



# Doraville, GA

City Population 8,500

Located approximately 14 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta and a little northeast of Buckhead (the ninth wealthiest zip code in the United States per Forbes Magazine), the City of Doraville is a place of enormous potential and is poised to become the northeastern gateway to Atlanta. It is already a regional transportation center. Interstate 285 forms part of its northern border and Interstate 85 is in close proximity at the Tom Moreland interchange. The northeast spur of MARTA (Atlanta's regional commuter rail system) ends in Doraville and it is a short 45 minute ride to Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport - the world's busiest airport. DeKalb Peachtree Airport (PDK), the second busiest airport in Georgia, is located just outside the City limits and caters to general aviation traffic.

The quality of life is very good in Doraville. It is a small town of character and charm nestled among wooded landscape within the large Atlanta metropolitan area.

The community offers a variety of housing and its single family homes generally have large lots with old growth trees. Prices are extremely reasonable, with 2,000 square foot homes with four bedrooms and two baths starting in the mid-\$100,000 range. There are DeKalb County public schools as well as private schools situated in and around Doraville. It is a livable, walkable community with a small town's cohesiveness while being part of one of the country's premier metropolitan areas. Several major universities are within an hour's drive of the City.

Doraville is also a friendly, growing and progressive community with a number of active neighborhood associations. It is ethnically diverse and cherishes its multicultural character with populations from Asian/Pacific and Latin countries. It is not uncommon to find a Hispanic grocery store next door to an Asian restaurant. The City has a long history of supporting



youth sports and is known throughout North Georgia for its football, basketball, baseball, boxing and cheerleading programs. It is also home to a well-known farmer's market and has hosted several festivals such as Doraville Days which included local restaurant food tastings and an art show.

Atlanta, with its many large city attractions, cultural and sporting events, is within a short MARTA train ride. If you are the outdoors type, Lake Lanier, the Chattahoochee National Forest, the foot of the Appalachian Trail and the North Georgia Mountains are less than two hours away.

When you combine all of the above with a 165 acre site (formerly the General Motors Assembly Plant), which is being actively marketed for redevelopment, Doraville holds a great deal of promise for the future.

## History and Commerce

Doraville was incorporated by an act of the Georgia General Assembly, approved December 15, 1871. From its inception and until the 1940s, Doraville was a small agricultural community that served the interests of a larger surrounding farming area.

Immediately after the Civil War, a railroad was built through the town from Atlanta to Greenville, S.C., and points north and south. During the early 1940s, Plantation Pipeline Company opened an oil pumping system and storage facility in Doraville with a pipeline that extended from Baton Rouge, La, to Greensboro, N.C. Today's Doraville tank farms grew from this pipeline development.

At the end of World War II, Doraville was on a main railroad line, and had a brand new water system available. General Motors selected Doraville as the site for its new assembly plant which opened in 1947 and at one point employed 3,100 people. The growth of Doraville then exploded from a population of 472 in 1950 to 6,160 in 1964. By then, the land area of the City was 1,722 acres. Part of the population growth during that period was because of the annexation of Northwoods in 1949 and Oakcliff in 1958.



Table I: Climate Data for Doraville (Based on 1981-2010 normals)

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	52.7	57.0	65.0	72.8	80.3	86.9	89.5	88.4	82.4	73.0	63.9	54.4	72.2
Average Low °F	34.2	37.7	44.25	1.4	60.3	68.07	1.2	70.6	64.6	53.8	44.3	36.5	53.1
Precipitation in Inches	4.24	.7	4.83	.4	3.74	.0	5.33	.9	4.53	.4	4.1	3.9	49.7
Snowfall in Inches	1.3	.4	.6	00		00		00		00		.3	2.7

Source: NOAA

The Doraville MARTA Station was built in 1992, and is currently the end of the North Line. The next major event to occur was the closing of the GM Assembly Plant in 2008 (which was producing 360 vans per day at that time). Since then, the recessionary economy has stalled plans to turn the plant site into a mixed-use town center, but the site is still being actively marketed for this type of use. The City's commercial corridor is located along Buford Highway.

## Geography

Doraville currently covers approximately three and a half square miles. The City limits will expand on January 1, 2013 when additional parcels are annexed into the City. The City is situated on gentle, rolling hills.

