

MEMO

TO: Metropolitan Area Planning Commission

From: Planning Department, Otis T. Spriggs

Date: February 6, 2014

Re.: Expanding the Village Residential Overlay District

Dear Planning Commissioners:

When the Village Residential Overlay District was initially established, the purpose envisioned was to provide for enhanced standards to protect the unique characteristics of small-scale areas and/or corridors around Jonesboro. Specifically, the overlay district was incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to promote safe streets while giving special attention to landscaping, signage, lighting, yard and bulk, and architectural elements in order to create cohesive development patterns. To achieve the desired development pattern set forth in the Village Residential Overlay District, development plans must contain certain design characteristics including 1) pedestrian scale, 2) a mix of uses (commercial, office, and residential), 3) unified planning, design and appearance, and 4) the inclusion of amenities and pedestrian connectivity.

The City of Jonesboro recognizes the potential for growth and population diversification that will continue to transform the entire community. Planned Mixed-Use Areas (PMUA) that contain a combination of office, retail, housing or compatible uses developed with a consistent theme and containing architectural, landscape, streetscape and signage standards are an emerging trend among growing communities, and present a unique opportunity for large scale investment and controlled growth. Mixed-use developments encourage innovative design that promotes a live, work, shop, play, and worship environment, pedestrian in scale, and conducive to transit use, all in a compact urban form.

Mixed use development discourages the development of businesses that contribute to traffic congestion and instead encourages shared parking, multi-modal traffic patterns, and the creation of places oriented toward pedestrians. The intent of PMUAs as provided in the Vision 2030 Plan is to promote a mix of land uses including innovative residential neighborhood patterns that provide a variety of housing typologies and to discourage single use while balancing such development with planned open spaces and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. The benefit of a mixed use development for the City of Jonesboro is minimizing traffic congestion and relative infrastructure costs while also minimizing environmental degradation in order to improve quality of life and promotion of a healthy community.

In order to support the anticipated growth and development trends emerging in the City of Jonesboro, the City's Planning & Zoning Department has identified the need to expand the current Village Residential Overlay District to provide a regulatory framework for the development of larger scale, mixed-use development that aspires to similar design principles and the mixing of land uses envisioned in a village-scale development scenario while also providing attractive, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and cohesive design elements. In March, the Planning & Zoning Department will be presenting for consideration to the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and the City Council an amendment to the current Village Residential Overlay District to include a "Town Center" element that builds upon the design tenants of the smaller-scale village regulatory provisions initially envisioned for this zoning overlay classification. The amended zoning provision will create an expanded zoning classification titled "Town Center and Village Residential Overlay Districts".

The intent of the recommended *Town Center (TC) Overlay District* is:

- *Public Space* – to preserve, enhance or create forms of publicly accessible open space
- *Compact Mixed Use* – to create a compact concentration of land uses within each development through multiple uses in a single building, or in the same general area
- *Street Activity* – to encourage a sense of place through street level activity by allowing the imaginative and efficient utilization of land and to develop a sense of community by promoting year-round pedestrian and outdoor activities at the street level
- *Pedestrian Oriented* - to reduce the dependence upon and dominance of the automobile through street design, shared parking, pedestrian scaled buildings and pedestrian pathways and spaces
- *Design* – to achieve a unique aesthetic design through high quality architecture with attention to placement, relationship and orientation of structures to provide greater compatibility with surrounding land uses

The Town Center (TC) Overlay District will be a mapped zoning district that imposes a set of development regulations in addition or in place of the underlying zoning district. The framework for the Town Center provisions to be incorporated into the Village Residential Overlay District will follow much the same organizational content as the current Village Residential Overlay zoning provisions including:

- Purpose
- Applicability
- Method of Adoption
- Effect of Town Center (TC) Overlay District Classification
- Town Center Approval Procedure
- Phasing of Development

The Town Center zoning standards will also address:

- Definitions
- Minimum site area
- Permitted Land Uses
- Permitted Conditional Uses
- Commercial, Office, and Residential Mixed-Use Development Standards (Building Placement, Site Layout, Street Hierarchy, Parking, Open Space, etc.)
- Design Guidelines and Standards (Landscaping, Architecture, Lighting, Signage, etc.)

Town Center Streetscape Examples:

