



Department of  
**CITY PLANNING**

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KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jason Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee

**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*

**SUBJECT:** **23-O-1659/CDP-23-025 for 1767 North Decatur Road NE, 1775 North Decatur Road NE, 1779 North Decatur Road NE, 1785 North Decatur Road NE, and 465 Emory Drive NE**

**DATE:** **June 4, 2025**

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## PROPOSAL:

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to designate properties located at **1767 North Decatur Road NE, 1775 North Decatur Road NE, 1779 North Decatur Road NE, 1785 North Decatur Road NE, and 465 Emory Drive NE** to the Office Institution (O-I) land use designation and **465 Emory Drive NE** to the Single Family Residential (SFR) land use designation as a result of the petition to annex the parcels into the corporate limits of the City of Atlanta and to facilitate their zoning to the University Park subarea of the Druid Hills Landmark District zoning district per Z-25-018.

## FINDINGS OF FACT:

- **Property location:** The properties proposed for annexation are located east of the City of Atlanta's corporate limits and directly south of the Emory University campus. Four of the parcels front the south side of North Decatur Road NE, while one parcel fronts on the east side of Emory Drive. The northern side of North Decatur Road, directly across from the subject property, includes portions of the Emory University campus, which lies within the City of Atlanta. The property is situated in Land Lot 52 of the 18<sup>th</sup> District of DeKalb County, Georgia. It borders the Emory neighborhood within the City of Atlanta, and Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) F and City Council District 6.
- **Property size and physical features:** The subject site consists of five parcels totaling approximately 1.858 acres (83,120 square feet), according to the DeKalb County Tax Assessor's Office. Property located at 1767 North Decatur Road NE is approximately 0.63 acres (27,443 square feet) and property located at 1775 North Decatur Road NE is approximately 0.3179 acres (13,847 square feet). These two parcels are improved with a two-story hotel/motel use and The University Inn at Emory, which is constructed over both parcels. Property located at 1779 North Decatur Road NE is approximately 0.25 acres (13,370 square feet). This parcel is developed with a two-story single-family residential structure. Property located at 1785 North Decatur Road NE is approximately 0.368 acres (16,031 square feet). This parcel is improved with a two-story multiunit, extended-stay motel, as

identified by the tax assessor. Property located at 465 Emory Drive NE is approximately 0.29 acres (12,429 square feet). This parcel has a single-family residential structure. Site access is provided from both North Decatur Road and Emory Drive. The parcels have a mix of trees, paving, walls, and fencing. The overall topography of the site is relatively level.

- **Current/past use of property:** According to the DeKalb County Tax Assessor's records, the subject parcels are currently developed with a mix of uses, including a hotel/motel, a multiunit extended-stay motel, and single-family residential structures. Specifically, the University Inn at Emory operates as a hotel/motel across two parcels, while one parcel contains an extended-stay lodging facility and two others include single-family homes. Staff is not aware of any prior uses of these properties.
- **Surrounding zoning/land uses:** DeKalb County's 2050 Comprehensive Plan identifies Character Areas that provide high-level guidance on development form and land use, each with specific principles to inform planning and zoning decisions within its boundaries. The parcels within the annexation area are currently designed as Traditional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area.

In the City of Atlanta, both Character Areas and Future Land Use Designations (FLUM) guide land use policy. Upon annexation, the City adopts compatible future land use designations that align with the recommended zoning classifications. The Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) includes a Land Use and Zoning Compatibility Table to ensure that adopted zoning districts are consistent with designated land uses. In this case, the recommended zoning and future land use designations for the annexed parcels are consistent with those in the City's CDP and are compatible with DeKalb County zoning and future land use designations.

The parcels immediately north of the annexation area lie within the City of Atlanta and are a part of the Emory University campus, which was annexed into the city in 2017. These parcels are designated as Office-Institutional (O-I) in the City of Atlanta's 2021 Comprehensive Development Plan and are zoned O-I-C/ECPD (Office Institutional Conditional/Emory Campus Parking District). The parcels surrounding the annexation area on the east, south, and west are in unincorporated DeKalb County and are also located within the Traditional Neighborhood Character Area in the DeKalb County 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Parcels to the east are zoned O-I/DHHD (Office Institutional/Druid Hills Historic District) and R-75/DHHD (Residential Medium Lot 75/Druid Hills Historic District). To the south, parcels are zoned R-75/DHHD (Residential Medium Lot 75/Druid Hills Historic District), and to the west, parcels are zoned O-I/DHHD (Office Institutional/Druid Hills Historic District). This zoning and land use context reflects a transitional area with institutional and residential uses as well as a historic preservation designation, making the annexation consistent with both City and County planning frameworks.

- **Transportation system:** The subject properties have frontage on North Decatur Road and Emory Drive. While the City of Atlanta does not assign a street classification to either roadway on its Right-of-Way or Street Classification Map, the DeKalb County 2050 Comprehensive Transportation Plan classifies North Decatur Road as a minor arterial and Emory Drive as a local street. Sidewalks are present along North Decatur Road in front of the parcels to be annexed, providing continuous pedestrian access. On Emory Drive, sidewalks exist only on the west side adjacent to the parcels to be annexed and are partially present in front of 465 Emory Drive on the east side, continuing intermittently further down the street. Public transportation in the area is served by MARTA bus route #36. A bus stop is located at North Decatur Road NE at Healthgate Drive, directly within the annexation area. MARTA bus route #36 provides direct connections to the Decatur Transit Station,

approximately 2.2 miles from the site, enhancing regional accessibility to and from the annexation area.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses:** The proposed Office–Institutional (O-I) and Single-Family Residential (SFR) land use designations are consistent and compatible with the existing surrounding land uses. Within the City of Atlanta, adjacent properties, including the Emory University campus, are designated as Office–Institutional, reflecting similar institutional and academic uses. Parcels in unincorporated DeKalb County fall within the Traditional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area, which supports a mix of residential and institutional uses. The proposed designations align with the established development patterns in both jurisdictions and support a harmonious transition between institutional and residential areas.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood:** The proposed Office–Institutional (O-I) and Single-Family Residential (SFR) land use designations are not anticipated to have an adverse effect on adjacent properties or the surrounding neighborhood character. The proposed designations are compatible with nearby institutional and residential uses and are substantially similar to the existing land use patterns in DeKalb County. The continuation of academic, institutional, and residential functions will support a seamless transition within the neighborhood, preserving its established character and supporting ongoing community stability.
- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed Office–Institutional (O-I) and Single-Family Residential (SFR) land use designations are appropriate and well-suited for the subject parcels. These designations accurately reflect the existing development on the site, which includes institutional, extended-stay, and residential uses. The proposed land uses align with the surrounding context and support the continued viability of the property in a manner consistent with the area’s character and planning objectives.
- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** In the City of Atlanta, the area adjacent to the parcels to be annexed have Institutional Area (OTHER) Character area in the *Comprehensive Development Plan* (CDP). The proposed Office–Institutional (O-I) and Single-Family Residential (SFR) land use designations are consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the City of Atlanta’s 2021 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). They support the city’s broader land use objectives under the Citywide Development (CW) policies. The proposed land uses support the following citywide and Institutional/Other CDP goals:
  - CW-3: Promotes a balanced mix of land uses by allowing continued institutional use near existing residential development.
  - CW-4: Supports an appropriate transition between higher-intensity institutional uses and surrounding residential neighborhoods.
  - CW-8: Encourages connectivity and integration with the surrounding neighborhood by preserving compatible block patterns and development scale.
  - CW-20: Safeguard Atlanta’s Cultural, social, economic, and architectural history, as embodied and reflected in the city’s most special and unique historic buildings, sites, and districts.

### **Institutional Area (OTHER) Policies:**

- OTHER-1: Minimizes the expansion of institutional uses into surrounding residential neighborhoods, maintaining neighborhood character.

- OTHER-2: The highest densities should be at the center or along major roads and highways and transition to lower densities at the edges.

Overall, the proposed land use designations reinforce the City’s policy direction by promoting compatibility, minimizing land use conflicts, and supporting cohesive neighborhood development.

- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The *Atlanta City Design* articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the *Atlanta City Design* map, the sites **1767 North Decatur Road N.E., 1775 North Decatur Road N.E., 1779 North Decatur Road N.E., 1785 North Decatur Road N.E., and 465 Emory Drive N.E.** are located adjacent to the Emory University campus, which lies within the City of Atlanta limits and is designated as both a Cluster area and a Conservation Suburban Neighborhood.

These overlapping designations reflect the unique development pattern surrounding institutional anchors like Emory University and the adjacent lower-density residential fabric. These designations guide future development character, and land use patterns:

**Cluster Areas** are described as:

“These are historically suburban commercial districts of New Atlanta that are becoming increasingly-urban. They are outlying concentrations of housing, work spaces, hospitals, and shopping that were developed at the confluence of major thoroughfares, highways, and transit. The largest and most established are Buckhead and Emory, but with better design policies, and investments, and with improving market conditions, other clusters like Greenbriar and outlying sites along Metropolitan and Hollowell, could emerge as strategic, lower-cost areas for innovation and business expansion.”

**Conservation Suburban Neighborhoods** are described as:

“These are peaceful post-war subdivisions designed by the speed and easy distance of automobiles. Many, like Adamsville, Brandon, and Perkerson, lack sidewalks, are not as well connected as older neighborhoods and are often distant from retail and employment areas. Their more generous yards and intervening floodplains, however, provide for less runoff, more habitat and host huge swaths of Atlanta’s tree canopy. In this way, in addition to offering homes for families who prefer less-urban lifestyles, these neighborhoods provide enormous benefits to the city at large”

**NPU Policies:** The proposed Office–Institutional (O-I) and Single-Family Residential (SFR) land use designations are consistent with the policies established by Neighborhood Planning Unit-F (NPU-F). These policies are intended to ensure responsible growth, protect neighborhood character, and support multimodal transportation. The proposal aligns with the following NPU-F policy objectives:

- F-7: Minimizes the impact of institutional facilities by ensuring that expansion does not encroach upon or disrupt adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- F-8: Supports appropriate land use transitions, concentrating higher-density institutional uses along major corridors such as North Decatur Road while buffering and protecting the surrounding lower-density residential areas from adverse impacts such as noise and lighting.

- F-9: Encourages adequate on-site parking and the potential for shared parking strategies, thereby reducing the burden on neighborhood streets and promoting well-designed public parking facilities.
- F-10: Reinforces multimodal transportation options by supporting access to public transit (MARTA), walkable sidewalks, and proximity to bicycle and shuttle routes serving the Emory area.
- F-11: Supports institutional development within defined corridors on Emory's campus while adhering to the neighborhood protections and design principles outlined in policies F-7 through F-10.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL OF THE OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL (O-I) AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SFR) LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU RECOMMENDATION:** NPU-F voted to APPROVE this land use amendment at its April 16, 2025, meeting.

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



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**CITY PLANNING**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1070/CDP-24-034 for 728 Monroe Drive NE  
**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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**PROPOSAL:**

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **728 Monroe Drive NE** from the Low Density Commercial (LDC) land use designation to the Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-24-089 from the C-1 (Community Business) zoning district to the MRC-2 (Mixed Residential Commercial) zoning district to allow for the construction of 108 multifamily units, a parking deck, and 15,875 square feet of nonresidential space.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- **Property location:** The subject property fronts on the west side of Monroe Drive NE and east of Charles Allen Drive NE. It is in Land Lot 48 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the Midtown Neighborhood of NPU E, Council District 2.
- **Property size and physical features:** The property is a rectangular shaped parcel approximately 0.586 acres (24,607 square feet) in area. There are no trees on the parcel and approximately 42 off-street parking spots. The elevation slightly increases from west to east.
- **Current/past use of property:** The property is developed with a nonresidential building dating to 1959. It is currently occupied and developed for nonresidential and retail uses.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning/:** The parcels located to the north have a Low Density Commercial (LDC) future land use designation and zoned C-1 (Community Business). These parcels are developed with nonresidential buildings and multifamily buildings. Parcels to the east and south have a Mixed Use (MU) future land use designation and zoned as C-2 (Commercial Service District). Parcels to the west have a Low Density Residential (LDR) future land use designation and zoned R-5 (Two Family Residential). These parcels are developed with institutional and residential buildings and within the Beltline Overlay.

- **Transportation system:** The subject property is located on Monroe Drive NE, which is classified as a collector street. There are sidewalks on both sides of Monroe Drive. MARTA provides bus service via route #2 and route #809. Route #809 operates along Monroe Drive NE and connects to the Lindbergh Transit station (Red and Gold Line) to the north and the King Memorial Transit Station (Blue and Green Line) to the south. There is one MARTA transit bus stop located equidistant from the site and situated along Monroe Drive NE and Ponce de Leon Avenue NW, approximately 90.33 feet from the property. Route #2 operates along Ponce de Leon Avenue NW and connects to the North Avenue Transit Station (Red and Gold Line) to the west. The MARTA transit bus stop is located south of the site and situated at Ponce de Leon Avenue NE and Monroe Drive NE, approximately 413 feet from the property.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses:** The proposed Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) land use designation is incompatible with that of the adjacent parcels. The surrounding land uses are Low Density Commercial, Mixed Use, and Low Density Residential. The Ponce de Leon Corridor Study recommends mid-rise multifamily land use with building heights of 5-7 stories.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood:** The applicant proposes the construction of building with 108 multifamily units, a parking deck, and 15,875 square feet of nonresidential space. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment would have a negative impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The site plan proposes the development of 15 floors which is not consistent with the goals of the Midtown Garden District Masterplan. The plan recommends that *“future development along Ponce should allow increased density overall (4-6 stories), utilizing transitional height planes currently required by adjacent residential zoning districts”*. The proposed land use amendment is inconsistent with the NPU E Midtown Garden District policy to, *“preserve the Historic Midtown Garden District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places for historical and architectural significance, from the encroachment of incompatible development, rezoning, or amending future land use within its established boundaries using the Midtown Garden District Master Plan”*.
- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) future land use designation is incompatible with the surrounding land use designation. The area is surrounded by Low Density Commercial, Mixed Use, and Low Density Residential. It does align with the Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan which recommends managing the levels of densities along the corridors, so the densest development happens near major intersections, centers, or transit station.
- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** The Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Character Area for this location is Intown Corridor. The applicable policies are:
  - IC/RC 1: Elevate the distinct character of each Corridor while encouraging density, growth, revitalization, and vibrancy
  - IIC/RC 4: Manage the levels of densities along the Corridors so the densest development happens near major intersections, centers, or transit station
  - IC/RC 5: Prioritize maintaining and rehabilitating existing housing and commercial buildings

- IC/RC 6: Encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots or deteriorated buildings.
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans:** The Midtown Garden District Masterplan was created to guide future decisions on development and investments. The plan is also intended to be flexible enough to embrace inevitable change in and around the neighborhood, and serve as a living breathing document. The proposed amendment doesn't align with the goals and recommendations outlined in the plan. Specifically, in the Midtown Garden District Masterplan, the proposed amendment does not align with the following:
  - The City's 2016 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) update does reflect Ponce as a mixed-use corridor. However, current City zoning maps still reflect most of the corridor as C-2. Aside from a few key "historic storefront" areas (i.e. Myrtle/Ponce), low-density commercial is not the "highest and best use" of land along Ponce. The Ponce de Leon corridor offers the opportunity for additional affordable housing and neighborhood commercial through mixed-use development. As a key link between the MID and the BeltLine corridor, it is critical that future redevelopment projects along Ponce de Leon embrace a mix of uses with residential and ground floor retail. Future development along Ponce should allow increased density overall (4-6 stories), utilizing transitional height planes currently required by adjacent residential zoning districts.

The parcel is also included in The Ponce de Leon Corridor Study. The plan was created to develop a community-based plan that utilizes transportation improvements, land use policies, and sound urban design to improve the quality of life along the corridors and within nearby neighborhoods. According to the study, the parcel is located in the Ponce de Leon Avenue West Sector and recommends the mid-rise multifamily land use designation which recommends buildings of 5-7 stories.

- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta's vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, **728 Monroe Drive NE** is in a Corridor Area. Corridors are described as follows:

"These are the connecting tissues of the city: the major streets that flow out of the core in every direction. They stitch Old and New Atlanta together and most of them are commercially developed. Streets like Hollowell, Peachtree and Jonesboro wind along the contours of the city while streets like Metropolitan and Northside slice straight lines across hills and valleys. In either case, we find commercial sites, civic buildings and anchor institutions along the way. With better design, these corridors can become main streets for every community, accommodating a reasonable amount of growth that will spur commercial vitality and a vibrant public life out beyond the core of the city."

**Consistency with NPU policies:** The proposed Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) land use designation is incompatible with NPU E policy to:

- E-3: Preserve the single-family and low-density residential character of the Ansley Park, Sherwood Forest, Brookwood Hills, Ardmore, Loring Heights, Midtown (Garden District), Brookwood, and Home Park neighborhoods.
- E-28 Preserve the Historic Midtown Garden District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places for historical and architectural significance, from the encroachment of incompatible development, rezoning, or amending future land use within its established boundaries using the Midtown Garden District Master Plan (adopted into the CDP in 2017) as a guiding resource for neighborhood development.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DENIAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE LOW DENSITY COMMERCIAL LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE MIXED USE MEDIUM DENSITY LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-E will vote on this land use amendment at its June 3, 2025, meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



**ANDRE DICKENS**  
MAYOR


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**JAHNEE PRINCE**  
COMMISSIONER

**DOUG YOUNG**  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF DESIGN

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee

**FROM:** Jahnee Prince, Commissioner, Department of City Planning 

**DATE:** June 4, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **25-O-1224/CDP-25-001 for Plan A: Atlanta’s Comprehensive Development Plan**

**CC:** Nate Hoelzel, Project Manager, Office of Design, Department of City Planning  
Doug Young, Director, Office of Design, Department of City Planning  
Monique Forte, Assistant Director, Office of Design, Department of City Planning  
Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development, Department of City Planning

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**PROPOSAL**

An Ordinance to adopt the 2025 Comprehensive Development Plan (“Plan A”) as the official comprehensive development plan for the City of Atlanta, Georgia, in compliance with the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and for other purposes.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

**The Comprehensive Development Plan and the Purpose of this Legislation**

Plan A is Atlanta’s comprehensive development plan, or CDP, and it guides decisions about Atlanta’s growth and development. The CDP shows relationships among land use, transportation, housing, economic and community development, nature, urban design, historic preservation, and other aspects to city building.

The purpose of this legislation is to adopt the City of Atlanta’s 2025 Comprehensive Development Plan (entitled “Plan A”) as mandated by Atlanta’s City Charter Sections 3-602, 3-603, and 3-604 and as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. State “Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning” (Georgia Administrative Code 110-12-1) as amended in October 2018 establish standards and procedures for comprehensive planning by all local governments in Georgia. Those standards and procedures emphasize preparing plans and help local governments address immediate needs and opportunities while

moving toward realization of long-term goals for the future. To maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) certification and thereby remain eligible for select state funding and permitting programs, each local government must prepare, adopt, maintain, and implement a comprehensive development plan as specified in these standards at least every 5 years.

The City of Atlanta last adopted a comprehensive development plan in 2021, and it must adopt an update to the plan by October 31, 2025, to maintain its QLG status. Atlanta's comprehensive development plan must include a set of required planning elements, including community vision and goals, needs and opportunities, land use, transportation, economic development, broadband internet, and housing and community development. Cities are encouraged to go beyond these required planning elements and supplement comprehensive development plans with other elements to make the overall plan a good local fit. Implementing elements, including Community Work Program with Report of Accomplishments and impact-fee funded Capital Improvements Element (CIE), are also required. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) determined that Atlanta's revisions to this year's update conform to the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

### **Atlanta's Growth and Development and Context for this Update**

The Atlanta Regional Commission estimates Atlanta's population to be 532,000. The ARC expects Atlanta's 2050 population to be nearly 700,000 people—or, still about 9% of the region's population. That is over 170,000 more residents needing at least 100,000 new housing units. Despite strong numbers for residential growth, this update is occurring during a period of transition in the way we work—fewer people are commuting to an office five days a week, leading to a noticeable decline in the demand for office space. It is not clear at this time whether this trend is temporary, or if the way we work has changed long term.

Hotspots for development are emerging around Atlanta. New construction activity is high in the urban core (Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead) and in emerging areas like the Upper Westside. Other hotspots include eastside neighborhoods like Edgewood, Grant Park, Peoplestown, and Old Fourth Ward, as well as pockets of southwest Atlanta like Pittsburgh and Oakland City. Most of these hotspots are along the Atlanta Beltline corridor or near MARTA rail stations, reflecting how trails and transit can serve as major drivers for development.

Additionally, several significant projects are in the pipeline for future construction. Some projects, such as Centennial Yards and the Stitch, are years in the making and just beginning to show how transformative they can be. Others are smaller projects, which collectively breathe life into neighborhood blocks, create employment opportunities, and provide places for neighbors to gather.

With Atlanta's population reaching a new high, this is an influx of new businesses and jobs, rising incomes, and vital funding for transportation and neighborhood improvements. During the course of the Plan A planning process, grappling with this growth was a central focus along with asking: Are we advancing in a way that truly embodies equity as a core value? It is crucial that Atlanta harnesses this moment to plan for a city that works for everyone.

### **The Planning Process and Community Involvement**

Atlanta's comprehensive development plans have been the foundation guiding how the city grows and evolves since 1975. This year's update of Plan A is particularly special—it not only marks five decades of thoughtful planning, but it is also happening alongside ATL Zoning 2.0 which is the ambitious rewrite of the City's 1982 zoning ordinance.

The Public Leadership Group (PLG) guided this year's planning process. The State requires the involvement of this group for all comprehensive plan updates and requires participation of elected officials and leadership from City departments and local economic development agencies. Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) are also represented by the chair of the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB). The PLG provides high-level direction and decision-making at particular points during the process. Atlanta City Council Chair of Community Development and

Human Services (CDHS) Committee traditionally chairs the PLG. The PLG met at least quarterly during the entire planning process.

The Department of City Planning consulted with the APAB to prepare an effective Community Involvement Plan prior to engaging the broader public. The Department routinely checked in with APAB during the planning process to keep the Community Involvement Plan relevant.

The planning process for this year's Plan A update kicked off at Greenbriar Mall in February 2024. Over 100 Plan A Ambassadors from Department of City Planning and other City departments, partner agencies, and community volunteers engaged more than 7,300 Atlantans at over 150 events. The Department of City Planning is entrusted with this remarkable community involvement to prepare a comprehensive plan reflecting Atlanta's diverse communities and voices.

Engagement included:

- 38 in-person Plan A meetings across three rounds of citywide meetings (and 12 ATL Zoning 2.0 meetings since the fall of 2021)
- Over 50 neighborhood pop-ups
- Over 50 small group conversations
- Nearly 15,000 public comments, ensuring public feedback shapes the final plan
- Quarterly meetings with the Public Leadership Group and briefings with APAB and City Council Members at key milestones

The first round of engagement included 12 Open Houses in March and April of 2024 to introduce the planning process and a proposal for a new land use approach with Development. Participants were given an opportunity to indicate which of these Development Patterns they would like to see preserved or introduced throughout the city and suggest additional ideas.

The second round of engagement included 16 Community Workshops in May and June of 2024 to review the proposed Development Patterns map and weigh in on areas of the city that required focused input.

The third round of engagement included 9 Community Meetings between October of 2024 and March of 2025. These meetings focused on "deep dives" of the plan's different elements and offered participants a chance to listen to and engage with community experts on different topics, and answer questions from the Plan A team about their thoughts on the vision and goals, needs and opportunities, and issues addressed in all the Plan A chapters.

Outreach included:

- 105 canvassing locations
- Over 45,000 social media views
- Over 67,000 emails opened from a robust, growing distribution list
- 16 million views on MARTA ads at stations and two bus wraps

Education included:

- Training sessions for Plan A Ambassadors and NPU and neighborhood leaders
- Updated factsheets and summary of key topics
- 3 Public Hearings to CDHS Committee
- Numerous other presentations to CDHS Committee, NPUs, and Neighborhood Organizations

Public review and comment included over 200 days for three previous drafts (May to July 2024, November 2024 to March 2025, and April 2025). All NPUs reviewed the current draft during the month of May, and the Department of City Planning will make final, minor revisions and document them after the June 4 public hearing and ahead of the June 24 CDHS Committee meeting.

### **Plan A Document**

Plan A contains 10 Planning Elements—Land Use Planning, Transportation, Housing and Community Development, Local Economic Development, Broadband Internet, Climate Resilience and Natural Systems, Urban Design, Historic Preservation, Public Safety Facilities, and Neighborhood Planning. Each Element is a chapter in Plan A organized in a similar way to better guide decisions.

- Each Element has a Vision and Goals reflecting the community’s future direction and letting us know what we are working to accomplish.
- Themes define the priority Needs and Opportunities identified during the planning process to be addressed.
- Those are supported by Policies and Actions, recommendations to guide achieving the Vision and Goals, and the key activities necessary to implement them.

Plan A has six appendices, including the NPU policies and maps in Appendix 1, the required Implementing Elements in Appendix 2, and a comprehensive summary and archive of Community Involvement in Appendix 3. During the entire planning process, the Department of City Planning updated these and the other appendices, including summary of related plans and initiatives, glossary of terms, and revision highlights (Appendices 4, 5, and 6, respectively).

### **Planning Elements Updates**

**A New Land Use Approach.** The City’s previous land use approach was confusing and overly complicated, with too many sources of policy direction and no clear hierarchy for decision-making. Plan A combines the best aspects of Future Land Use and Character Area planning into a single cohesive layer, called “Development Patterns,” to provide a consistent, streamlined approach to guiding physical growth and development.

**Alignment with the New Zoning Ordinance.** ATL Zoning 2.0 is a multi-year effort to rewrite the 40-year-old Zoning Ordinance that no longer meets Atlanta’s present and future needs. The new Zoning Ordinance has been intentionally written to support Plan A and the new land use approach by creating the tools for the City and its neighborhoods to customize zoning to meet specific local needs.

**Preparing for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update.** Atlanta’s Transportation Plan was the first citywide plan adopted under the Atlanta City Design framework in 2018. Later in 2025, Atlanta’s Department of Transportation will start updating this plan to make our city’s transportation network safer, more equitable, and more sustainable. The update will be based on a set of clear and ambitious goals resulting from the Plan A process, and upcoming community participation will play a vital role in shaping the next version of Atlanta’s Transportation Plan and its implementation.

**Housing for All.** Coordinated public action among various departments and agencies, combined with strong participation from the private and philanthropic sectors, will be essential for developing housing at the price points that Atlanta requires. In this year’s Plan A update, the City and its public agency partners emphasized their strategic position to leverage public resources, including land and various local funds, to ensure widespread housing affordability and opportunities for all Atlantans across every neighborhood.

**Designing Atlanta’s Public Realm.** Atlanta City Design inspires excellent urban design and recognizes the mutual relationship between the public realm and people’s lives. Plan A has many recommendations to enhance the public realm with art, monuments, public spaces, interpretative wayfinding, and other public and private investments that contribute to our city and neighborhood’s natural, cultural, social, and civic identity. Plan A is looking ahead to the new Zoning Ordinance by promoting quality and flexibility in building architecture and urban design to activate and enhance the public realm and evolve with the needs and opportunities of surrounding areas. Plan A furthers the vision for our parks and trails to connect more people to nature throughout the city by designing and building “nature spaces” as new public spaces at the intersection of streets with streams, rivers, and forests.

**Preserving Atlanta’s Places and Spaces.** Historic places and spaces are our future—they make Atlanta a genuinely great and unique city. Since the adoption of Atlanta’s Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1989, not much has changed related to how the City designates or reviews projects on historic properties. As a result, Atlanta continues to lose historic properties that are central to its story and identity. Plan A brings fresh ideas from Future Places Project and the ATL Zoning 2.0 initiative to highlight the need to update the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance to reflect modern best practices, address the City’s operational capacity, and produce a historic preservation program that meets an urgent need in Atlanta.

**Creating a More Resilient Atlanta.** The physical and mental health of Atlanta residents is inextricably linked to the health of the city’s natural systems. These systems are our first defense against environmental pollution and climate vulnerabilities to extreme heat, drought, and flooding. This update to Plan A supports several upcoming initiatives that will not only make substantial investments in our environment but also celebrate it. Implementing the upcoming Climate Resilient ATL will build our capacity to prepare, adapt, and respond to climate change. Later this year Atlanta will have a new Tree Protection Ordinance focusing on preserving the long-term health of the city’s tree canopy while supporting future growth and development. Plan A also supports Activate ATL (and the new Trails ATL) and its community vision of increasing access to exceptional recreational programming and fostering connections to nature through parks and trails.

**Setting the Groundwork for Coordinated Small Area and Neighborhood Planning.** Plan A outlines the initial steps for creating a small area and neighborhood planning program. This program is intended to empower partners and community members to develop actionable recommendations for neighborhoods facing significant design, equity, and livability challenges. Additionally, it will establish clear and transparent expectations for planning processes, encouraging greater community participation in shaping the future of their neighborhoods.

