet of storage space. Currently, the direct appeals filed for one year equal about 85 cubic feet of storage. More storage space is consumed by paper applications, case records, transcripts and other materials the Court must maintain in its filing area.

4. Attorneys' knowledge and use of technology creates expectations that the Court will employ similar technologies for more efficiency and remote access to records. Most attorneys are becoming acclimated to obtaining and sending information through the internet. Legal research is now largely done by researching large on-line databases. Daily, attorneys employ e-mail, scanners, and fax machines to transmit documents and communicate with clients electronically. They expect the Court to be able to provide their orders, opinions and docket information in the same manner.

5. The need for tele-working and remote access to court records is fueled by the continued growth of the Atlanta metropolitan area and transportation congestion. The Atlanta metropolis has grown immensely in the last twenty years. For example, the Census Metropolitan Statistical Area for Atlanta was enlarged from 20 counties (1993) to over 27 by 2004. Georgia's population has increased by over 26% from 1990 to 2000 and continues to increase. As a result, congestion on the highways has been increasing. Travel-to-work averages from the U.S. Census increased from 22.7 to 27.7 minutes from 1990 to 2000. In the Atlanta area, the travel to work average was even longer, 28.3 minutes in 2000. The Court of Appeals has statewide jurisdiction, and, therefore, its judges are elected statewide and cases arise from all parts of the state. The staff lives throughout the Atlanta Metropolitan area. Therefore, remote access will benefit the judges, staff and parties that litigate in the Court.

Internal Factors:

1. In order to be efficient, staff attorneys need to have training relevant to their unique role assisting the judges and to be encouraged to be healthy as well as productive employees. With the increase of caseload over the last ten years, the staff attorneys are more heavily relied upon by the judges. As a result, it is imperative they be experienced, have training relevant to the Court, and be encouraged to have healthy lifestyles.

2. As judges and staff attorneys live further from the Court's downtown Atlanta offices, tele-working and having remote access to resources permit more efficient use of their services. Over half of the judges either still maintain a home or have an active connection to the hometown outside the Atlanta metro area in which they lived prior to their judgeship on the bench of the Court of Appeals. The staff live in the metro area as far away as White to the north, Jackson to the south, Social Circle to the east and Villa Rica to the west.

3. Success of the court's web page as evidenced by positive feedback from users is encouraging the court to permit access to more information on-line. (Bud any good comments.)

4. Growth of workload (an average of 141 opinions per judge in 1991 to 174 in 2004) and the statutory creation of an application process required changes in the Court. This included the creation of a central staff (6 attorneys) to handle jurisdictional issues and provide the necessary speedy review of applications for the judges, and the addition of a panel of judges in 1999 and their attendant staff. This increase in personnel has resulted in cramped quarters for the Court in the Judicial Building and acquisition of a limited amount of space in an adjoining building limiting the efficiency of the operation of the Court.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1. Improve efficacy of internal court's structure. (Priority 1)

Objectives

- A. Improved facilities.
 - a. Work on enhance security through assessment, improved controlled access, and emergency procedures. (1 Year Plan)
 - b. Consolidation of judicial offices in a single building which will permit better security and easier communication among offices. (4 Year Plan)
 - c. Self - contained suites for all judges and their administrative and legal staff which should further enhance communication and improve efficiency. (Long Term Plan)
 - d. Improved access for public to clerk's office by upgrade of clerk's office. Also consolidation of administrative staff of Court, i.e., Fiscal Office, Clerk's Office, Media Center in one physical location to improve coordination and operation. (4 Year Plan)
 - e. Improved efficiency of central staff by an upgrade of their offices. (4 Year Plan)
- B. Development and implementation of a business continuity plan (1 Year Plan)
- C. Uniform application of internal policies through development of an employee intranet and access to personnel and internal operating policies and procedures. (4 Year Plan)
- D. Shared goals/spirit of cooperation. See C.

[Goal of Physical Facilities; {Location of Judges?} was in the 2000 Planning Session]

Accomplishment of this Goal and Objectives should improve the security and safety of the Court and the persons using the Court as well as creating a greater uniformity in the application of Court policies.

GOAL 2. Development of Staff - Education/Training (Priority 2)

Objectives

- A. Continue in-house training in cooperation with Atlanta Bar Association to provide staff attorneys a mandatory continuing education class directly relevant to jobs in a more efficient manner (both in cost and time) then available through other sources. (1 Year Plan and ongoing)
- B. Improve the media center to permit staff attorneys and other employees to receive training on their own schedules to cover employee and public safety and employee health as well as legal training. This should impact in a beneficial manner both the efficiency of the performance of the employee's job and maybe reduce health and workers' compensation claims. (1 Year Plan and ongoing)
- C. Development of a new judge's and new employee orientation manual specific to each class of employees' (staff attorney, administrative assistant, clerk's staff) needs. (1 Year Plan - Administrative Assistant; 4 Year Plan - Staff Attorney, Judge, Clerk Personnel)

[Goals of Training/Education; Staff Development; Staff/Office Personnel; More Uniform Inter-Office Procedures were in the 2000 Planning Session]

Accomplishment of this Goal and Objectives should enhance the professional development of the Court's staff members, thereby adding to their productivity and the quality of work.

GOAL 3. Automation of case processing through use of technology (Priority 3)

Objectives

A. Tele-working through continued development of Court web portal for both in-house and remote access to legal research materials and to draft memorandums and opinions, and to provide enhanced means of communication among judges and judge's staff even while tele-working (4 Year Plan)

B. Internal Communication - continued development of intranet and web page (4 Year Plan)

C. External Communication - Development of portal to provide additional information for both the general public and litigants in the court. Eventual access to electronic documents and e-filing of records from trial court, transcripts from court reporter, and documents from parties. (4 Year Plan)

D. Development of e-filing and electronic documents database thereby speeding the transmission of records from the trial courts to the appellate courts and ultimately reducing costs and time required to process the record. This should ultimately shorten the time from the filing of the Notice of Appeal to the final disposition of the appeal. Electronic records will improve management of records, reduce storage needs and permit speedier retrieval. (Long Term Plan)

E. Increased use of legal on-line services for legal research and continued reduction of print sources. More reliance on the increasing libraries of online research materials. (1 Year Plan)

[Goal of Focused Technology was stated in 2000 Planning Session]

Accomplishment of this Goal and Objectives should result in better management of the Court, a more efficient use of resources, and an enhancement in public trust in the Georgia Justice system.

GOAL 4. Improve access to public information (Priority 4)

Objectives

A. Further education of the public by preparation of a video on the history and purpose of the Court - Distribute to schools, etc. (1 Year Plan)

B. Preparation of an instruction video for pro se litigants . (4 Year Plan)

C. Provide more information to the public on court's web page, eventually expanding the web page to a portal to access not only the court's docket, but copies of court orders and court records for parties' research of their case. (4 Year Plan)

D. Provide Mandatory Continuing Legal Education training to attorneys on e-filing and remote access to court documents as those systems are implemented. (4 Year Plan)

[Goal of Public Information was in 2000 Planning Session.] *highlight*

Critical Success Factors and Success Inhibitors

Success Factors:

- Goal 1: Previous Work Developing Current Court Web Page
- Goal 2: Recent Collection of Historical Material on Court for Video; Recent Technical Staff Enhancement of Court Network in Preparation for E-filing and Image Database; General Cooperation of Trial Court Clerks and Attorneys with Court
- Goal 3: Current Document Production System in Judicial Offices
- Goal 4: Effort Already Made to Begin Development of Media Center
- Goal 5: Promised Availability of Space in Health Building

Success Inhibitors:

- Goal 1: Limit of Technical Staff Hours
- Goal 2: Grant from Civil Justice Foundation to Fund Video, Funds; Necessary Cooperation And Technical Sophistication of Trial Courts to Obtain Electronic Records and Transcripts; Need to Set Standards Indexing Methods; Time and Money to Train Attorneys
- Goal 3: Staff Needs to Scan Paper Records
- Goal 4: Staff Time Demands
- Goal 5: Time and Funding Needed for Renovation of Space
- Goal 6: Determination of Best Interest for Both Appellate Courts and Unpredictability of Future Growth Rate of Caseload

1 Year Plan - Objectives List in Priority Order

1. Security Assessment of Facility; Emergency Procedure Manual
2. Complete Video on Court Function and History
3. Initiate Imaging of Old Case Records
4. Develop Business Continuity Plan
5. Enhance Online Research Capabilities
6. Institutionalize In-house Mandatory Continuing Legal Education for Staff Attorneys
7. Development of Orientation Manual/Video for New Administrative Assistants
8. Begin Media Center Training of Staff

Performance Measures:

1. (A) Completion of Security Assessment Report and Review by Court
(B) Completion of Emergency Procedures Plan and Distribution and Discussion with Personnel
2. Distribution of Video to Schools, Etc, and Use in Courtroom Visits, Etc.
3. Completion of Imaging of 2004 Case Records
4. Completion of Business Continuity Plan
5. Completion of Intranet Portal and Addition of New Research Tools Such as Internal Operating Manual, Etc.
6. Conduct One 6-hour MCLE Course for Staff Attorneys and Central Staff/*make video available in video media center*
7. Complete Preparation of Materials for Administrative Assistant Orientation
8. Availability of Additional Education Tools for Staff Use in Media Center

State Strategic Plan

THE NEW GEORGIA: THE VISION

A new day has dawned in Georgia. In a fundamental change of leadership philosophy, our New Georgia will have a state government that is principle-centered and people-focused. People are more important than politics and we will have a state government that truly is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

- ❖ The **public trust in government will be restored** by ensuring that in all business matters, strict codes of conduct and ethics are enforced and that leadership throughout state government provides an impeccable example for others to follow.
- ❖ The **public voice will be heard** and government made more responsive by bringing decision-making closer to those citizens who are affected through local control and recognition of public sentiment on issues of great concern to the citizens of Georgia.
- ❖ We will **inspire results-oriented innovation and productivity** by empowering our state employees on the front lines; cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and regulation; and providing incentives for an effective and efficient state government in which getting results for the people carries a higher priority than the politics-of-the-day

This new approach to state government encourages careful stewardship of the people's resources to meet the human needs of Georgians. Our New Georgia will be committed to an **Educated Georgia, a Safe Georgia, a Healthy Georgia and a Growing Georgia.**

Educated Georgia

Education is the means by which we develop Georgia's most important resource, her people. As we work to improve the quality of jobs for Georgians, education will be the foundation of success, both for individual Georgians and for our state as a whole. We are committed to providing every child in this state with an opportunity to learn and to ensuring that no child is left behind. We will set standards for learning and demand accountability for student progress. We will show respect for teachers by listening to their recommendations and concerns and by giving them greater control of their classrooms. We will enhance local control of education by cutting burdensome bureaucracy and regulations, and giving local superintendents, school boards and parents more control over their community's education decisions.

We are committed to excellence in our post-secondary education system and to fostering a culture of life-long learning. We will protect the HOPE scholarship, support adult learning and help our institutions of higher learning continue to produce quality graduates and world-class research.

A Safe Georgia

A fundamental duty of any government is providing for the safety of its citizens. All Georgians should feel safe on their streets, in their communities and in their homes. We will protect our society from violent, dangerous felons. We will provide our law enforcement community with the tools and the resources to detect and prevent crimes and to respond swiftly and effectively when crimes do occur. We will maintain a criminal justice system that can dispense justice swiftly and surely. And we will increase our coordination and readiness to protect our citizens from the threat of terrorism and to respond to natural disasters.

Healthy Georgia

A healthy Georgia is a strong Georgia. We will encourage Georgians to adopt healthy lifestyles and make access to sound and affordable medical care available to every Georgian. We will pay particular attention to the quality of health and human services for our most vulnerable citizens, including

provision of child protective services, and care for developmentally disabled citizens and those with mental health challenges.

Georgia will lead the way in quality of life for senior citizens. We will open doors to more long-term care options and shift the state emphasis in long-term care from nursing homes to home and community-based settings.

We will continue to battle substance abuse in our state. Through a combined awareness, treatment and law enforcement approach, we will fight for a drug free Georgia.

A Growing Georgia

Our state is blessed with great economic resources and competitive advantages that can create opportunity and prosperity for all Georgians. We are committed to being good stewards of Georgia's economy by practicing fiscal responsibility in state government and by maintaining a business climate that sustains our existing companies, attracts new business and jobs to our state, and empowers small businesses to grow and to create jobs throughout Georgia.

We will train and educate Georgia's workforce to be well prepared for the job opportunities of the 21st century. We will extend our leadership in developing new technology resources and infrastructure and be aggressive in bringing economic vitality to rural Georgia as well as our cities.

We must balance the demands of growing Georgia's economy with ensuring a good quality of life for our citizens. We will improve our transportation systems to reduce congestion and improve mobility, encourage development of livable communities, and protect our air, water, green space and other natural resources for current and future generations.

[Click here to contact us](#)



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Critical Success Factors and Success Inhibitors

Success Factors:

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STRATEGIC PLAN

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VISION

Timely justice to parties and
clear and sound guidance to
Georgia trial bench and
practicing attorneys.

GOAL

1. Improve efficacy of internal court's structure.

A. Enhance security through assessment, improved controlled access, and emergency procedures.

(1 yr. plan)

Strategic Objective: Identify and rectify security weaknesses within Court offices. Develop and train court personnel regarding emergency procedures.

Strategic Outcome: Improved security and safety of Court personnel and visitors.

B. Improved Facilities

- 1. Consolidation of administrative support offices in a single building. Relocation and redesign of administrative offices. (1 yr plan)**

Strategic Objective: Relieve cramped working conditions for administrative Clerk's Office and Central Staff. Consolidate administrative services in one location.

Strategic Outcome: Improved access for public to Clerk's Office. Improved working conditions and filing storage for Clerk's Office. Consolidation of Central Staff offices for better coordination of work and sharing of printed research materials. Improved coordination and cooperation of all administrative services.

2. **Enlargement/Improvement of the Media Center to enable self-study training.**

Strategic Objective: Improve the Media Center to permit staff attorneys and other employees to receive job-related training as well as information regarding public safety and employee health on their own schedules. (1 yr plan and ongoing)

Strategic Outcome: Use of enhanced media center should improve efficiency of the performance of employee's job and may reduce health and workers' compensation claims through proactive awareness and efforts.

3. Creation of Court of Appeals Conference Room. (1 yr plan)

Strategic Objective: The Conference Room should be large enough to house 30-50 individuals. Court Conference Room would allow the Court to hold internal meetings with staff as well as with external parties. It would also provide an additional training area as needed.

Strategic Outcome: Enable Court to meet together more often to discuss issues and projects on a collaborative basis. More synergy, spirit of cooperation.

C. Uniform application of internal and state policies and procedures.

Strategic Objective:

1. Development of new judge's and new employee orientation manuals specific to each class of employees' (staff attorney, administrative assistant, clerk's staff) needs. (1 yr plan)

Strategic Outcome: Greater uniformity in the application of court policies.

D. Development and Implementation of Business Continuity Plan

Strategic Objective: Identify and plan for business continuity in event of security/emergency conditions which would require work to be performed from remote or alternative locations.

Strategic Outcome: Readily transition court work to remote or alternative locations with minimal disruption of services.

GOAL

2. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of case process by automation through use of technology.

A. More reliance on online legal research libraries.

Strategic Objective : Increased use of legal online services for legal research.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced access to legal resources. Continued reduction of print resources and better utilization of space.

B. Enhancement of Court Web Portal for both in-house and remote access to legal research materials, draft memorandums and opinions.

Strategic Objective: Greater flexibility for processing cases both in-house and remotely through teleworking.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced communication among judges and support staff.