## Climate

The climate is classified as subtropical with hot, humid summers, and mild winters. January temperatures average in the low 40s Fahrenheit while the high temperatures in July average 89° F. The area receives abundant rainfall which is relatively evenly distributed throughout the year. Severe weather events are rare. Snowfalls are minimal, ice storms occur occasionally, and the Atlanta region is subject to infrequent tornados. See Table I for Doraville climate data.

## Demographics

Based on the 2011 Census estimate, the City's population is approximately 8,500. It tends to comprise a younger population with a median age of 29. See Table II: Population by Age.

According to the most recent Census figures, the City's population was 44% Caucasian, 10% African American and 18% Asian. The Census lists the remaining 28% as some other race. [CB&A Note:

28% is what the Census reported. Frankly, it looks like an error.] The Hispanic population (all races) comprises approximately 49% of the total population. 53% of the population over 25 have a high school degree and 16% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Most of those who work commute to jobs outside the community (the mean time to work is just over 30 minutes). The most recent Census figures list approximately one third of the population as being below poverty level. It should be noted that with the large number of new settlers residing in the City, it is believed that the Census figures may significantly under-report the City's population.

Table II: Population by Age

Age Group	Percent
Under 5	11%
10 to 14	12%
20 to 24	19%
25 to 34	20%
35 to 44	11%
45 to 54	11%
60 to 64	9%
65 to 74	4%
Over 75	2%

Source: U.S. Census



The annexation, which will be effective on January 1st, will increase the population by an estimated 1200 residents, but not expected to change the demographics significantly.

## The Government

The City of Doraville is one of eight cities in DeKalb County. Earlier this year, the Georgia General Assembly enacted legislation to change Doraville from the strong mayor form of government to the city manager form. The City Council is initiating the transition during 2013.

The City has an elected City Council composed of a Mayor and six Council Members. The Mayor is elected at large and does not have a vote except in the case of a tie. The Council Members must reside in their geographic districts, but are elected by the City's entire population. They serve staggered four year terms with elections in November of odd numbered years. The elected body is fiscally conservative, but progressive. The members of the Council are active, engaged, interactive and routinely focused on the issues facing the City. As a body, the Council is relatively young. They engage in very active debate and are personally involved in finding the best approaches to advance the City. It is important to note that the City's elected leadership has turned over almost completely in the past seven years.

The City provides the following services: code enforcement, planning and community development, municipal court, parks and recreation, police (including dispatch), library, public works, stormwater management and animal control. Fire, emergency medical services and water/sewer are provided through the County. The City has 97 full time positions and 14 part time. Of all positions, 59 are in police and court services; 9.5 in public works; 9 in parks and recreation; 8 in 911 dispatch; 4 in the library; 3 in planning; 2 in code enforcement; and the remaining 14 (including the Mayor and 6 Council Members) are in finance and administration. The City is very lean in terms of staff, and those who are on board tend to be professional, and excel at multi-tasking. They are dedicated and serious about their work. The City's FY 2013 General Budget is \$8.9 million; the total Budget is \$10.6 million.

## The Challenges and Opportunities

Doraville's residents and elected officials want to continue to move the City forward; it is not the "sleepy little town" it once was. That was the reason for the City's change in government to the council-manager form which was approved by referendum in 2011. A majority of the residents felt that a professionally trained and experienced local government city manager would make the government more efficient and effective. The transition to a new form of government will be the new manager's first significant challenge. The office and role of the City Manager will need to be established and tested. The residents, businesses, city staff and elected officials will need to become accustomed to a new way of doing things and expectations are very high. While the public and the elected officials are generally supportive, that does not mean the process will be without its challenges. At the same time, the new manager will need to conduct a thorough review and analysis of City operations and identify ways to improve them.

The second major challenge is that resources are extremely tight. While the annexation of additional properties will bring some marginal relief in terms of additional revenues (along with additional residents and businesses to serve), the City's needs are many and the budget is still feeling the significant effects of the closure of the GM Assembly Plant. All of the City's computer software needs to be updated, personnel regulations require revision, and the undersized staff has not had a raise since 2008. The City is also re-evaluating its pension plan and tending toward a 401(a)/457(b) style arrangement.

The third challenge will be to establish a Doraville brand. Although the City is over 140 years old, it is not well known by many in the region except as the last stop on the MARTA line. Businesses and people looking to relocate to the Atlanta area need to be made aware of the City and why it would be a good location for them to establish and purchase property.