### **Implementing Elements Updates**

Plan A emphasizes implementation. Over the past few years, many key projects prioritized by the plan have either been completed or are actively underway, showcasing our collective commitment to turning the plan’s vision into reality.

This update of Plan A continues to build on this momentum. Every chapter in Plan A outlines achievable actions, many of which create synergies across multiple chapters and are carried over in the Community Work Program and Capital Improvements Element.

Additionally, several programs and projects included in the new Community Work Program—the required prioritized list of actions to implement significant recommendations over the next five years—are supported by ongoing local infrastructure initiatives, such as Moving Atlanta Forward and More MARTA. Various economic and community development initiatives from local partners, including Invest Atlanta, Atlanta Housing, Atlanta Beltline, and Atlanta’s philanthropic community, leverage implementation efforts even further.

## **Plan A and Other City and Regional Plans**

Plan A acknowledges that Atlanta is the core of a larger, dynamic region by integrating The Atlanta Region's Plan, specifically, the region's 2024 update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, into the planning process and plan recommendations.

Each Planning Element references related citywide plans and studies which inform key recommendations, as well.

## **Plan A and Atlanta City Design**

Atlanta City Design, which was incorporated into the City Charter in 2017, is a framework for equitable, inclusive, and accessible growth. Inspired by our core values, Atlanta City Design reveals that the essence of Atlanta's shared identity is key to shaping a vibrant future city that can welcome a growing population. Additionally, it presents ideas to celebrate and enhance Atlanta's authentic character. Plan A represents the next step toward realizing our shared aspirations.

The Plan A adopted in October 2021 was Atlanta's first comprehensive plan update advancing the vision of Atlanta City Design:

At our best, Atlanta is both a vibrant city and a verdant forest. Our core values-- equity, progress, ambition, access, and nature—will guide our growth and change to create a future city that is designed for people, designed for nature, and designed for people in nature.

Plan A aligns several initiatives using Atlanta City Design as a framework to plan for a future Atlanta with greater density and diversity while conserving our ecosystem and beautiful landscapes and unique character and scale of our neighborhoods. It is intended to be a policy guide to inform future growth and development for years to come.

Atlanta City Design identifies two distinct design areas to frame land use planning: Growth Areas and Conservation Areas. It was a challenge to fold in this new layer as a policy approach in the 2021 Plan A Land Use Planning Element. The plan already had two guiding layers with 36 different designations, 20 Future Land Uses, and 16 Character Areas. Add Atlanta City Design, and the land use approach became very messy and complicated, lacking a clear hierarchy or process for resolving conflicting designations.

A major goal of this update to Plan A is to streamline and simplify the land use planning approach. The Department of City Planning selected the components of each layer that worked best and created Development Patterns. No changes were made to Atlanta City Design Growth and Conservation Areas, and they remain a useful guide to understanding Atlanta's current and future physical form.

## **DCA and ARC Approval and Submission of Adopted Plan by October 31**

Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Atlanta Regional Commission reviewed Atlanta's 2025 comprehensive plan update and determined that it meets the State's "Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning." Atlanta City Council and the Mayor are now responsible for adopting Plan A by October 31, 2025, to maintain the City's Qualified Local Government status. When adopted, the Department of City Planning will submit the final plan to DCA and ARC. Only when adopted and submitted will DCA reinstate the City's QLG status. DCA has already reviewed and approved the City's 2025-2029 Capital Improvements Element (adopted in October 2024 by ordinance 24-O-1497). It is the City's responsibility to ensure the annual CIE for 2026-2030 is adopted by October 31, 2025.

Upon adopting this year's Plan A update, the City must commit to DCA and ARC that the next update will be completed by October 31, 2030.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON ORDINANCE:**

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (DCA) AND ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) REVIEW: The 2025 Comprehensive Development Plan (“Plan A”) ADEQUATELY ADDRESSES the State’s “Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.”**

**DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL of Plan A.**

**NPU Recommendations: 25 out of the 25 NPUs Voted to SUPPORT ADOPTION of Plan A at their May 2025 meetings.**



Department of  
**CITY PLANNING**

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JAHNEE R. PRINCE, AICP  
COMMISSIONER

KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee

**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*

**SUBJECT:** **25-O-1263/CDP-25-006 481 West Lake Avenue, 485 West Lake Avenue, and 495 West Lake Avenue NW, 1595 North Avenue, 1607 North Avenue, 1617 North Avenue, and 1625 North Avenue NW, 1590 Hasty Place, 1600 Hasty Place, 1618 Hasty Place, 1621 Hasty Place, and 1626 Hasty Place NW and 480 Elmwood Road and 492 Elmwood Road NW**

**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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## PROPOSAL:

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **481 West Lake Avenue, 485 West Lake Avenue, and 495 West Lake Avenue NW, 1595 North Avenue, 1607 North Avenue, 1617 North Avenue, and 1625 North Avenue NW, 1590 Hasty Place, 1600 Hasty Place, 1618 Hasty Place, 1621 Hasty Place, and 1626 Hasty Place NW and 480 Elmwood Road and 492 Elmwood Road NW** from the Low Density Residential (LDR) 0-8 units per acre land use designation to the Low Density Residential (LDR) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcels per Z-25-006 from the C-1 (Community Business) zoning district and the R-4A (Single Family Residential) zoning district to the RG-2 (Residential General Sector 2) zoning district to allow for the construction of a mix of attached single family, detached single family, and townhome buildings, totaling 90 units. It will also include on-street parking and several shared off-street parking lots.

## FINDINGS OF FACT:

- **Property location:** The subject properties front on the east side of West Lake Avenue NW and on the north side of North Avenue NW, the south side of Hasty Place NW, and to the west side of Elmwood Road NW. The properties are in Land Lot 146 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the Grove Park Neighborhood of NPU J, Council District 9.
- **Property size and physical features:** The properties are an assemblage that measures approximately 5.197 acres (226,381.32 square feet) in area. Some of the parcels are developed with single family homes. The elevation increases from west to southeast, north to south, and northeast to southwest. Trees cover the undeveloped parcels and cover the rear and side property

lines of the developed parcels. A creek traverses the site from south to north along the eastern side of the site.

- **Current/past use of property:** The properties are currently a mix of undeveloped and developed parcels with single family residential buildings. The commercially zoned parcel has a building foundation.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning:** The parcels surrounding the properties to the north, south, east, and west all have a Low Density Residential 0-8 units per acre (LDR 0-8 u/a) future land use designation and zoned R-4A (Single Family Residential). The parcels are developed with single family residential houses. To the north, two of the parcels have a Low Density Commercial (LDC) future land use designation and zoned MRC-1 (Mixed Residential Commercial). The parcels are developed with single family residential houses.
- **Transportation system:** The subject property is located on North Avenue NW and West Lake Avenue which are classified as collector streets. Hasty Place NW and Elmwood Road NW are classified as local roads. Sidewalks are present along both sides of all the roads. MARTA provides bus service via route #853 and route #58. Route #853 operates along North Avenue and connects to the West End Transit Station, approximately 3.6 miles from the site. There are two MARTA transit stations near the site. One bus stop is situated at North Avenue NW and West Lake Avenue, approximately 7 feet from the property, while the other stop is situated at North Avenue NW and Elmwood Road, approximately 141 feet from the property. Route #53 operates along West Lake Avenue NW and also connects to the West End Transit Station. One bus stop is situated at West Lake Avenue NW and North Avenue NW, approximately 56 feet from the property, while the other stop is situated at West Lake Avenue NW and Madrona Street NW, approximately 0.2 miles from the property.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses:** The proposed Low Density Residential (LDR) land use designation is compatible with the area. Currently, the parcels have a Low Density Residential (LDR) 0 to 8 units per acre land use designation. According to the 2025 Plan A Comprehensive Development Plan, with anticipated adoption summer of 2025, the units per acre measurement will be removed from land use classifications. Therefore, the proposed land use designation is compatible with the surrounding uses.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood:** The applicant proposes the construction of a mix of attached single family, detached single family, and town home buildings, totaling 90 units. It will also include on-street parking and several shared off-street parking lots. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment will have a positive impact on the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Adjacent parcels have a Low Density Residential land use designation and are developed with single family buildings, similar to the proposed development of the site.

- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed Low Density Residential (LDR) future land use designation is suitable for the Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment character area. It is consistent with CDP policy to, “*encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots or where existing housing and commercial buildings are deteriorated*” and to “*encourage a variety of housing types, including “missing middle” housing, that are compatible with nearby buildings.*”
- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** The *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)* character area for this location is Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment. The proposed Low Density Residential land use is consistent with the CDP land use policies to:
  - TNR 1: Preserve the walkable scale and residential character of the neighborhoods.
  - TNR 4: Encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots or where existing housing and commercial buildings are deteriorated.
  - CW 12: Encourage a variety of housing types, including “missing middle” housing, that are compatible with nearby buildings.
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans:** The Donald Hollowell & M. L. King Redevelopment and Tax Allocation District Plan, adopted in 2006, was created to achieve the development goals set forth by the community. According to the plan, the proposed site is located in the Grove Park Node which has the following description:
  - “The intersection of West Lake/Florence and D.L. Hollowell currently features several businesses. This node has the capacity to add commercial or mixed-use structures to better serve neighboring residents. According to the market analysis this area can support an additional 15,000 square feet of retail.”
- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, **481 West Lake Avenue, 485 West Lake Avenue, and 495 West Lake Avenue NW, 1595 North Avenue, 1607 North Avenue, 1617 North Avenue, and 1625 North Avenue NW, 1590 Hasty Place, 1600 Hasty Place, 1618 Hasty Place, 1621 Hasty Place, and 1626 Hasty Place NW and 480 Elmwood Road and 492 Elmwood Road NW** are considered to be an Urban Neighborhood. Urban Neighborhood are described as follows:

“These are small-scale, historic, walkable neighborhoods where growth capacity is limited mostly by our desire to keep them the way they are the traditional intown communities that were built by the expansion of streetcars a century ago, such as Westview, Grant Park and Brookwood Park. Most have some form of commercial district within walking distance from homes, and many include small apartment buildings, townhouses, or two- and three-family homes. Their inherent walkability, historic charm and proximity to downtown make them highly desirable under today’s market pressures, and therefore, threatened by even denser development”

- **Consistency with NPU policies:** The proposed Low Density Residential land use designation is compatible with NPU J policy to:
  - J-1: Preserve the culture and character of the neighborhoods of NPU-J, to include compatible design, visually similar building materials, height, setbacks, parking accommodations, and landscape; and encouraging infill development compatible with surrounding uses
  - J-12: Increase community stability by promoting diverse housing options, public funding for down payment assistance and other homeownership programs for current residents. Encourage the enforcement of laws that govern home rehabilitation/renovation, and the sale of real property.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL FOR 0 TO 8 ACRES PER UNIT LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-J recommended APPROVAL for this land use amendment at its March 25, 2025, meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



Department of  
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KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
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OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** **25-O-1264/CDP-25-007 for 1138 Glenwood Ave SE**  
**DATE:** **June 4, 2025**

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An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **1138 Glenwood Ave SE** from the Low Density Residential (LDR) land use designation to the Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-25-003 from the R-4 (Single Family Residential) zoning district to the NC-2 (East Atlanta Village Neighborhood Commercial) zoning district to allow for the construction of a restaurant/commercial building.

The applicant has requested a deferral of the application to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter CD/HS Public Hearing. Staff is supportive of the request.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DEFERRAL to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter CD/HS Public Hearing**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



## CITY OF ATLANTA

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**JUSTIN CUTLER**  
COMMISSIONER  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**GAYLAN WILLIAMS, PH.D.**  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 4, 2025  
**TO:** Jason Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Justin Cutler, Commissioner  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1133/ CDP-25-010 – Adoption of the Trails ATL Plan

#### **SUMMARY:**

An Ordinance to adopt the Trails ATL Plan; to be included in the City of Atlanta 2021 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) to incorporate the plan into the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP); and for other purposes.

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation with core team partners the Departments of City Planning, Watershed Management and Transportation, contracted the PATH Foundation, Inc. to develop a citywide plan for walking and wheelchair accessible trails.

Key findings in research conducted include the following:

- The top request identified in a statistically valid survey conducted for the Activate ATL: Recreation and Parks for All 10-Year Comprehensive Master Plan was multi-purpose, paved, shared-use trails.
- The Trails ATL survey indicated that 90 percent wanted the city to prioritize building new trails.
- Approximately 86 percent of those surveyed said having more trails would encourage them to walk or roll rather than drive
- The top trail destinations indicated were commercial areas, parks, the Atlanta Beltline, MARTA and schools.
- Greenway trails over street and other trails are preferred by 98 percent of Atlantans.

The vision for Trails ATL is for “...an Atlanta united by an evolving network of safe, inviting, and equitably accessible trails that nurture thriving neighborhoods and promote boundless exploration, active lifestyles, environmental health and cultural enrichment.”

It has been reviewed over four rounds of public engagement by neighborhood and stakeholder groups as well as all Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU). Twenty-three NPUs recommended approval.

The Plan is an action item of the approved Activate ATL: Recreation and Parks for All Comprehensive Master Plan and meets its standards.

### **Plan Purpose:**

*Trails ATL* is a long-range plan that guides, on a high-level, the growth and improvement of Atlanta by adding a network of citywide trails built for public use over the next 30 years. The plan increases the 80 miles of existing alignments, including the Atlanta Beltline, PATH 400 and other public trails by fostering a system-wide, sustainable network that guides user access to parks and enables connections across the city. The overall goal of *Trails ATL* is to provide all Atlanta residents within a 10-minute walk, access to protected trails for the purposes of transportation and recreation. Once built, the network will consist of 525 miles of trails.

The guiding principles incorporated into the plan include trails:

- Be inclusively planned and designed;
- Promote health and wellness;
- Enable safe, inviting and equitably access to parks, schools and transit;
- Link people to economic opportunity;
- Enhance, showcase and connect us to the natural world;
- Be enjoyable for children, seniors and people with disabilities;
- Be accessible within a 10-minute walk or wheelchair ride of all Atlanta homes; and
- Help City of Atlanta achieve park acreage and access goals.

Ultimately, *Trails ATL* serves as a vision and guide for the citywide trails network and its use supported by residents and visitors. The plan is an action outlined under the goal, CONNECT in the approved *Activate ATL: Recreation and Parks for All Ten-Year Comprehensive Master Plan*.

### **Planning area:**

The planning area is citywide and includes all Council Districts and Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU)

### **Planning Process:**

*Trails ATL* was developed in partnership with the Departments of City Planning (DCP), Watershed Management (DWM) and Transportation (ADOT) by the selected consultant, PATH Foundation, along with its partner, KAIZEN Collaborative.

It was formally launched in January 2024 and developed over a 17-month process. During that time, the existing trails network in Atlanta as well as other trail concepts across US cities were explored.

The Core Team consisting of the city partners, met bi-weekly to review fieldwork and guide decisions and public engagement. In addition to the core team, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that included other local, regional and state public agencies and nonprofit partners met four times to review data and provide professional feedback as well as to ensure the plan fit into existing transportation and land use plans.

The *Trails ATL* Plan was developed using a public engagement process that involved a variety of approaches to expanding the trail network in Atlanta. Four rounds of community involvement were conducted to carefully listen to the needs of Atlanta stakeholders. Consultants explored where Atlantans want to go on trails, where opportunities for trails exist or could be created, captured feedback on proposed trail alignments, citywide, and, finally secured general neighborhood and NPU comments.

Additional feedback was captured using three separate online surveys and both virtual and in-person, *Trails ATL*-dedicated and City Planning Department Plan A Comprehensive Plan partnership events. Ten focus groups met twice each to cover key topics such as Commercial Improvement Districts (CIDs), college and universities, Mayor's office, nature, parks, people with disabilities, police and safety, schools and social advocacy. Additional stakeholder group meetings were held including advocacy groups, activity groups, the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board, neighborhood

leaders, Atlanta Urban Development Corp., Friends of the Park groups, real estate developers and the Mayor’s Greenspace Advisory Committee. Meetings and surveys were promoted through a dedicated website ([www.trailsatl.com](http://www.trailsatl.com)), yard signs in parks, flyers distributed in public spaces, email broadcasts, pop up events, and advertising in monthly DPR newsletters and at NPU meetings.

Presentations of the final draft were made to NPUs in March, April and May 2025. Additional feedback from adjacent neighborhoods was incorporated into the plan. A total of 23 of the 25 NPUs voted for approval of recommending the Trails ATL Plan for adoption.

The Trails ATL main sections – Executive Summary, Introduction, Trail Opportunities, the Trail ATL Network, Implementation, Guidelines - present the existing inventory and conditions, public engagement, vision and goals, trail alignments by Council District with names and three-phased installation, criteria for evaluating trail priorities, standards for trail development, and partnership and Phase 1 funding. The plan also introduces, “The Emerald Network,” a series of greenway connections in southwest and west Atlanta that will become an amenity in and of itself, much like the Atlanta Beltline currently is at the heart of the city.

### **Implementation:**

The plan recommends a 30-year strategy to develop 420 miles of new trails, including 140 miles of greenways and 280 miles of street trails across all City Council Districts. It is divided into three phases. Phase 1 to be completed by 2037, proposes construction of 35 miles of new trails considered priority projects.

Community engagement is emphasized in the development of the trails network. Therefore, the Trails ATL Plan has a community engagement strategy that will be utilized to ensure the public is informed and involved throughout the planning and construction processes for each project.

The plan also outlines funding opportunities over federal, state and local resources.

**Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** *Trails ATL* takes into account all approved City plans, including the Atlanta City Design which articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. *Trails ATL* is particularly focused around the challenge of, “Access.” which calls for designing traffic for people by encouraging walking for short trips rather than driving on congested streets. Moreover, the greenway trails model offers Atlantans greater opportunities to enjoy nature by connecting to new and existing parks.

The Trails ATL Plan also has, in its aims, meeting the goals of the *Moving Atlanta Forward* by supporting the Mayor’s vision of being, A City Built for the Future.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL of the *Trail ATL Plan* and to amend the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan by incorporating these plans by reference. This includes:**

1. Adopting the *Trails ATL* Plan as a supplement to the City of Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan.
2. Incorporating by reference the *Trails ATL* Plan into the 2021 Comprehensive Development Plan.

### **NPU Recommendations:**

NPU A: Recommended to Approve at their May 6, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU B: Did Not Recommend to Approve at their May 6, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU C: Did Not Recommend to Approve at their May 6, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU D: Recommended to Approve at their April 22, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU E: Recommended to Approve at their May 6, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU F: Recommended to Approve at their April 16, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU G: Recommended to Approve at their April 17, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU H: Recommended to Approve at their April 15, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU I: Recommended to Approve at their April 16, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU J: Recommended to Approve at their April 22, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU K: Recommended to Approve at their April 15, 2025 NPU meeting.

NPU L: Recommended to Approve at their May 13, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU M: Recommended to Approve at their April 28, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU N: Recommended to Approve at their May 22, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU O: Recommended to Approve at their April 22, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU P: Recommended to Approve at their May 5, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU Q: Recommended to Approve at their April 17, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU R: Recommended to Approve at their May 7, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU S: Recommended to Approve at their May 15, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU T: Recommended to Approve at their May 14, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU V: Recommended to Approve at their April 14, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU W: Recommended to Approve at their May 21, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU X: Recommended to Approve at their April 14, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU Y: Recommended to Approve at their April 15, 2025 NPU meeting.  
NPU Z: Recommended to Approve at their April 28, 2025 NPU meeting.

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Strategic Planning  
Jared Evans, Legislative Research & Policy Analyst



Department of  
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COMMISSIONER

KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jason Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1225 / CDP-25-011 for The Stitch Master Plan  
**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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### PROPOSAL:

An Ordinance to adopt the Stitch Master Plan as the City of Atlanta's Plan Reconnecting North Downtown Atlanta; to amend the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) by incorporating by reference said plan.

### FINDINGS OF FACT:

The Stitch Master Plan is a comprehensive, community-centered initiative designed to reconnect neighborhoods divided by the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector and to foster inclusive, sustainable growth in the heart of Atlanta. The plan is structured around four guiding pillars that reflect both the values and strategic priorities of the City: Community, Transportation, Economy & Wealth Building, and Health & Resilience. Each of these pillars represents a strategic focus area that guides the project's vision to reconnect Downtown Atlanta and promote equitable urban development.

- **Community:** Cultivate a thriving, diverse, and inviting environment that reflects Atlanta's rich cultural legacy through inclusive design and community-driven development.
- **Transportation:** Repair the long-standing barrier created by the interstate system and restore human-scaled, multimodal connectivity that supports walkability, transit access, and neighborhood cohesion.
- **Economy & Wealth Building:** Expand equitable access to opportunity by linking residents to affordable housing, employment centers, local businesses, and community resources.
- **Health & Resilience:** Enhance health outcomes, safety, and long-term environmental sustainability through improved infrastructure and public space.

The Stitch which is a combination of transformational infrastructure, policy strategies, and community-driven initiatives that will reconnect the heart of Atlanta and improve access to essential resources represents a bold infrastructure and placemaking strategy that will create approximately 17 acres of new park and civic space atop a ¾-mile platform spanning the Downtown Connector between Ted Turner Drive and Piedmont Avenue. This new civic space will bridge long-disconnected communities and significantly enhance access to jobs, education, transportation options, and affordable housing.

The development of this master plan included robust community engagement to ensure that the plan reflects a broad spectrum of resident voices and stakeholder priorities. Outreach efforts included 2 community workshops, 2 digital feedback portals, 3 student workshops, 14 community pop-ups, 22 stakeholder interviews, 5 focus groups, 4 steering committee meetings, and presentations at various community forums. This extensive outreach ensured that the master plan reflects the voices, needs, and aspirations of Atlanta residents, especially those most impacted by historic disinvestment and displacement. The Stitch is not only a physical reconnection of neighborhoods but a long-term investment in the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the city and its people.

The Stitch represents a transformative investment in Atlanta's future, reaffirming the city's commitment to equitable growth, restorative infrastructure, and inclusive planning practices. The site's boundary lies within Land Lots 80, 49,79, 50, 78, and 51 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia. It is in the Downtown neighborhood of NPU-M and NPU-E and within City Council Districts 2, 4, and 5.

### **Plan Purpose:**

The purpose of the *Stitch Master Plan* is:

- To facilitate the “capping of the highway” over the Downtown Connector, where it will encompass the entire interstate of the planned area to create connections to both sides.
- To help mend the damage from the construction of the Downtown Connector (Phased construction between the early 1950s and the late 1960s).
- To restore the vibrancy of Downtown.
- To address Atlanta's challenge of affordable housing.
- To recreate a diverse and affordable Downtown community, connecting Atlantans to jobs, housing, transportation, parks, and resources.

### **Planning Area:**

The Stitch planning area is located within what was once Buttermilk Bottom, a historically vibrant, predominantly African American neighborhood in Atlanta. In the 1940s, federal and local plans prioritized the construction of the Interstate highway system through this area to avoid disrupting Downtown Atlanta's commercial core. As a result, Buttermilk Bottom was labeled a “depreciated” area and targeted for “slum clearance.” This designation enabled the condemnation and demolition of homes and businesses under urban renewal programs. By 1967, these actions displaced an estimated 41,000 residents and led to the complete erasure of the Buttermilk Bottom and Butler Street communities. This process also made way for the construction of the Downtown Connector (I-75/I-85) and institutional development, which physically and socially divided Downtown from surrounding neighborhoods like Midtown and the Old Fourth Ward, a divide that still exists today. The Stitch Master Plan aims to reconnect these severed communities through a bold infrastructure investment that creates a new ¾-mile platform and approximately 17 acres of new public park and civic space.

Historical Timeline – Downtown Connector Construction:

- **1960:** Connector under construction
- **1968:** The Connector and Civic Center were completed
- **1993:** The Connector expanded

The proposed platform is bounded by:

- **North:** Bounded by Pine Street NE and Currier Street NE, adjacent to the Civic Center MARTA Station and nearby institutional uses.
- **East:** Defined by Piedmont Avenue NE, where Downtown transitions into the SoNo (South of North Avenue) neighborhood.
- **South:** Framed by Ralph McGill Boulevard NE and Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard, adjacent to and connecting to Downtown landmarks such as the Georgia Power Headquarters and the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center site.
- **West:** Anchored by West Peachtree Street NW, marking the transition between Midtown and Downtown Atlanta.

The proposed planning area, project boundary, and approved Stitch Special Services District (SSD) boundary adopted by City Council on April 21, 2025, via Ordinance 25-O-1169 is:

- **North Boundary:** The northern edge of the SSD generally follows 3rd Street NW, extending east along Ponce de Leon Avenue NE, and turns southeast along Juniper Street NE and North Avenue NE, covering areas just south of the Midtown core and adjacent to the Georgia Tech campus.
- **East Boundary:** The eastern boundary runs south along Juniper Street NE / State Route 29, then continues along Piedmont Avenue NE to Pine Street NE and Central Park Place NE. It wraps around Baker-Highland Connector NE, heading toward the I-75/85 interchange, and then follows segments of Piedmont Avenue, Jesse Hill Jr. Drive NE, and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue NE, encapsulating areas just west of the Old Fourth Ward.
- **South Boundary:** The southern boundary includes Auburn Avenue NE, Peachtree Street NE, Carnegie Way NW, and Andrew Young International Boulevard NE, extending to Centennial Olympic Park Drive NW. It continues through Baker Street NW, Luckie Street NW, and reconnects westward through Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard NW, covering parts of Downtown Atlanta.
- **West Boundary:** The western edge runs generally along Williams Street NW, Spring Street NW / Ted Turner Drive NW, and the I-75/85 corridor, reaching northward back to Mills Street NW, Lovejoy Street NW, and Parker Street NW, wrapping around the western edge of Georgia Tech and the downtown connector before closing the loop at 3rd Street NW.

The SSD proposed boundaries for the Stitch Special Services District above include both nonresidential and residential rental properties within this boundary, approximately ½ mile from the proposed Stitch Park. It does not include owner-occupied housing, nor will it assess tax-exempt properties

This strategic location forms a vital link between Downtown, Midtown, and the Old Fourth Ward neighborhoods, all of which are included in the planning and study area.

The 2021 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) designates much of the area as High Density Commercial and some parts as Open Space, with active land uses including multifamily residential, mixed-use developments, commercial properties, religious institutions, healthcare facilities, and small-scale parks. No changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) are required to implement the Stitch Master Plan, allowing the vision to move forward to bring the Stitch Master Plan vision to fruition and guide future redevelopment.

### **Planning Process:**

The master planning process began in June 2023 and took place over 14 months. The Master Plan holistically covers six distinct focus areas for the Stitch. Each focus area was developed across five project phases:

- Existing Conditions – Collect data and analyze the existing conditions of the area.

- Vision Framework – refine the existing project vision and develop pillars, goals, and objectives to guide the development of the Stitch.
- Recommendation Development – develop recommendations across all Stitch master plan focus areas.
- Recommendation Strategy – assign priority and time frame, detail implementation considerations, and identify potential partners for recommendations.
- Stitch Next Steps – recommend governance scenario, detail funding strategies, and outline next steps pre-, mid-, and postconstruction of the Stitch. Community engagement was a key factor that was included throughout all steps of the Master Plan. This was to keep the community updated with the progress of the plan and to make sure that their feedback and preferences were integrated into every phase, which resulted in a final Master Plan that reflects the community’s needs.

### **Community Engagement:**

The Stitch’s community engagement process was intentionally designed to be inclusive, accessible, and representative of Atlanta’s diverse population. A wide range of outreach activities were conducted to share project information, gather meaningful feedback, and build sustained support for the vision of the Stitch. This extensive input directly shaped the Master Plan, ensuring it reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of Atlantans.

- **Engagement by the Numbers**
  - 6,000+ Total Participants Engaged
  - 2,000+ Engaged In-Person
  - 20 Community Events Held
- **Engagement Activities**
  - 2 Community Workshops
    - *Community Kickoff Event* – November 15, 2023
    - *Design Workshop (3 sessions)* – April 30 – May 1, 2024
  - 2 Digital Feedback Portals (November 2023 – June 2024)
  - 3 Student Workshops (February – April 2024)
  - 14 Community Pop-Ups (January – August 2024)
  - 22 Stakeholder Interviews (November 2023 – February 2024)
  - 5 Focus Groups (November 2023 – February 2024)
  - 4 Steering Committee Meetings (November 2023 – June 2024)
  - Ongoing Presentations at Community Meetings (Since June 2023)

### **A Strategic and Inclusive Approach**

The Stitch’s engagement efforts were the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan (SCEP), which outlined a clear, equity-driven strategy to ensure all voices, especially those historically left out of planning conversations, were heard and valued.

### **Key Elements included:**

- **Stakeholder Identification:** Diverse groups were intentionally included, such as displaced residents, arts and culture advocates, government officials, business owners, and transit agencies, ensuring broad-based representation.
- **Multiple Methods of Engagement:** A range of tools from community pop-ups and workshops to digital platforms and printed newsletters were used to make participation accessible, flexible, and meaningful.

- **Culturally Responsive Engagement:** Recognizing Atlanta’s legacy of displacement and inequality, the process intentionally honored the lived experiences of communities of color through culturally sensitive and trauma-informed practices.
- **Ongoing Feedback Loops:** The SCEP incorporated evaluation metrics, check-ins, and iterative outreach to ensure community feedback remained central throughout the planning process.

## **A Community-Driven Vision**

Overall, the Stitch’s engagement process ensured that planning was not done to communities, but with them. By centering community voices—particularly those from historically marginalized groups—the Master Plan is grounded in a shared vision for a more inclusive, equitable, and connected future for Downtown Atlanta.

### **Vision and Goals:**

#### **Vision**

The Stitch Master Plan envisions a transformative civic infrastructure project that reconnects Downtown Atlanta, both physically and socially, by bridging the divide caused by the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector and past urban renewal efforts. The project will create approximately 17 acres of new park space, restore neighborhood connections, and expand access to affordable housing, jobs, and multimodal transit.

This revitalized district will be vibrant, inclusive, and active day and night, welcoming people of all backgrounds. Strategies span six focus areas, from infrastructure improvements to supportive policies, all shaped by a community equity lens to ensure inclusive, community-driven outcomes. The Stitch is more than a physical reconnection; it’s a long-term investment in equity, sustainability, and shared prosperity for the heart of Atlanta.

#### **Vision Framework**

The Stitch Master Plan is guided by a Vision Framework that articulates the community-driven goals, guiding principles, and strategic direction of the project. Rooted in extensive public input, Steering Committee guidance, and technical expertise, this framework sets a clear path for achieving equitable, transformative change in Downtown Atlanta.

#### **Development Process**

1. Legacy Goals & Objectives – Built upon prior planning efforts and foundational community priorities.
2. Steering Committee Input – Provided strategic and policy-level guidance.
3. Project Team Revisions – Synthesized feedback into actionable updates.
4. Vision, Goals, and Objectives Workshop – Facilitated alignment and refinement.
5. Updated Pillars, Goals & Objectives – Organized into a coherent structure.
6. Community Presentations – Ensured transparency and accountability through final public review.

#### **Framework Structure**

The refined Vision Framework is organized around four central Pillars, each with specific Goals and supporting Objectives, forming the basis for implementation strategies and evaluation metrics:

#### **Stitch Pillars and Goals:**

- **Pillar 1: Community:** Cultivate a thriving, diverse, and inviting community that reflects Atlanta's Rich Culture.
  1. Develop a signature public park that serves as a vibrant gathering space.
  2. Prioritize equity, inclusivity, and universal design.

3. Infuse local history, heritage, and culture throughout the design.
  4. Maximize green space connectivity and community access.
- **Pillar 2: Transportation:** Repair the long-standing barrier created by the interstate system and restore human-scaled connectivity options.
    1. Reconnect neighborhoods through pedestrian-oriented design.
    2. Prioritize multimodal transportation, including walking, biking, and transit.
    3. Implement enhancements to key transit nodes such as the Civic Center MARTA Station.
    4. Activate streets as public spaces that support social life and accessibility.
    5. Support transit improvements that reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles Transit Improvements
  - **Pillar 3: Economic and Wealth Building:** Build equitable access and expand opportunities and resources.
    1. Expand affordable transportation options.
    2. Support inclusive economic development and affordable housing initiatives.
    3. Create pathways to jobs, local entrepreneurship, and business partnerships.
    4. Integrate community services that address social and economic needs.
  - **Pillar 4: Health and Resilience:** Enhance Health, Safety, and Sustainability.
    1. Promote physical and mental well-being through access to nature and green infrastructure.
    2. Design resilient systems to manage stormwater and urban heat.
    3. Prioritize safety through well-lit, accessible, and thoughtfully programmed public spaces.
    4. Implement sustainable materials and practices that contribute to long-term environmental health.

### **Implementation Approach**

Goals and objectives have been refined for clarity, inclusiveness, and measurability, and have been structured into a hierarchy of Pillars → Goals → Objectives/Tactics, with responsibilities distributed across Stitch-led initiatives and external partner collaborations. This structure ensures accountability and enables long-term progress tracking. The Stitch is not only a physical reconnection project, but a strategic investment in equity, mobility, sustainability, and community resilience for the heart of Atlanta.

### **Key Plan Recommendations:**

The Stitch Master Plan outlines a bold, community-driven vision to address historic injustices, improve quality of life, and reconnect Downtown Atlanta through equitable, sustainable urban redevelopment. Below are key recommendations from the plan:

#### **1. Advancing Community Equity**

The construction of the Downtown Connector resulted in the displacement of Black communities like Buttermilk Bottom, erasing intergenerational wealth, disrupting social networks, and physically dividing neighborhoods. Today, its presence continues to disproportionately impact surrounding communities through air and noise pollution, stormwater runoff, and environmental degradation.

The Stitch represents a generational opportunity to begin to heal these harms by reconnecting the physical and social fabric of the city. The plan includes a robust Equity Framework, developed and applied throughout the planning process, to ensure that future development serves all Atlantans, particularly historically marginalized populations.

#### **Key Equity Strategies:**

- Right-to-Return Housing Program – Prioritize descendants of displaced Buttermilk Bottom residents in new affordable housing opportunities.

- Anti-Displacement Measures – Implement planning tools, monitoring mechanisms, and dedicated funding to prevent involuntary displacement.
- Affordable Housing Preservation – Support existing affordability through incentives, preservation funds, and targeted redevelopment.
- Cultural Recognition – Amplify the stories and voices of displaced communities, continue listening sessions, and embed community history into public spaces.
- Small Business Support – Provide technical assistance, funding, and space for local entrepreneurs and legacy businesses.
- Environmental Justice – Integrate green space and sustainable design to mitigate air pollution, heat island effects, and stormwater runoff.

## 2. Understanding a Fragmented Urban Realm

A key early task in the Stitch planning process was a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions, which highlighted persistent challenges and opportunities that the Stitch can directly address via the key focus areas:

- **Parks & Open Space**

Downtown has significantly less parkland and tree canopy than other parts of Atlanta, despite the city's legacy as a “City in a Forest.” The Stitch proposes 17 acres of new public space, ecological restoration, and improved access to green spaces. Precedents and environmental data guide strategies for urban reforestation, connectivity, and public health.

- **Multimodal Streets**

Downtown’s street grid is generally well-connected and benefits from strong transit access. However, many streets are wide, one-way, and prioritize cars over people, creating unsafe and uninviting conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. The Stitch proposes reconfiguring streets to prioritize multimodal access, improve safety near interstate access points, and enhance connectivity for all users.

- **Urban Design**

The existing public realm is shaped by large blocks, inactive frontages, and surface parking, which undermine walkability and neighborhood cohesion. The Stitch envisions a human-scaled, pedestrian-friendly environment—introducing active ground-floor uses, finer-grain development patterns, and streetscape improvements to reconnect communities divided by the interstate.

- **Land Use & Zoning**

While downtown contains a surplus of underutilized parcels, existing zoning often limits development potential and fails to support inclusive, transit-oriented growth. The plan recommends targeted updates to zoning policies to enable mixed-use, higher-density, and equitable redevelopment in alignment with citywide goals.

- **Real Estate & Redevelopment**

Downtown’s redevelopment potential remains strong, but real estate performance, particularly office and retail, is underperforming. The Stitch highlights key redevelopment opportunities and advocates for strategic reinvestment that is equitable, catalytic, and aligned with community priorities.

- **Affordable Housing**

The area includes existing and proposed affordable housing developments, rising property values and development pressure pose displacement risks. The Stitch builds on supportive city and state policies with strategies to expand affordability, protect existing residents, and ensure long-term housing stability.

- **Economic Vitality**

Downtown is a regional economic hub with a wide range of jobs. Yet many small and minority-owned businesses face barriers to growth. The plan outlines infrastructure, policy, and ecosystem supports needed to foster inclusive economic development, improve job access, and sustain a vibrant local economy.

- **Sustainability & Resilience**

North Downtown is highly impervious, contributing to extreme heat, stormwater runoff, and pollution. The Stitch proposes green infrastructure, native landscaping, and climate-responsive design to improve resilience and public health.

North Downtown is among the city’s most impervious and environmentally vulnerable areas, facing extreme heat, flooding, and pollution. The Stitch proposes a robust suite of resilience strategies—including green infrastructure, native landscaping, and climate-responsive design—to reduce environmental risks and improve public health outcomes.

### 3. **Healing A Torn Community**

The Stitch Master Plan serves as a bold blueprint to heal the physical and social divisions caused by the construction of the Downtown Connector. By capping the highway with a 17-acre park and catalyzing redevelopment across a central swath of Atlanta, the Stitch reimagines Downtown as an inclusive, connected, and resilient district. Grounded in equity, environmental performance, and public engagement, the plan outlines a phased, actionable path to reconnect communities, restore the urban fabric, and promote long-term, sustainable growth.

#### **Core Focus Areas and Strategies:**

Each of the plan’s six integrated focus areas emerged from extensive community input, rigorous data analysis, and precedent research. Together, they form the framework through which the Stitch will be realized, physically, economically, socially, and environmentally:

#### 1. **Parks and Open Space**

Transform the highway scar into a signature civic commons by creating a 17-acre cap park that enhances access, wellness, culture, and ecological restoration.

- Strategies and Features:

- Implement the park in three phases to manage construction and funding efficiently.
- Incorporate a robust urban tree canopy, multi-use lawns, native plantings, and interactive water features.
- Design key amenities: event pavilions, gardens, performance spaces, food and restroom facilities, and shaded terraces.
- Include diverse activation elements: art installations, historic interpretation, skate parks, festival streets, and dog play areas.
- Prioritize accessibility through ADA-compliant design and intuitive circulation plans.

#### 2. **Multimodal Streets**

Reconnect the street grid, enhance safety, and expand non-vehicular mobility options.

- Strategies:

- Prioritize improvements on Peachtree, West Peachtree, Courtland, Pine, and Currier Streets through new bike lanes, transit-priority corridors, and widened sidewalks.
- Reintroduce historic street connections to restore walkability.
- Convert one-way streets to two-way for safer speeds and improved navigation.
- Reduce access ramps to limit high-speed traffic and unlock new development opportunities.

- Integrate green infrastructure and complete streets principles throughout.
- Outcomes:
  - Safer, more vibrant corridors that reconnect neighborhoods, reduce emissions, and improve MARTA access.

### 3. Urban Design

Create a vibrant, human-scaled environment that celebrates Atlanta's identity and invites people to linger, not just pass through.

- Strategies:
  - Establish Stitch District Urban Design Guidelines to guide streets, plazas, parks, and development.
  - Encourage developer partnerships to activate park edges and nearby corridors.
  - Emphasize consistent streetscapes, public art, lighting, and pedestrian-first design.
  - Create gateways and neighborhood nodes to define orientation and identity.
  - Promote block-scale redevelopment with high walkability and access to open space.
- Outcomes:
  - A cohesive public realm that fosters a sense of place and enhances quality of life.

### 4. Land Use and Zoning

Foster mixed-use, transit-oriented development that balances new investment with neighborhood character and community benefits.

- Strategies:
  - Establish a Stitch Subarea Zoning Overlay with customized development standards (e.g., floor area ratios, active ground-floor uses, park-facing design).
  - Reduce open space requirements for parcels fronting the park to increase feasible development.
  - Require mixed-use developments in key areas, encourage adaptive reuse, and streamline approvals for catalytic sites.
  - Introduce shared parking and loading strategies to reduce conflicts and increase efficiency.
- Outcomes:
  - A zoning framework that enables density, affordability, and contextual growth

### 5. Community Development and Economic Vitality

Advance equitable development through housing, small business support, and inclusive economic opportunity.

- **Real Estate & Redevelopment Strategies:**
  - Prioritize high-impact parcels for mixed-use, high-density redevelopment.
  - Support ongoing pipeline projects that include affordable housing and amenities.
  - Utilize value capture mechanisms to reinvest in the district
- **Affordable Housing Strategies:**
  - Establish a 25-year goal for 30% of all housing within a half-mile of the Stitch to be affordable to households earning  $\leq 80\%$  AMI.
  - Create an anti-displacement tax fund for legacy homeowners.
  - Partner with landowners and the Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUDC) to deliver mixed-income housing on public land.
- **Economic Strategies:**
  - Activate underused properties with local businesses and pop-ups.
  - Host regular community markets in the park.
  - Provide public Wi-Fi and utilities to support entrepreneurship.
- Outcomes:

- Potential for 12,000+ new housing units and \$2.4 billion in new property value, with a focus on long-term affordability and community wealth building.

## 6. Sustainability and Resilience

Design a climate-resilient, environmentally restorative district aligned with Atlanta’s sustainability goals.

- Strategies:
  - Implement green infrastructure for stormwater management, energy-efficient building design, and heat island reduction.
  - Align with third-party certifications (e.g., LEED, SITES, Envision).
  - Conduct a Climate Resilience Assessment to guide long-term planning.
- Outcomes:
  - Improved air and water quality, enhanced biodiversity, and resilience to climate-related risks

## Equity and Community Engagement

Equity is woven throughout the Stitch from housing affordability to public space programming and development policy. Key commitments include:

- Inclusive Development: Leverage zoning tools and the Eastside TAD extension to ensure benefits flow to longtime residents.
- Community Engagement: Foster ongoing partnerships with stakeholders, ensuring historically marginalized voices shape outcomes.
- Cultural Preservation: Embed local history and cultural identity into the design of public spaces to celebrate Atlanta’s legacy and foster belonging.

## Implementation Framework

Each recommendation is accompanied by an implementation roadmap detailing.

- Priority Level: (e.g., Top, High)
- Timeframe: (Near-, Mid-, or Long-Term)
- Key Considerations: (Funding, Coordination, Partnerships)
- Responsible Parties: (e.g., City Planning, MARTA, AUDC, Developers)
- Alignment with Stitch Pillars: Community, Transportation, Economy, and Health

By translating community priorities into design standards, investment tools, and phased actions, the plan ensures the Stitch not only bridges a highway but also uplifts people, reconnects places, and strengthens the city’s social and ecological fabric for generations to come.

## Realizing the Vision:

Successful implementation of the Stitch Master Plan will require a sustained, collaborative effort among public agencies, nonprofit partners, and the private sector. The Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID), in coordination with the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and MARTA, will play a leading role in translating the Plan’s recommendations into action.

The Stitch includes recommendations spanning short-, medium-, and long-term timeframes, ranging from pre-construction activities for Phase 1 to ongoing management and programming after the full Stitch Park is completed. Continued public engagement will be essential throughout implementation to ensure transparency, accountability, and community alignment.

- Governance Strategy
  - The recommended governance structure for the Stitch Park is a public-private partnership, anchored by a lead nonprofit organization with operational support from the City of Atlanta. Under this model:
    - The City will retain ownership of the Stitch infrastructure and parkland.
    - A nonprofit partner will lead day-to-day operations, maintenance, programming, and fundraising.
  - This structure ensures dedicated long-term stewardship while reducing the operational and financial burden on City departments. It also enables flexibility in generating revenue, leveraging philanthropic support, and adapting programming to evolving community needs.
  
- Funding and Financial Strategy
  - Phase 1 of the Stitch has already secured capital funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant. However, additional funding will be needed for the completion of Phases 2 and 3 and for long-term operations and maintenance.
    - Potential funding sources include:
      - City Budget Allocations – Direct investments through general funds or special appropriations.
      - Federal and State Grants – Continued pursuit of transportation, infrastructure, parks, and equity-focused grants.
      - Real Estate Value Capture – Tax increment financing (TIF), special service districts, or development impact fees tied to rising property values around the Stitch. TIFs are often called TADs (or Tax Allocation Districts) in Georgia.
      - Philanthropy and Private Contributions – Donations from individuals, foundations, and corporate sponsors.
      - Membership and Earned Income – Revenue from concessions, event rentals, sponsorships, and other park-based activities.
    - Each source offers unique advantages and constraints and will be strategically matched to the needs of specific project components (e.g., capital vs. operational expenses).

### **Site Concept Plan and Recommendations:**

The Site Concept Plan provides a visual and strategic framework that illustrates how the Stitch area can evolve through phased redevelopment, centering equity, connectivity, and sustainability. These recommendations serve as a guiding vision for turning the Stitch into a landmark civic project that benefits all Atlantans.

### **Capping the Highway**

At the heart of the Stitch vision is the creation of a multi-phase cap over the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector, a signature infrastructure intervention that will physically reunite Downtown and Midtown Atlanta. Unlike standard bridges, this continuous platform will provide a fully connected civic space that supports parks, public gathering areas, and future development.

#### a. Bridges Included in the Cap Area

The proposed cap spans multiple key crossings between Downtown and Midtown:

1. Piedmont Avenue / Baker Street Bridge
2. Courtland Street / Ralph McGill Boulevard Bridge
3. Peachtree Street Bridge
4. West Peachtree Street Bridge / Civic Center MARTA Station

## 5. Ted Turner Drive Bridge

### b. Structural Components of the Cap

To create a safe and durable platform, the cap will incorporate:

- Substructure
  - *Bents* – central vertical supports within the highway corridor
  - *Abutments* – edge supports anchoring the cap to existing infrastructure
- Superstructure
  - *Girders* – structural beams supporting the deck
  - *Decking System* – the bridge deck itself, plus waterproofing and safety systems

### c. Cap Use and Amenities

The platform will support a new 17-acre urban park featuring:

- Expansive green space and tree canopy
- Pedestrian and bike paths
- Interactive public art and interpretation elements
- Playgrounds, seating areas, and community plazas
- Event lawns, gardens, and shaded gathering spaces
- Buildings for food and beverage, restrooms, and park operations
- Critical infrastructure for fire safety, ventilation, and life-safety systems

### d. National Precedent

The Stitch aligns with a growing trend of cities across the U.S. using highway capping as a strategy for urban repair and placemaking. To date, over 66 parks and structures have been built over highways nationwide, demonstrating both the feasibility and transformative impact of this approach.

## **Partnerships and Implementation Strategy:**

The Stitch Master Plan emphasizes the critical role of strong, multi-agency partnerships to bring the vision to life. Given the complexity and scale of the project, particularly the engineering and cost-intensive task of constructing a multi-phase platform over the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector, successful implementation will require coordinated leadership and sustained collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders.

The creation of the Stitch platform entails significant predevelopment work, including site preparation, demolition, and infrastructure integration. Initial estimates suggest that the cost to cap the existing highway alone may reach hundreds of millions of dollars. Because of these high capital requirements, the plan recommends establishing a clear governance structure and funding roadmap immediately following plan adoption.

ADID and its key partners will take the lead in identifying funding mechanisms, public and private investment strategies, and phasing opportunities to advance platform construction and subsequent redevelopment.

## **Potential Implementation Partners:**

- Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) – Lead entity for plan implementation and coordination.
- Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) – Advocacy, community engagement, and policy alignment.
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) – Coordination for capping the highway and managing access ramps.

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) – Regional planning, technical assistance, and potential funding alignment.
- Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT) – Street design, multimodal infrastructure, and permitting.
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) – Transit access, station area planning, and right-of-way coordination.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Federal approvals and potential funding for infrastructure work.
- City of Atlanta Departments – Including City Planning, Public Works, Watershed Management, Housing, and the Mayor’s Office to support zoning, housing policy, public space operations, and permitting.
- Private Sector and Philanthropic Partners – For capital investment, development partnerships, and operations support.

**Process steps after adoption:**

- Pre-Construction
  - o Establish a clear and compelling shared vision for the Stitch, informed by the community engagement undertaken to date and included in this Master Plan.
  - o Establish a new 501c3 nonprofit entity in partnership with Atlanta Parks and Recreation.
  - o Delineate and codify roles and responsibilities between the City and the new nonprofit.
  - o Determine reasonable public and private funding streams for capital costs for future park phases, including a detailed grant search and a value capture impact analysis.
  - o Create a Special Service District (SSD) for a defined area around the Stitch as the primary tool and funding mechanism for the Stitch's operations and maintenance, and capital costs.
  - o Extend the Eastside Tax Allocation District’s (TAD) anticipated sunset date to leverage it as a funding mechanism to help support affordable housing goals and other public investments around the Stitch.
  - o Make a compelling case to developers on the nexus between public realm successes and expected economic returns to encourage development around the Stitch that aligns with the goals of the Master Plan.
- Mid-Construction
  - o Establish public and private funding sources for ongoing operations and maintenance expenses.
  - o Plan and produce a detailed programming and operations schedule that maximizes impact and efficiency.
  - o Identify partner organizations and third-party contractors, as needed, and sign contracts or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize partnerships for ongoing operations and programming.
- Post-Construction
  - o Undertake balanced programming that includes both ticketed and no-cost events.
  - o Incorporate revenue-generating programming into the Stitch's overall plan and design.
  - o Integrate performance metrics to track and assess the impact and efficiency of operations, maintenance, and programming.

**The Stitch Next Steps**

*The Stitch Master Plan* outlines the roadmap for implementation after the plan's adoption, addressing governance, funding, and phased actions needed to bring the project to fruition. It highlights the significance of shared leadership, financial sustainability, and long-term community stewardship.

## Governance and Management

- Governance Recommendation:
  - o A public-private partnership model is recommended, involving the establishment of a new nonprofit entity that will work in coordination with the City of Atlanta
  - o Key Governance Actions:
    - Establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation.
    - Clearly define roles and responsibilities between the City and the nonprofit.
    - Ensure an inclusive and flexible governance structure representing residents, institutions, businesses, and youth.
- Funding Strategy
  - o Capital Funding:
    - Phase 1 construction (\$157 million) is fully funded through a federal grant.
    - Additional funding for Phases 2 and 3 will rely on public-private funding sources, value capture strategies, and grant opportunities.
  - o Operating & Maintenance Funding:
    - Create a Special Service District (SSD) to generate local revenue.
      - Extend the Eastside Tax Allocation District (TAD) to support affordable housing and public investments.
      - Explore earned income opportunities (e.g., events, rentals, concessions) to sustain operations.
- Phased Implementation Steps
  - o Pre-Construction (now through 2026)
    - o Formalize the nonprofit governance structure.
    - o Finalize funding strategies (grants, SSD, TAD extension).
    - o Define the roles and responsibilities of the City and the nonprofit.
    - o Engage developers and make a compelling economic case for public realm investment.
- Mid-Construction
  - o Launch programming and operations planning.
  - o Finalize contracts with third-party partners.
  - o Secure funding for ongoing operations and maintenance.
- Post-Construction
  - o Deliver inclusive programming (ticketed and free).
  - o Implement performance metrics to track park success.
  - o Promote Stitch as a civic destination and economic catalyst.

## Guiding Principles

- The approach emphasizes flexibility, transparency, inclusivity, and a commitment to long-term resilience. Community involvement remains a central theme, ensuring that the Stitch is not only built with the public in mind but also governed with them as partners.

## **Consistency with Other Plans:**

The Stitch Master Plan aligns closely with and advances several adopted plans and ongoing planning initiatives in Atlanta, reinforcing citywide priorities for equity, connectivity, economic vitality, and sustainability.

- **Downtown Atlanta Master Plan (2018)**

- The Downtown Atlanta Master Plan explicitly references and supports the Stitch Vision Plan (2015), highlighting its role in reconnecting Downtown and Midtown through strategic reinvestment in underutilized infrastructure. Key alignments include:
  - Advancing the Stitch vision to physically and socially reconnect Midtown and Downtown, particularly in the South of North (SoNo) area.
  - Repurposing the former Peachtree and Pine shelter into a space for active and cultural uses.
  - Integrating new park space and enhancing stormwater management throughout the corridor.
  - Encouraging infill development to strengthen east-west connections.
  - Supporting the redevelopment of the Atlanta Civic Center site as a catalytic anchor within the Stitch district.
- Grow Downtown Framework – Strategy 3.3: Reimagine Critical Sites
  - Under the Grow Downtown initiative, Strategy 3.3 specifically calls for reimagining transformative sites like the area encompassed by the Stitch. The plan supports:
    - The completion of feasibility, engineering, design, and development studies is necessary to realize the Stitch’s implementation.
    - Integrating the Stitch into a broader approach to neighborhood-centered growth, public space activation, and sustainable urban design.
- **Stitch Vision Plan by CAP/ADID (2016)**
  - Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) launched the original Stitch Vision Plan in 2016 as a bold strategy to cap the Downtown Connector with new civic infrastructure and public realm improvements. That foundational plan envisioned:
    - A mix of green space, transit-oriented development, and civic destinations built atop a ¾-mile highway cap.
    - Enhanced connectivity to the Civic Center MARTA Station and surrounding neighborhoods.
    - Activation of new development pads and public spaces designed to maximize multimodal access.
  - The Stitch Master Plan builds directly on this vision, incorporating feasibility study results, engineering guidance, and community feedback gathered since 2016. Participants in the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan process consistently expressed strong support for the Stitch as a high-impact civic investment.

### **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:**

The Atlanta City Design (ACD) outlines Atlanta's vision, emphasizing five core values: Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. The ACD targets future growth in developed areas known as Growth Areas, which are further divided into Core Areas, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside of these Growth Areas are Conservation Areas, consisting of Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas.

The ACD identifies the Stitch Master Plan and its corresponding platform and boundaries as both a Core and Corridor Growth Area. These areas are designed to function as main streets that can accommodate growth and density while promoting vibrant public life. This designation aligns with the Stitch Master Plan's objectives, as it supports the development of high-density residential and commercial spaces, particularly around the proposed capping of the highway. The Plan's vision aims to reconnect the physical and social urban fabric fractured by the construction of the Downtown Connector and other urban renewal efforts. It

focuses on vital aspects such as parks and open spaces, multimodal streets, urban design, land use and zoning, real estate and redevelopment, affordable housing, economic vitality, and sustainability and resilience. These recommendations uphold the ACD's principle of "designing for people; designing for nature; designing for people in nature," further reinforcing the purpose of ACD Growth Corridors and the core.

According to the Atlanta City Design, the Stitch platform and boundary are located in the Downtown neighborhood, which qualifies as both Core and Corridor neighborhoods due to its proximity to significant corridors such as Ralph McGill Boulevard, Piedmont Avenue, Peachtree Street, and Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard. These areas are described as follows:

- Core Areas: "This is the center of Old Atlanta. It includes the City's densest, most traditional, adaptable, and walkable districts. It has a high capacity for growth, the best transit network, and many of the region's top historic, cultural, and academic assets. This area encompasses Downtown, Midtown, and a larger surrounding territory primarily characterized by commercial and industrial properties. It also includes emerging districts like West Midtown, South Downtown, West End, and Castleberry, where improved design can address current limitations to growth."
- Corridor Neighborhoods: "These serve as the connecting tissues of the city; these major streets flow out of the Core in every direction. They connect Old and New Atlanta, and most are commercially developed. Streets such as Hollowell, Peachtree, and Jonesboro wind along the contours of the city, while streets like Metropolitan, Memorial, and Northside cut straight through hills and valleys. In either case, commercial sites, civic buildings, and anchor institutions can be found along these routes. With better design, these corridors can transform into Main Streets for every community, accommodating reasonable growth that will enhance commercial vitality and foster vibrant public life beyond the Core of the city."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL of the *Atlanta Stitch Master Plan* as the City of Atlanta's Plan Reconnecting North Downtown Atlanta, and to amend the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan by incorporating this plan by reference.**

**NPU Recommendations:**

NPU-M voted to recommend approval of the Plan at their April 28, 2025, regular monthly meeting. NPU-E will vote on the Atlanta Stitch Master Plan at its June 3, 2025, regular monthly meeting.

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



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KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
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OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1265/CDP-25-012 for 2945 Forrest Park Road SE  
**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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**PROPOSAL:**

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **2945 Forrest Park Road SE** from the (SFR) Single Family Residential land use designation to the (I) Industrial land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-25-028 from the PD-H (Planned Development Housing District) to the I-1 (Light Industrial) zoning district to allow for the development of light industrial uses.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- **Property location:** The subject property fronts on the west side of Forrest Park Road SE. It is in Land Lot 4 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the South River Gardens Neighborhood of NPU Z, Council District 12.
- **Property size and physical features:** The property is a rectangular parcel measuring approximately 20.621 acres (898,250 square feet) in area. The parcel is undeveloped. The elevation of the lot increases from northwest to southeast. Trees cover the parcel.
- **Current/past use of property:** The property is currently undeveloped. Staff is unaware of any previous activities or other prior uses of the site.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning/:** The parcels located to the north, east, and west have an Industrial (I) future land use designation and zoned I-1 (Light Industrial). The parcel to the west is undeveloped and forested. The parcel to the north is undeveloped but has been cleared for future industrial use. The parcel to the east is the Department of Parks and Recreation Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve. To the south and southeast, the parcels have a Single Family Residential (SFR) future land use designation and zoned R-4 (Single Family Residential). These parcels are the site

of a developed single-family residential neighborhood. Additionally, to the southwest of the site, there is an Atlanta Public Schools high school.