GOAL

3. **Improve access to public information**

Service

A. Further education of the public on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals.

Strategic Objective: Prepare a video on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals and distribute to schools and other interested parties.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced understanding of intent and purpose of our court.

lyr

B. Provide more information to the public through web access.

Strategic Objective: Expansion of the court's web page to a portal which would access not only the court's docket, but copies of court orders and court records.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced access to public records.

c. Educate public on how to appeal a case in Georgia.

Strategic Objective: Prepare an instructional video for pro se litigants on how to correctly appeal their cases.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced understanding of public on appellate case procedures. Reduction of mistakes by pro se litigants.

GOAL

4. **Improved Opinion Writing.**

A. Development of staff through training.

Strategic Objective: Continue in-house training in cooperation with Atlanta Bar Association to provide more effective training relating to opinion writing.

Strategic Outcome: Enables staff to receive required CLE training in a more efficient (time) and cost-effective manner. Training better relates to actual duties performed.

B. Reduce caseloads for judge/staff. (4 yr plan)

Strategic Objective: Reduce caseload either through additional judgeships or one additional staff attorney per judgeship.

Strategic Outcome: Reduction in cases handled per individual would allow emphasis to be on quality of work more than quantity. Current caseload coupled with time constraints require quantity to be priority.



Court of Appeals

Memorandum

To: All Judges
From: 
William L. Martin, III
Subject: Court Strategic Plan Summary
Date: July 27, 2005

Attached you will find a short summary of the strategic plan meeting which includes one page of minutes for the meeting and the summary of the Court's adopted plan objectives. This information is being distributed to you at the direction of the Chief Judge. The strategic plan objectives are listed under one of three time categories: 1-2 year objectives, 4 year objectives, and long term.

You may wish to keep this summary since the staff will be making reports to you from time to time as the Court progresses toward achievement of the objectives. If you have any questions about these materials or any other aspect of the strategic plan, just let me know.

Court of Appeals of Georgia
Strategic Planning Meeting
July 21, 2005
Minutes

After a welcome and introduction by Chief Judge Ruffin, staff members, Bill Martin, Jan Kelley, John Ruggeri, and Holly Sparrow made a presentation of the proposed goals and objectives for the Court's strategic plan. At the end of the presentation, the Judges discussed the materials and placed the plan objectives on a time line: 1-2 year objectives, 4 year objectives and long term. See the attached list.

After the discussion of the objectives and the deadlines for accomplishment was concluded, Chief Judge Ruffin stated that he would entertain a motion to adopt the plan. Judge Smith made the motion which was seconded by Judge Adams and approved unanimously by the judges, excluding Judges Blackburn, Johnson and Miller who were unable to attend the meeting.

Then, Judge Phipps suggested that the court establish a schedule for the staff to report on achievement of the goals and objectives of the plan. It was generally agreed that the staff would provide a progress report to the Court at least quarterly at regularly scheduled administrative banc meetings. In addition, it was recommended that the Court meet once a year to affirm, revise or refine as necessary the overall plan.

Thereafter the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, William L. Martin, III

William L. Martin, III, Clerk/Court Administrator

Court of Appeals of Georgia

July 28, 2005

COURT OF APPEALS
SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

1-2 YEAR PLAN

1. Consolidate Judges into One Building
2. Identify Deficiencies in Court Security; Initiate Corrective Actions
2. Consolidate Administrative Support Services in a Single Building; Redesign Offices
3. Enlarge/Improve the Media Center
4. Create A Court Conference Room
4. Develop and Begin Testing of the Appellate Procedures Segment of a COA E-Filing System
5. Develop New Orientation Manuals for Employees
6. Educate the Public Through a Court Function and History Video
7. Institutionalize In-house Mandatory Continuing Legal Education for Staff Attorneys in Our Own Facility
8. Gather Information Needed to Develop a Business Continuity Plan

4 YEAR PLAN

1. On-Going Correction of Security Weaknesses and Continued Training of Court Personnel Regarding Safety/emergency Procedures
2. On-Going Development and Implementation of Document E-filing, E-Notification and Creation of an Electronic Documents Database
3. Enhance Web Portal for Both In-house and Remote Access

