



# SANDY SPRINGS **NORTH END**

**City Council Presentation**  
**December 15, 2020 @ 6:00 PM via Zoom**

## **Agenda**

- This Study's Purpose & Goals
- Engagement Summary
- Plan Results
- Recommendations for the City

# 4 Redevelopment Sites



**North River Village  
Shopping Center**  
**11.2 acres**



**River Springs  
Center**  
**9.8 acres**



**Northridge  
Shopping Center**  
**10.5 acres**



**North Springs  
Center**  
**8.8 acres**

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## What this Plan IS

- Conceptual, but feasible, ideas
- Models for redeveloping underutilized commercial centers
- An understanding the community's preferences for future redevelopment

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## What this Plan ISN'T

- A zoning exercise (we are not re-writing the Code, merely making recommendations)
- A final design for all four sites

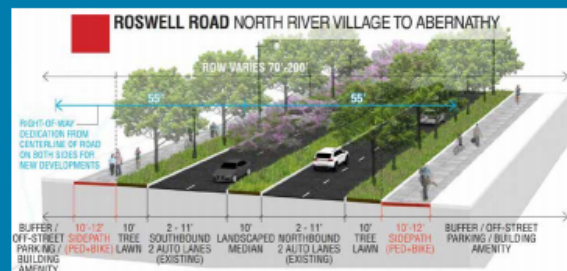
# Goals

1. Ensure a variety of housing options to accommodate all types of residents.
2. Improve multimodal connectivity throughout the North End, starting with the four sites and Roswell Road.
3. Model how mixed-use (retail, office, housing, and institutional uses, and green space) environments can work in Sandy Springs.
4. Build upon existing green spaces and parks to create a cohesive public space network.
5. Attract and support local small businesses in the North End.

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# Overall Assumptions

- **The key to success is changing North Roswell Road**
- Not much demand for retail; retail is changing even faster due to the pandemic
- High demand for a variety of housing types and price points
- Each site is designed differently based on surrounding context



**\*\*Street Section from Next Ten Comprehensive Plan**

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# Public Engagement Summary

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## Outreach

- ✓ Focus Groups & Stakeholder Meetings (February-April 2020)
- ✓ Kick-Off Meeting (March 5, 2020) - 200 participants
- ✓ Virtual Pop-Up (June 2020) - 162 participants
- ✓ Weekly Virtual Activities for each Site (August - September 2020) - participation varied by site
- ✓ 5 Advisory Committee Meetings
- ✓ Final Plan Open House (Virtual) & Farmers' Market Pop-up

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# Overall Feedback Themes

- Need a mix of housing options that are attainable at many price points, including single-family homes and different forms of multi-unit buildings
- Desire for parks, plazas, green space, and connected parks and trails
- Desire for mixed-use with residential and retail
- New buildings should not be taller than 5-6 stories, but can go taller to support more housing options on certain sites
- Support for public funding of infrastructure and parks in order to accommodate higher-quality redevelopment, attainable housing, and more green space

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## Plan Results

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# Site Plans

- **13 plans** created (3 per site, 4 for River Springs) and revised based on financial feasibility and public input
- 6/13 worked financially; 7/13 could work with changes to City code or incentives
- Today's code can create financially-feasible site plans, but the requirements do not allow much room for site design creativity, public space, or affordable housing
- Conflicting preferences and code requirements limit the density on each site



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# Financial Feasibility

- Broad assumptions are intended to be a screening tool, NOT development recommendations. Refine as development & pricing evolve.
- Each site assessed as though master developer purchased the center, demolished existing buildings, prepared the site for redevelopment, then sold the pads to vertical developers within 24 months.
- Land cost based on recent area comparable sales; adjusted for inflation and speculation
- **Three levels of feasibility:** not feasible (red light), potentially feasible with modifications, concessions, public-private partnerships (yellow light), feasible (green light)

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# Site Plan Revisions from Input

- Added more green space, particularly on North River Village and North Springs Center with larger community spaces
- Reduced building heights in some concepts on North Springs and River Springs
- Acknowledged the need for City investment in housing and public infrastructure to make some redevelopment work financially

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An aerial photograph of a proposed development site, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple rectangle. The site plan shows various building footprints, parking lots, and green spaces. The text "Recommendations for City" is written in large white letters across the center of the purple overlay.