The fourth challenge is that the location of major transportation venues (Buford Highway and MARTA) tend to divide the City into distinct sections that tend

to detract from the sense of community that had been present historically.

The final challenge is fostering redevelopment, and that presents a tremendous opportunity. The closed GM Assembly Plant covers 165 acres (over a quarter square mile) and its proximity to Atlanta makes it ideal for redevelopment encompassing multi-modal transportation opportunities. This regional re-birth is the kind of project that could put a younger city manager on the map or be the crowning jewel of an experienced city manager's career. Buford Highway, with its vibrant international presence, also offers many redevelopment opportunities. The City needs businesses that create energy and continue to bring people to the community and to make Doraville a destination.

## The Ideal Candidate

The City Council is looking for an experienced professional who has a thick skin and who is a strong leader and patient manager. They expect he/she will take the City to the next level. The individual will have a high degree of energy, integrity and be of strong character. He/she will be intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, positive, transparent and progressive - - someone with a "can do" attitude and is visionary, yet practical. In the face of adversity, the manager will need to be firm, yet non-political. Her/his governing principle will be doing what is best for the City. The individual will realize that rules and process are important while not being a bureaucrat. The manager will be analytical and always looking for a better, more efficient and more effective way to get the job done, resulting in improvements to the City's processes and procedures. She/he will not find, "We have always done it that way" to be an acceptable answer. Rather, the individual will be able to see things as they should be, not just as they are. The next manager will have excellent communications skills and use them in dealing with the community, elected officials and staff. In establishing the new Office of the City Manager, it will be important to present a positive image and one that engenders public trust and confidence. Listening will be very important generally, but particularly in terms

of navigating the transition. Customer service will be a core principle. The customer is not always right, but they do deserve a good explanation when the City's decision is different from what is wanted. The manager will be a problem solver, approachable, creative and active in the community. The goal will be to foresee issues before they become problems and to take steps to avoid them. The staff is small, so the next manager will be hardworking and ready to get his/her hands dirty. This situation is not one where you can sit behind a desk and direct traffic by memoranda. You should expect to roll up your sleeves and pitch in. He/she will not be a micromanager, but rather will delegate, set standards and hold employees accountable while providing an environment that allows the staff to accomplish their tasks. Staff mentoring will also be expected and appreciated. The Council would like to raise the bar, so setting high expectations will be important. At the same time, it is expected that the manager will encourage teamwork and maintain morale at a high level. Information will be conveyed to the Mayor, Council and staff in keeping with a policy of free flowing communications. Finally, the individual will be a bit of a salesman, both in promoting the new office and in promoting the City.

In terms of specific skills, the ideal candidate will have a demonstrated track record of achievement in management, finance, economic development and redevelopment. Further, the City does not have a human resources director, so the manager should be extremely knowledgeable in this area. He/she will know how to find/obtain money through mechanisms such as grants and earmarks. The individual will know how to get along and encourage regional cooperation. Given the diversity of the community, experience working with other races and ethnicities is also important. Experience in managing a jurisdiction that has provided personalized citizen services will be a plus. The selected candidate will be expected to make a commitment to Doraville. This position should not be viewed as a stepping stone but as a gem in its own right. The City hopes the new manager have a lengthy tenure. While, as noted, the City is supportive of the change in the form of government, these transitions often involve overcoming some issues. Therefore, the City prefers someone who has been through a similar transition.

The position requires a Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field and seven to ten years of increasingly responsible experience as a senior level government manager or private sector executive. A Master's degree is preferred.

## Compensation

The starting salary will be between \$100,000 and \$120,000. Benefits are very good.

## Residency

Residency is not required. However, the community has a variety of housing opportunities available.

## Confidentiality

Applications will be treated as confidential if requested. It is anticipated that once the finalists are selected, the names will be available and we expect an open process involving some degree of public participation. It should be noted that in comparison with Atlanta, Doraville is a relatively small community and we do not anticipate significant press coverage of this recruitment.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [RecruitEight@cb-asso.com](mailto:RecruitEight@cb-asso.com) by November 2, 2012. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Tom Andrews at (770) 814-0455 of Colin Baenziger & Associates.

## The Process

Applicants will be screened between November 3rd and December 17th. It is anticipated that interviews will be held the second or third weekend in January with a selection made on or about February 1st.

## Other Important Information

Doraville is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages minorities to apply. It is a community committed to serving its residents and businesses. It values public service and recognizes the importance of diversity.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