4. Develop an Employee Intranet for Access to Personnel and Internal Policies and Procedures
5. Develop and Implement a Business Continuity Plan
6. Continue Increased Use of Online Research Libraries
7. Enhance Court Web Page to Include COA Orders and Records for Legal Community and Public
8. Educate Public by Preparation of an Instructional Video on How to Correctly Appeal a Case

LONG TERM PLAN

1. Design and Renovate the Judges Offices into Self-Contained Suites
2. Receive Electronic Records and Transcripts from Trial Courts
3. Reduce Caseloads for Judges/Staff

Court of Appeals of Georgia



**Strategic
Plan**

Mission

1. To review decisions of trial courts and correct errors of law which have been properly brought before this Court.
2. To assist litigants to achieve final and just resolutions of their disputes and contribute to the orderly development of Georgia law through orders and opinions based on logic, reason, persuasion and precedent.

Vision

Timely justice to parties and clear and sound guidance to Georgia trial bench and practicing attorneys.

Core Business

Process and decide cases filed in court by parties (attorneys and pro se litigants).

Core Values

- Impartiality of Decision Makers
- Independence of Judicial Decision Making
- Accessibility to Process by Public
- Integrity of Judicial Process
- Well Reasoned and Articulated Decisions

External Factors

- Increasing diversity of the Georgia population and numbers of persons filing as pro se litigants.
- Changes in technology.
- Growth in Atlanta metropolitan area and transportation and environment issues relative to that growth.

Internal Factors

- Continued growth of workload.
- Trained staff attorneys relative to opinion writing.
- Remote access.
- Public access to information via court website.

Goal

1. Improve efficacy of internal court's structure.

*E-filing
+ all court*

A. Enhance security through assessment, improved controlled access, and emergency procedures. (4 yr. plan)

Strategic Objective: Identify and rectify security weaknesses within Court offices. Develop and train court personnel regarding emergency procedures.

Strategic Outcome: Improved security and safety of court personnel and visitors.

B. Improved Facilities

1. Consolidation of judges and staff.

a. Consolidate judges into one building (Judicial Building) (2 yr. plan)

Strategic Objective: Improve security for judges by being in one building. Facilitate work within panels by being more proximate to each other.

Strategic Outcome: Networking/Communication improved for dialogue/conference of cases. Greater security for judges and staff.

b. Renovation and redesign all judges' offices into self-contained suites (LT).

Strategic Objective: Relieve cramped working conditions for judges and staff. Consolidate judges and staff.

Strategic Outcome: More efficient use of resources when judges and staff are proximate to each other. Better collaboration on cases and coordination of caseload.

2. Consolidation of administrative support services in a single building. Relocation and redesign of administrative offices. (2 yr. plan)

Strategic Objective: Relieve cramped working conditions for Clerk's Office and Central Staff. Consolidate administrative services in one location.

Strategic Outcome: Improved access for public to Clerk's Office. Improved working conditions and filing storage for Clerk's Office. Consolidation of Central Staff for better coordination of work and sharing of printed research materials. Improved coordination and cooperation of all administrative services.

3. *Enlargement/improvement of the Media Center.*

Strategic Objective: Improve the Media Center to permit staff attorneys and other employees to receive job-related training as well as information regarding public safety and employee health on their own schedules.

Strategic Outcome: Use of enhanced media center will enable better access to online self-study training. Video training should enhance employee job performance and may reduce health and workers' compensation claims through proactive awareness and efforts.

4. *Creation of Court of Appeals Conference Room (2 yr. plan)*

•Strategic Objective: Conference room should be large enough to house 30-50 individuals. Conference room will allow the Court to hold internal meetings with staff as well as external parties. It will also provide an additional training area as needed.

•Strategic Outcome: Enable Court to meet together more often to discuss issues and projects on a collaborative basis. More synergy, spirit of cooperation.

C. *Uniform application of internal and state policies and procedures.*

1. Development of new employee orientation manuals specific to each class of employee: judge (2 yr. plan), staff attorney (2 yr. plan), administrative assistant (1 yr. plan), clerk's staff (2 yr. plan)

Strategic Objective: Facilitate training of new staff relative to court rules and procedures.

Strategic Outcome: Greater uniformity in the application of policies.

2. *Development of employee intranet for access to personnel and internal policies and procedures (4 yr. plan)*

Strategic Objective: Improve employee access to internal (Court) and external (State) policies and procedures.

Strategic Outcome: Greater uniformity in the application of policies.

D. *Development and implementation of Business Continuity Plan.*

Strategic Objective: Identify and plan for business continuity in event of security/emergency conditions which would require work to be performed from remote or alternative locations.

Strategic Outcome: Ability to readily transition court work to remote or alternative locations with minimal disruption of services.

Goal

2. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of case processing by automation through use of technology.

A. More reliance on online legal research libraries. (LT plan)

Strategic Objective: Increased use of legal online services for legal research.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced access to legal resources. Continued reduction of print resources and better utilization of space. Potential reduction in research costs.

B. Enhancement of Court Web Portal for both in-house and remote access to legal research materials, draft memorandums and opinions. (LT plan)

Strategic Objective: Greater flexibility for processing cases both in-house and remotely through tele-working (virtual office).

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced communication among judges and support staff.

C. Development of e-filing and electronic documents database.

Strategic Objective: Receive case filings and pleadings from parties electronically. Send out notices, orders, and opinions from Court to parties electronically (4 yr. plan). Receive records and transcripts from trial courts (LT plan).

Strategic Outcome: Speed transmission of documents to/from Court. Potential long-term reduction of filing space for court records. Enhanced access to public information by unlimited and equal simultaneous access to court records. Potentially e-filing will expedite case processing in the Court.

Goal

3. Improve access to public information.

A. Further education of the public on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals

Strategic Objective: Prepare a video on the history and purpose of the Court of Appeals and distribute to schools and other interested parties (1 yr. plan).

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced understanding of intent and purpose of our court.

B. Provide more information to the parties, general public, and media through web access.

Strategic Objective: Expansion of the court's web page to enable access not only to the court's docket, but copies of court orders and court records.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced access to public records.

C. Educate public on how to appeal a case in Georgia.

Strategic Objective: Prepare an instructional video for pro se litigants on how to correctly appeal their cases.

Strategic Outcome: Enhanced understanding of public on appellate case procedures. Greater access to public for information on how to appeal cases. Reduction of mistakes by pro se litigants.

Goal

4. Improved Opinion Writing.

A. Development of staff through in-house training.

Strategic Objective: Continue in-house training in cooperation with Atlanta Bar Association to provide more effective training relating to opinion writing.

Strategic Outcome: Enable staff to receive CLE training in a more efficient (time) and cost-effective manner. Training better relates to actual duties performed.

B. Reduce caseloads for judge/staff.
(LT plan)

Strategic Objective: Reduce caseload either through additional judgeships or additional staff attorneys.

Strategic Outcome: Reduction in cases handled per individual would allow greater emphasis to be on quality of work more than quantity.

jurisdictional changes

Success Factors

- Promised available of space in Health Building.
- Current tele-working activity and remote access.
- Current Media Center utilization.
- Current Court Web Page.
- Available historical information on Court of Appeals.

Success Inhibitors

- Time and funding for renovation of space.
- Continued growth of workload.
- Availability of trained staff attorneys relative to opinion writing.
- Limit of technical staff hours.
- Staff time demands.
- Cooperative efforts of trial courts to obtain electronic records. Time and money required.