## Recommendations for City

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# Striking a Balance

One example  
of where this  
becomes difficult

## Fiscal Impact

The City of Sandy Springs can benefit through one-time & continued revenue on redeveloped sites.

## Community Values

- Housing affordability
- Green space & public spaces
- Quality retail
- Limited building heights
- Walkability / trails

## Affordability Gap

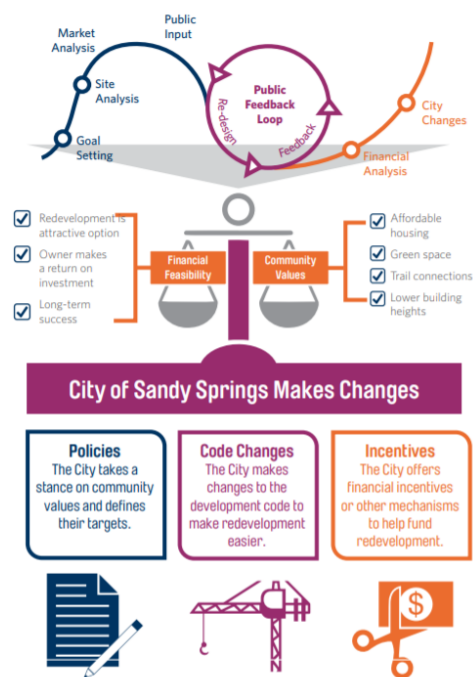
- Cost to build a typical new housing unit is **\$225-260K**
- To build an affordable unit at 80% AMI, cost cannot exceed **\$180K**
- Gap of **\$45-80K** that needs to be made up

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# The Main Point

*The City of Sandy Springs needs to make changes in order to reflect community values, attract quality and financially feasible development, and catalyze targeted redevelopment on underutilized sites.*

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# Policies



- **Define what “affordable” or “workforce” housing means for Sandy Springs**
- **Use the Housing Assessment and this study to set specific targets and timelines**
  - Number of units or percentage of new units
  - Types of units and applications in different types of neighborhoods
- **Support key public infrastructure and site preparation**
  - Use previous plans to set specific targets and timelines for parks / public spaces
  - Prioritize Roswell Road streetscape changes and implementing trails
- **Establish Opportunity Zones & GRAD Sites**

# Code Changes



- Expedited permitting
- Remove the concrete and steel construction requirements above 3 stories in the North End for key sites
- Change streetscape requirements for internal streets in redevelopments
- Allow more units types by-right, not just as conditional uses
- Reduce lot size requirements for townhouses live / work, cottage court, multi-units to allow a greater diversity of unit types
- Re-zone some sites or change some aspects of the mixed-use districts
- Remove or refine the ground-floor commercial requirement in SX- districts
- Consider options to require or incentivize affordable housing in new development

# Development Incentives



## • Mitigate risk

- Place public uses on or near sites
- Enhance the public realm
- Enhance transit / mobility options

## • Offer financing support

- Tax Allocation Districts
- Municipal bonds
- Development Authority
- Tax abatements and credits

## • Do the hard work ahead of time

- Buy and assemble small parcels into marketable parcels.
- Buy aging or contaminated sites and clean them up

## • Direct incentives

- Purchase sites & write down land cost
- Public Parking Deck
- CDBG Grants

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# Example: Tying it Together

## Affordability Gap

- Cost to build a typical new housing unit is **\$225-260K**
- To build an affordable unit at 80% AMI, cost cannot exceed **\$180K**
- Gap of **\$45-80K** that needs to be made up

## Policy

- Define housing affordability goal

## Code Changes

- Expedite permits & inspections
- Increase density by 10%
- Address minimum lot size & street width requirements
- Reduce parking requirements by 20%

## Incentives

- Write-down land costs
- Use TAD to pay for 10% of costs
- Waive or reduce impact fees

Using all of these:

**20 - 25%**

**HOUSING COSTS**

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# City Next Steps

- **Housing Action Plan:** 12/15 Council Agenda
- **Development Code:** City staff working on proposed changes for Council consideration to discuss at Council Retreat
- **Incentive Programs:** Discussion at Council Retreat