- **Transportation system**: The subject property is located on Forrest Park Road SE which is classified as a collector street. There is no existing sidewalk. MARTA provides bus services via route #55. Route #55 operates along Hutchens Road SE and connects to the Five Points Transit Station. A bus stop is situated at Hutchens Road SE and Forrest Park Road SE, approximately 0.6 miles away.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses**: The proposed Industrial (I) land use designation is incompatible with that of the adjacent parcels. To the south and southeast, the parcels have a single family residential (SFR) land use. There is a high school located to the southwest of the site. The entrance to the Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve is across the street. The proposed land use is incompatible with these surrounding land uses.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood**: The applicant proposes the development of light industrial uses. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment would have a negative impact on the character of South River Gardens neighborhood. The current proposed site is surrounded by industrial, however, this parcel is immediately adjacent to a residential neighborhood and a nature preserve with a high school nearby. Light industrial land uses would have a negative impact on the character of this neighborhood and does not align with NPU Z's goal to "*prevent the further degradation of the residential neighborhoods in NPU-Z by preventing the conversion of residential properties to non-residential uses,*" and the CDP policy to "*protect existing single-family, low-density, and medium-density residential from incompatible higher densities and non-residential uses*".
- **Suitability of proposed land use**: The proposed Industrial (I) future land use designation is unsuitable with the surrounding land use designation of Single Family Residential (SFR). The proposed land use amendment is inconsistent with the Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Character Area policies to preserve the walkable scale and residential character of the neighborhoods and to encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots.
- **Consistency with City's land use policies**: The *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)* character area for this location is Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment. The proposed Industrial (I) land use designation is inconsistent with the CDP land use policies to:
  - CW 2 Protect existing single-family, low-density, and medium-density residential from incompatible higher densities and non-residential uses.
  - TNR 1: Preserve the walkable scale and residential character of the neighborhoods.
  - TNR 4: Encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots or where existing housing and commercial buildings are deteriorated
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans**: The NPU Z Redevelopment Plan was created to measure improvement priorities and to match specific sources of funding to improve implementation goals. Development plans that have been adopted or proposed for sub

areas of NPU-Z neighborhoods are incorporated to support this consensus vision for a vibrant community. The community's vision is to aggressively address deficiencies in nonresidential issues that include service quality, neighborhood retail availability, "smart growth", public transportation, human services, and a clean and safe environment that affords expansion and improvements to open space, infrastructure and parks in each of NPU-Z neighborhoods.

The proposed amendment does not align with the goals and recommendations outlined in the plan. Specifically, in the NPU Z Redevelopment Plan, the proposed amendment does not align with the following:

- Vitality and quality of life in NPU-Z should be preserved and expanded when development incentives and revised zoning codes tailored to the neighborhoods are introduced. The great majority of housing in NPU-Z (96%) is maintained to high standards. Stable and appreciating market conditions for single-family housing should continue to be supported.
  - Residential property conditions were measured in 2006 (107 substandard housing units and 324 vacant lots). Blighted conditions exist in NPU-Z at focal points: multifamily buildings on Conley Road in South River Gardens and Macon Drive in Glenrose Heights; vacant commercial structures on Jonesboro Road; isolated residential structures within Lakewood, Thomasville Heights, Norwood Manor, and Glenrose Heights; and vacant industrial properties within the Southside and South River Industrial Parks. Addressing blight through public/private partnership intervention and promotion of development opportunities is a priority. Housing codes should be uniformly applied to prevent and correct all illegal conversions, zoning violations, and nonconforming commercial / nonresidential uses.
- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta's vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, at **2945 Forrest Park Road SE** is a Suburban Neighborhood. Suburban Neighborhood are described as follows:

"These are peaceful post-war subdivisions designed by the speed and easy distance of automobiles. Many, like Adamsville, Brandon and Perkerson, lack sidewalks, are not as well-connected as older neighborhoods, and are often distant from retail and employment areas. Their more generous yards and intervening floodplains, however, provide far less runoff, more habitat and host huge swaths of Atlanta's tree canopy. In this way, in addition to offering homes for families who prefer less-urban lifestyles, these neighborhoods provide enormous benefits to the city at large."

- **Consistency with NPU policies:** The proposed Industrial (I) land use designation is incompatible with NPU Z policy to:

- Z-1: Conserve and preserve the historic, single family residential character of NPU-Z in all of the following neighborhoods: Blair Villa/Poole Creek, Browns Mill Park, Glenrose Heights, Lakewood, Leila Valley, Norwood Manor, Orchard Knob, Polar Rock, Rebel Valley Forest, Rosedale Heights, South River Gardens, Swallow Circle/Baywood and Thomasville Heights.
- Z-2: Prevent encroachment of commercial and other uses into single-family and low-density residential areas.
- Z-3: Prevent the further degradation of the residential neighborhoods in NPU-Z by preventing the conversion of residential properties to non-residential uses, except in those limited situations where such conversion is required by applicable law due to the existing, established non-residential use of all surrounding property.
- Z-7: Promote and encourage the redevelopment and rezoning of vacant, underutilized, auto-oriented, and residential trailer-park development along NPU-Z's exterior corridors to MRC.
- Z-8: Encourage the placement of all new I-1 and I-2 industrial development projects in the industrial parks of NPU-Z, only (Southside Industrial Park, Zip Industrial and Browns Mill industrial area)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DENIAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SFR) LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE INDUSTRIAL (I) LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-Z recommended APPROVAL for this land use amendment at its May 27, 2025, meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



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COMMISSIONER

KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
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OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee

**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*

**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1266/CDP-25-013 for 1280 Chattahoochee Ave NW

**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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**PROPOSAL:**

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **1280 Chattahoochee Avenue NW** from the Industrial (I) land use designation to the High Density Residential (HDR) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-25-025 from the I-2 (Heavy Industrial) zoning district to the MR-4A (Multifamily Residential) zoning district to allow for the redevelopment of the property with 105 townhomes, 350 multifamily rental units, and a parking structure.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- **Property location:** The subject property fronts on the south side of Chattahoochee Avenue NW and the east side of Southland Circle NW. It is in Land Lot 192 of the 17<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the Hills Park Neighborhood of NPU D, Council District 9.
- **Property size and physical features:** The rectangular shaped parcel measures approximately 8.98 acres (391,168.8 square feet) in area. The parcel has existing industrial structures. The parcel boundaries are planted with trees. The elevation increases from west to east and east to west.
- **Current/past use of property:** The property is currently developed with three warehouse buildings built between 1953 and 1975. A roofing supply company operates onsite. Fencing and paving were constructed between 1968 and 1975. Staff is unaware of any other previous activities or other prior uses of the site.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning/:** The parcels located to the north, south, east, and west all have an Industrial (I) future land use designation. The parcel to the north is zoned I-MIX (Industrial Mixed Use) and is developed with industrial, nonresidential and multifamily residential uses. The parcels to the east, west and south are zoned as I-2 (Heavy Industrial). The parcel to the east is developed

with a recreation and eating and drinking establishment, Top Golf. The other parcels are developed with industrial uses.

- **Transportation system**: The subject property is located on Chattahoochee Avenue NW, which is classified as a collector street, and Southland Circle NW, which is a local road. There is sidewalk infrastructure along Chattahoochee Avenue NW and the east side of Southland Circle NW. MARTA provides bus service via route #14. Route #14 runs along Chattahoochee Avenue NW and connects to the Midtown Transit Station, approximately 3.7 miles from the site. There is one bus stop located at Chattahoochee Avenue NW and Southland Circle NW, approximately 0.1 miles.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses**: The proposed High-Density Residential (HDR) land use designation is incompatible with that of the surrounding industrial parcels. All parcels surrounding the site are designated as Industrial (I). The proposed land use is not compatible with the recommendation of the Upper Westside Improvement District Masterplan which recommended retaining the Industrial land use designation. It is also not compatible with the goals of the Northwest Atlanta Industrial Freight Study which recognizes the need to retain industrial businesses. It aims to mitigate land use conflicts while preserving land for industrial uses by preserving and supporting industrial and manufacturing land.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood**: The applicant proposes the construction of 105 townhomes, 350 multifamily rental units, and a parking structure. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment would have a negative impact on the character of the Chattahoochee Industrial District by placing residential uses only on land designated for industrial purposes. The proposed site is surrounded by property with the (I) Industrial land use designation. While there is a need for more housing in the city, there is also a need to preserve industrial land uses to retain and attract local businesses, provide jobs that pay middle income wages and reduce job displacement for Atlanta citizens. According to the Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) Character Area, the following is the description for Industrial land uses:

*“Pressure to rezone and convert Industrial Areas will continue as demand increases for housing and other uses. Industrial Areas are attractive because of their relatively low costs, large lots, desirable locations, and unique architecture. Other challenges include the need to invest in Atlanta’s aging industrial buildings and the rising costs for industrial businesses to stay in the city. These are urgent needs as industrial rezoning and conversions are already resulting in further industrial business and job displacement and creating conflicts across Atlanta... Atlanta’s Industrial Areas are strategically located to support the growing demand to move goods in and out of the region by air, sea, rail, pipeline, and roads.”*

Rezoning any Industrial land use in a predominantly Industrial area is not consistent with the Atlanta CDP or Atlanta City Design. In addition, this proposal is not consistent with the Upper Westside Improvement District Masterplan 2021 or the Northwest Atlanta Industrial Freight Study 2023.

- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed High Density Residential (HDR) future land use designation is incompatible with the surrounding land use designation in an area that has an existing Industrial (I) land use designation. The proposed rezoning is inconsistent with the Industrial Character Area policies to “*preserve industrial land and buildings supporting 21st century industrial businesses*” and “*prevent encroachment of incompatible land uses, particularly residential development*”.
- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** The *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)* character area for this location is Industrial. The proposed High Density Residential (HDR) land use is inconsistent with the CDP land use policies to:
  - I-3: Discourage rezoning or conversion of industrial land and buildings to non-industrial uses.
  - I-4: Prevent encroachment of incompatible land uses, particularly residential development.
  - I-6: Preserve and rehabilitate potentially-historic industrial buildings, especially those 50+ years old.
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans:** The parcel is in The Upper Westside Improvement District Masterplan. The plan, created in 2021, lays out a strategy for where to invest in the public realm to improve quality of life and set a higher standard development design. Throughout the Upper Westside Masterplan, there is an understanding of the need to rezone industrial parcels, with limitations. The plan recommendation is- *CZ-2b: Work with property owners and other stakeholders in a collaborative process to explore rezoning Chattahoochee Avenue’s I-1 (Light Industrial) and I-2 (Heavy Industrial) sites to I-MIX (Industrial Mix Use) for the reasons noted above. The I-MIX zoning district was created to specifically retain industrial land while allowing the development of residential and nonresidential uses on the same property.*

The parcel is also located in the Northwest Atlanta Industrial Freight Study area. The Northwest Industrial Freight Study was created to define goals, needs and priorities for moving goods, improving access to jobs, reducing traffic congestion, adapting to changes in the logistics industry, and improving safety, mobility, and access for all roadway users in the plan’s study area. The plan acknowledges the need to retain industrial businesses as they have long contributed to critical employment and will continue to provide economic opportunities for new and existing residents, alike. Safe and efficient freight transportation is important to attract and retain these businesses and employers. Policies that support industrial development and jobs include:

- Support, retain, and attract industrial businesses (business development)
- Strengthen pathways to good and promising jobs for Atlantans (workforce development)
- Support industrial real estate development
- Mitigate land use conflicts while preserving land for industrial uses (zoning)

Additionally, the plan recognizes that zoning is needed to preserve and support industrial and manufacturing land users in Northwest Atlanta while allowing for mixed-use districts and conversion of industrial sites where appropriate.

- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further

categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, **1280 Chattahoochee Avenue NW** is a Production Area. Production Areas are described as follows:

“Beyond neighborhoods, these are other areas that the city has an interest in protecting from change. Primarily, they consist of strategic industrial land and railyards where intermodal transfer facilities, warehousing and key production facilities are needed close to the city center. They also include sites like the federal penitentiary and the large film studios at Fort McPherson and Lakewood Fairgrounds, which are simply unlikely to change and should not be included in the growth area.”

- **Consistency with NPU policies:** Relevant NPU D policies are:
  - D-3: Industrial Transition: Discourage heavy industrial uses throughout NPU-D and encourage existing industrial sites to convert to light-industrial or mixed industrial-commercial residential (i.e. I-MIX) uses.
  - D-13: Chattahoochee Ave: Preserve Chattahoochee Ave between Howell Mill Road and Marietta Blvd as a primarily light industrial, commercial and mixed-use corridor. Discourage truck traffic from accessing the intersection of Chattahoochee Ave and Howell Mill Road. Improve sidewalks and pedestrian crossings particularly in the vicinity of Central Mobile Home Village.
  - D-17: New residential development: Encourage medium- and high-density residential development around the Atlanta waterworks, at the west end of Blandtown close to the new Westside Park, and along Marietta Blvd. in Bolton and Hills Park. Encourage medium- and low-density residential developments on the periphery of existing single-family areas.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DENIAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE INDUSTRIAL (I) LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR) LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-D recommended APPROVAL for this land use amendment at its May 27, 2025, meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



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KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
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OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1267/CDP-25-015 for 1944 St. Johns Circle SW  
**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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## PROPOSAL:

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **1944 St. Johns Circle SW** from the Single Family Residential (SFR) land use designation to the Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-25-023 from the R-4 (Single Family Residential) to the MR-3 (Multifamily Residential) zoning district to allow for the construction of 50 townhomes and 4 parcels with detached single family homes. This parcel is being rezoned in conjunction with adjacent parcels per Z-23-033.

## FINDINGS OF FACT:

- **Property location:** The subject property fronts on the northeast side of St. Johns Circle SW and the south side of Fair Drive SW. The property is in Land Lot 90 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the Lakewood Heights Neighborhood of NPU Y, Council District 12.
- **Property size and physical features:** The irregular-shaped parcel measures approximately 0.633 acres (30,927 square feet) in area. Combined with the parcels that are part of Z-23-033, the assemblage measures 8.63 acres. The parcel is undeveloped. The elevation increases from southeast to northwest. Trees cover the parcel. The South River-Middle Branch traverses the northern part of the parcel.
- **Current/past use of property:** The property is currently vacant and undeveloped. Staff is unaware of any previous activities or other prior uses of the site.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning/:** The parcels located to the north and east have a Low Density Commercial (LDC) future land use designation and zoned C-1 (Community Business) zoning district. Several of these parcels are undeveloped while others are developed with commercial uses. The parcels to the east, west and south, that are also part of the assemblage, have a Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation and zoned MR-3 (Multifamily Residential).

These parcels are undeveloped. The remaining parcels surrounding the site all have a Single Family Residential (SFR) future land use designation and zoned R-4 (Single Family Residential). Many of these parcels are developed with single family residential housing.

- **Transportation system:** The subject property is located on St. Johns Avenue and Fair Drive SW, which are classified as local roads. The property is in the vicinity of Pryor Road SW, which is classified as a collector street. There is sidewalk infrastructure on the west side of Pryor Road SW and both sides of Fair Drive SW. There are no sidewalks on St. Johns Avenue SW. MARTA provides bus service via route #42. Route #42 runs along Pryor Road SW and connects to the Five Points Transit Station, approximately 4.3 miles from the site, and the Lakewood/Fort McPherson Transit Station, approximately 3 miles away. There is one bus stop located at Pryor Road SW and Fair Drive SW, approximately 0.2 miles. Another bus stop is located at Pryor Road SW and St. Johns Avenue SW, approximately 0.3 miles.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses:** The proposed Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation is compatible with the surrounding area. The parcel is nestled within parcels with a Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation. Therefore, the proposed site would be compatible with the surrounding land uses in the area.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood:** The applicant proposes the construction of 50 townhomes and 4 detached single family homes. The single-family homes will be oriented to face St. Johns Avenue. The applicant proposes to access the townhomes via a new road connecting to Fair Drive. The development would provide additional housing in the Lakewood Heights neighborhood. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment would have a positive impact on the character of the Lakewood Heights neighborhood by facilitating the development of additional housing that aligns with the goals of the Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) including the goal to “*provide a balanced range of housing, working with local partners to provide workforce housing, and focusing on increasing homeownership rate*”. In addition, the plan recommends Medium Density Residential land use for this parcel.
- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation is suitable for the proposed site. Currently, the surrounding properties all have a Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation. According to the Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), one of the goals is to “*encourage a mix of land uses and a diversity of housing typologies*”. Additionally, some of the CDP policies are to “*preserve the walkable scale and residential character of the neighborhoods*”. Therefore, the proposed land use designation would be suitable for this location.
- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** The *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)* character area for this location is Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment. The proposed Medium Density Residential land use designation is consistent with the CDP land use policies to:
  - TNR 1: Preserve the walkable scale and residential character of the neighborhoods.
  - TNR 4 Encourage compatible infill development on vacant lots.

- CW 10 Provide diverse and more affordable housing choices that are accessible by all people.
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans:** The Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) was created to provide a community-based, economic development-focused plan for the Lakewood area. The plan includes goals to link transportation and land use, increase housing options, promote mixed-use development, expand transportation choice, and encourage thoughtful economic growth.

The proposed amendment aligns with the goals and recommendations outlined in the plan. Specifically, in the Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), the proposed amendment aligns with the following:

- A high quality of life, with safe and attractive neighborhoods and quality housing options at varying price points, for rent and for purchase;
- A safe, convenient intown Atlanta location that offers an attractive and engaging environment for its residents and businesses;
- Protect neighborhoods by concentrating new development into areas best suited for it. Offer a balanced range of housing for people of different ages, incomes, and lifestyles
- Encourage a mix of land uses in close proximity. In order to create real walkable communities, residences, daily needs, and jobs must be located within close proximity. The Medium Density Mixed-Use areas shown in Figure 5.1, combined with the areas adjacent to them, will create walkable communities.
- Encourage community development agencies and non-profits to purchase vacant/foreclosed properties in the near term. While increased individual home ownership rates are desirable in the long term, these entities can help reduce vacancy and improve the housing stock in the short term.
- Work to speed up stabilization of the residential market. Stable home values and occupancy are key to fostering redevelopment and economic growth.
- Continue to work with local partners to provide workforce housing. This key resource should continue to be provided by the Atlanta Housing Authority, Invest Atlanta, Habitat for Humanity, Charis, and other public and private partners.<sup>19</sup>
- Encourage a mix of housing price points and types. A diversity of detached houses, townhouses, apartments, senior residences, student housing, and other types of housing at a variety of prices will preserve diversity and allow the community to be accessible to everyone.
- Focus on increasing homeownership rates. In the long term, the percentage of owned homes should be increased relative to rental housing. This will promote stability and long-term investment.

In addition, the plan recommends Medium Density Residential and Open space along the South River for this parcel. The plan also identifies activity nodes where development activity should be concentrated. The parcel is situated within an activity node centered at Pryor Road SW and Fair Drive SW.

- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, at **1944 St. Johns Circle SW** is a Suburban Areas. Suburban Areas are described as follows:

“These are peaceful post-war subdivisions designed by the speed and easy distance of automobiles. Many, like Adamsville, Brandon and Perkerson, lack sidewalks, are not a well connected as older neighborhoods, and are often distant from retail and employment areas. Their more generous yards and intervening floodplains, however, provide far less runoff, more habitat and host huge swaths of Atlanta’s tree canopy. In this way, in addition to offering homes for families who prefer less-urban lifestyles, these neighborhoods provide enormous benefits to the city at large.”

- **Consistency with NPU policies:** The proposed Medium Density Residential land use designation is compatible with NPU Y policy to:
  - Y-1: Preserve the residential character of the main neighborhood cores of NPU-Y and encourage new housing developments that are compatible with the character of the existing neighborhoods
  - Y-35: Maintain, rehabilitate, and replace existing housing stock where appropriate. Encourage new housing developments that are compatible with the character of the existing neighborhoods. Accelerate the replacement of blighted housing through the city’s existing in rem process.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (SFR) LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR) LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-Y will vote on this land use amendment at its June 2025 meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development



Department of  
**CITY PLANNING**

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JAHNEE R. PRINCE, AICP  
COMMISSIONER

KEYETTA M. HOLMES, AICP  
DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF ZONING & DEVELOPMENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jason H. Winston, Chair, Community Development/Human Services Committee  
**FROM:** Keyetta M. Holmes, AICP, Director, Office of Zoning and Development *KMH*  
**SUBJECT:** 25-O-1268/ CDP-25-016 for 335 Sawtell Avenue SE  
**DATE:** June 4, 2025

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**PROPOSAL:**

An Ordinance to amend the land use element of the 2021 Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) so as to redesignate property located at **335 Sawtell Avenue SE** from the Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation to the Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) land use designation. This land use amendment will facilitate the rezoning of the parcel per Z-25-031 from the R-4 (Single Family Residential) zoning district to the MRC-1 (Mixed Residential Commercial) zoning district to retain the existing Lakewood Heights Elementary School and to allow for the redevelopment of the building and site for mixed use development and affordable housing.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- **Property location:** The subject property fronts on the south side of Sawtell Avenue SE, the west side of Charleston Avenue SE and the north side of South Bend Avenue SE. It is in Land Lot 40 of the 14<sup>th</sup> District, Fulton County, Georgia in the Lakewood Heights Neighborhood of NPU Y, Council District 1.
- **Property size and physical features:** The L-shaped parcel measures approximately 2.15 acres (93,654 square feet) in area. The historic school fronts Sawtell Avenue, and an addition is located on South Bend Avenue with play fields located along Charleston Avenue. The elevation increases from northwest to southeast. Trees are planted along the outside perimeter of the parcel.
- **Current/past use of property:** The property is currently the site of the former Lakewood Heights Elementary School. The school was constructed in 1932. The building served as a meeting place for the historic General Motors Strike in 1936. Atlanta Public Schools acquired the property in 1952, and the building served as a school until its closure in 2003.
- **Surrounding land uses/zoning/:** The parcels located to the southeast have a High Density Residential (HDR) future land use designation and zoned R-4 (Single Family Residential). These parcels are developed with single family residential buildings. The parcel located to the southwest

has a Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD) future land use designation and zoned MRC-2 (Mixed Residential Commercial). This parcel is developed with a mixed use development. The Lakewood Heights Commercial district, located a block to the southeast, has a Mixed Use Land use designation and is zoned MRC-1 (Mixed Residential Commercial). All other parcels surrounding the site have a Single Family Residential (SFR) future land use designation and zoned R-4 (Single Family Residential). The parcels are developed with single family residential buildings.

- **Transportation system:** The subject property is located on Sawtell Avenue SE, which is classified as an arterial street. It is also located between Charleston Avenue SW and South Bend Avenue SE, which are both classified as local roads. There are sidewalks along both sides of the roads that line the parcel. MARTA provides bus service via route #55 and #155. Route #55 runs along Jonesboro Road and connects to the Five Points Transit Station, approximately 4.2 miles from the site. Route #155 runs along Jonesboro Road and connects to the Five Points Transit Station, approximately 4.0 miles from the site. There is a bus stop located at Jonesboro Road SE and Sawtell Avenue SE, approximately 463 feet.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- **Compatibility with surrounding land uses:** The proposed Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) land use designation is compatible with the surrounding area. The surrounding parcels range from Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-MD), Single Family Residential (SFR), and High Density Residential (HDR). The requested land use designation, MU-LD (Mixed Use Low Density) would be compatible for the area.
- **Effect on adjacent property and character of neighborhood:** The Atlanta Public Schools is partnering with the Atlanta Urban Development Authority to renovate the historic school building and develop the rest of the parcel with a mixed use development and affordable housing. The development would provide additional housing in the Lakewood Heights neighborhood. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed land use amendment would have a positive impact on the character of the Lakewood Heights neighborhood by rehabilitating the Lakewood Heights Elementary School and facilitating the development of additional housing that aligns with the goals of the Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), including the goal *“to find an appropriate reuse for the historic Lakewood Heights School, encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings, encourage a mix of land uses in close proximity and concentrating redevelopment along corridors”*.
- **Suitability of proposed land use:** The proposed Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) land use designation is suitable for the proposed site. Currently, the surrounding properties range from single-family homes to commercial developments which complement the existing proposal. According to the *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan*, Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) is described as the following *“This category is for a mix of residential and commercial uses. Development is at a scale and intensity compatible with a typical neighborhood setting that uses often cater to local residents”*. Additionally, per the CDP policies, the goal is to *“prioritize and maintain existing buildings in the neighborhoods and preserve their walkable character”*. Therefore, the proposed land use designation is suitable for this location.

- **Consistency with City’s land use policies:** The *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)* character area for this location is Redevelopment Corridor. The proposed Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) land use is consistent with the CDP land use policies to:
  - IC/RC 1 Elevate the distinct character of each Corridor while encouraging density, growth, revitalization, and vibrancy.
  - IC/RC 2 Support the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land and buildings.
  - IC/RC 5 Prioritize maintaining and rehabilitating existing housing and commercial buildings.
  - IC/RC 12 Preserve and protect historic buildings and sites through rehabilitation and reuse.
  
- **Consistency with Adopted Small Area and Neighborhood Plans:** The Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) was created to provide a community-based, economic development-focused plan for the Lakewood area. The plan includes goals to link transportation and land use, increase housing options, promote mixed-use development, expand transportation choice, and encourage thoughtful economic growth.

The proposed amendment aligns with the goals and recommendations outlined in the plan. Specifically, in the Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), the proposed amendment aligns with the following:

- One of the Urban Design and Historic Resources Policies is to preserve, protect, and encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings (those over 50 years old). These buildings are valuable because of the history and memories they preserve, because of their historic design, and because of the flexible affordable space for homes and businesses they provide. One of the recommendations is to Work with Atlanta Public Schools to find an appropriate reuse for the historic Lakewood Heights School on Sawtell Avenue.
  - Encourage a mix of land uses in close proximity. In order to create real walkable communities, residences, daily needs, and jobs must be located within close proximity. The Medium Density Mixed-Use areas shown in Figure 5.1, combined with the areas adjacent to them, will create walkable communities.
  - Preserve existing single-family areas and neighborhood commercial areas. Existing residential and commercial areas should be preserved as new growth occurs. Neighborhood commercial areas should be rehabilitated and revitalized with new investment.
  - Concentrate new development and redevelopment along key corridors. While there is a large amount of vacant or underutilized land within the study area, development activity should be concentrated along existing major corridors and at activity nodes shown in Figure 5.2, especially along Metropolitan Parkway, Jonesboro Road, Lakewood Avenue, Pryor Road, and west of the Lakewood Fairgrounds.
  - Ensure appropriate transitions between existing residences and more intense uses. This includes transitions to new, higher intensity development, as well as screening between residences and existing or future industrial areas.
- 
- **Consistency with Atlanta City Design:** The Atlanta City Design articulates Atlanta’s vision organized according to its five core values of Equity, Progress, Ambition, Access, and Nature. It focuses future growth into already-developed areas called Growth Areas, which are further

categorized as Core, Corridors, and Clusters. Outside the Growth Areas are the Conservation Areas, which include Urban Neighborhoods, Suburban Neighborhoods, Rural Neighborhoods, and Production Areas. Conservation Areas are the natural parts of the city that are less suited for growth and that should be protected from radical change.

According to the Atlanta City Design map, at **335 Sawtell Avenue SE** is considered to be a Corridor. Corridors are described as follows:

“These are the connecting tissues of the city: the major streets that flow out of the core in every direction. They stitch Old and New Atlanta together and most of them are commercially developed. Streets like Hollowell, Peachtree and Jonesboro wind along the contours of the city while streets like Metropolitan and Northside slice straight lines across hills and valleys. In either case, we find commercial sites, civic buildings and anchor institutions along the way. With better design, these corridors can become main streets for every community, accommodating a reasonable amount of growth that will spur commercial vitality and a vibrant public life out beyond the core of the city”

- **Consistency with NPU policies:** The proposed Mixed Use Low Density (MU-LD) land use designation is compatible with NPU Y policy to:
  - Y-1: Preserve the residential character of the main neighborhood cores of NPU-Y and encourage new housing developments that are compatible with the character of the existing neighborhoods.
  - Y-2 Encourage the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized commercial districts and industrial areas into attractive commercial or mixed-use areas (e.g., retail, arts, and entertainment, and mixed-use residential) that improve the quality of life of surrounding neighborhoods
  - Y-35 Maintain, rehabilitate, and replace existing housing stock where appropriate. Encourage new housing developments that are compatible with the character of the existing neighborhoods. Accelerate the replacement of blighted housing through the city’s existing in rem process.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL OF THE LAND USE AMENDMENT FROM THE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR) LAND USE DESIGNATION TO THE MIXED USE LOW DENSITY (MU-LD) LAND USE DESIGNATION.**

**NPU Recommendation: NPU-Y will vote on this land use amendment at its June 2025 meeting.**

cc: Jessica Lavandier, Assistant Director, Office of Zoning and Development