State Strategic Plan

THE NEW GEORGIA: THE VISION

A new day has dawned in Georgia. In a fundamental change of leadership philosophy, our New Georgia will have a state government that is principle-centered and people-focused. People are more important than politics and we will have a state government that truly is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

- ❖ The **public trust in government will be restored** by ensuring that in all business matters, strict codes of conduct and ethics are enforced and that leadership throughout state government provides an impeccable example for others to follow.
- ❖ The **public voice will be heard** and government made more responsive by bringing decision-making closer to those citizens who are affected through local control and recognition of public sentiment on issues of great concern to the citizens of Georgia.
- ❖ We will **inspire results-oriented innovation and productivity** by empowering our state employees on the front lines; cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and regulation; and providing incentives for an effective and efficient state government in which getting results for the people carries a higher priority than the politics-of-the-day

This new approach to state government encourages careful stewardship of the people's resources to meet the human needs of Georgians. Our New Georgia will be committed to an **Educated Georgia, a Safe Georgia, a Healthy Georgia and a Growing Georgia.**

Educated Georgia

Education is the means by which we develop Georgia's most important resource, her people. As we work to improve the quality of jobs for Georgians, education will be the foundation of success, both for individual Georgians and for our state as a whole. We are committed to providing every child in this state with an opportunity to learn and to ensuring that no child is left behind. We will set standards for learning and demand accountability for student progress. We will show respect for teachers by listening to their recommendations and concerns and by giving them greater control of their classrooms. We will enhance local control of education by cutting burdensome bureaucracy and regulations, and giving local superintendents, school boards and parents more control over their community's education decisions.

We are committed to excellence in our post-secondary education system and to fostering a culture of life-long learning. We will protect the HOPE scholarship, support adult learning and help our institutions of higher learning continue to produce quality graduates and world-class research.

A Safe Georgia

A fundamental duty of any government is providing for the safety of its citizens. All Georgians should feel safe on their streets, in their communities and in their homes. We will protect our society from violent, dangerous felons. We will provide our law enforcement community with the tools and the resources to detect and prevent crimes-and to respond swiftly and effectively when crimes do occur. We will maintain a criminal justice system that can dispense justice swiftly and surely. And we will increase our coordination and readiness to protect our citizens from the threat of terrorism and to respond to natural disasters.

Healthy Georgia

A healthy Georgia is a strong Georgia. We will encourage Georgians to adopt healthy lifestyles and make access to sound and affordable medical care available to every Georgian. We will pay particular attention to the quality of health and human services for our most vulnerable citizens, including

provision of child protective services, and care for developmentally disabled citizens and those with mental health challenges.

Georgia will lead the way in quality of life for senior citizens. We will open doors to more long-term care options and shift the state emphasis in long-term care from nursing homes to home and community-based settings.

We will continue to battle substance abuse in our state. Through a combined awareness, treatment and law enforcement approach, we will fight for a drug free Georgia.

A Growing Georgia

Our state is blessed with great economic resources and competitive advantages that can create opportunity and prosperity for all Georgians. We are committed to being good stewards of Georgia's economy by practicing fiscal responsibility in state government and by maintaining a business climate that sustains our existing companies, attracts new business and jobs to our state, and empowers small businesses to grow and to create jobs throughout Georgia.

We will train and educate Georgia's workforce to be well prepared for the job opportunities of the 21st century. We will extend our leadership in developing new technology resources and infrastructure and be aggressive in bringing economic vitality to rural Georgia as well as our cities.

We must balance the demands of growing Georgia's economy with ensuring a good quality of life for our citizens. We will improve our transportation systems to reduce congestion and improve mobility, encourage development of livable communities, and protect our air, water, green space and other natural resources for current and future generations.

[Click here to contact us](#)

Court of Appeals of Georgia
Strategic Planning Meeting
7:00 p.m. Thursday, July 21, 2005
Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introduction..... Chief Judge John Ruffin

- II. Purpose of the Current Planning Meeting..... Jan Kelley
See Tab Titled Strategic Framework, Behind Tab Titled Thursday for
Materials

- III. Previous Planning Session of Court 2000..... Bill Martin
See Tab Titled 2000 Priorities

- IV. What Do We Need to Do Now?..... Bill Martin & John Ruggeri

- V. Outline of Presentation for Friday, July 22, 2005..... Jan Kelley

- VII. Announcement: Time & Location of Friday Meeting.....Chief Judge
John Ruffin

Adjournment