



**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 24, 2023**

## **LaGrange Named 2023 Visionary City by GMA and Georgia Trend**

***LaGrange, Ga. January 24, 2023*** – The City of LaGrange was honored with the Visionary City Award by Georgia Trend and Georgia Municipal Association during the GMA’s Cities United Summit over the weekend.



Pictured from left to right: LaGrange Youth Council Chairperson Jack Baker, Secretary Charlsie Reed, Historian Charlie Key, Vice-Chairperson Simone Acosta, City Manager Meg Kelsey, City Councilman Leon Childs, City Councilman Jim Arrington, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Mitchell & Councilman Nathan Gaskin

LaGrange joined eight other city recipients. Three cities each earned the award in three categories: Small (population under 4,999), medium

(5,000 to 24,999), and large (25,000 and over). LaGrange won in the large city category.

Each city was recognized for actions and initiatives taken that increased civic engagement, created community partnerships, and made people proud to call their city home.

The City of LaGrange was recognized for its vision of creating world-class parks for its residents. The first step was the creation of the Master Parks Plan in 2019 which included input from the community. In July 2021, the City acquired maintenance and capital funding for the park system from Troup County and is now focused on the redevelopment, creation, branding, and maintenance of the City's parks.

"We are committed to providing high-quality park destinations for our citizens and guests," said City Manager Meg Kelsey. "Our goal is to create unique spaces that serve a diverse group of all ages and abilities. To be recognized for our vision of the city parks is truly an honor."

The City focused on the following initial park projects with more park projects to follow:

- **Frank Cox Park**: A 2-acre linear park along the newly remodeled LaGrange Housing Authority development. This project was a collaborative effort between the City of LaGrange, the LaGrange Housing Authority, and Callaway Foundation.
- **Moss and Wood Park**: This park features amenities citizens requested for their community including a beautiful outdoor covered stage and pavilion. This project was funded by ARPA funding.

- **Granger Playground:** Voters approved SPLOST funds to revamp Granger Playground. The project features a trike track connecting to The Thread.
- **Southbend Park's Skatepark:** The City constructed a state-of-the-art skate park within Callaway Foundations' Southbend Park funded in part by a Tony Hawk Foundation grant.
- **The Thread Trail:** In 2017, the construction of a 29-mile multi-use trail began construction. To date, 11 miles of trail have been completed with investments from the city, Troup County, the State of Georgia, Callaway Foundation, Friends of The Thread, and various land owners.

Future projects include a bicycle playground across from a local elementary school, a 45-acre outdoor recreation facility featuring a 15-acre lake and special needs facilities called Ridley Lake, and renovation of Eastside Park in the collaboration with the LaGrange Housing Authority and Twin Cedars.

“As we recognize there is still much work to accomplish, we appreciate being honored for the hard work we have done and the vision we have for our community’s quality of life,” added Kelsey.

The City of LaGrange will be featured in the next edition of Georgia Trend magazine.

**About the Georgia Municipal Association:** Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit, and consulting services to all of Georgia’s 537 cities. GMA anticipates and influences the forces shaping Georgia’s cities and provides leadership, tools, and services that assist municipal governments in becoming more innovative, effective, and responsive. Created in 1933, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA)

is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. For more information, visit [www.gacities.com](http://www.gacities.com).

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