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## Sky's the limit for high-rises in new Gwinnett commercial district

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Posted: 8:14 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016

For decades strip centers and shopping malls have been the norm for commercial development in Gwinnett County. While other suburbs built up, Gwinnett grew out.

But the sky's now the limit for vertical development in Gwinnett – at least in a new commercial zoning district near Gwinnett Place Mall.

The Board of Commissioners Tuesday unanimously approved the new Venture Drive overlay zoning district – a place where developers can build urban-style high rises in Atlanta's largest suburban county. The **original plan** allowed buildings as tall as 25 stories if developers included amenities like multi-use paths and pedestrian boulevards.

But under an amendment approved Tuesday, there would be no height limit for buildings in the district, bounded by Pleasant Hill Road to the east, I-85 to the south, Steve Reynolds Boulevard to the west and Satellite Boulevard to the north.

"We're just sending the message that we'll let the market determine what the building height limitations need to be there," said Commissioner Jace Brooks, who represents the area and offered the amendment.





There would be no height limits on buildings in a new commercial district near Gwinnett Place Mall. The district is bounded ... [Read More](#)

“We do not anticipate a mad rush of 20- and 30-story buildings,” Brooks said. “But we certainly want to leave that up to the market.”

The new zoning district is part of a larger Gwinnett effort to encourage **urban-style development**. Another example: Commissioners **recently approved** plans for a densely packed mix of shops, offices and apartments near the Mall of Georgia.

That development also includes a 21-story hotel that would become the tallest building in the county. Currently, the tallest is the 17-story Sonesta Gwinnett Place Atlanta hotel.

If developers take advantage of the new Venture Drive district, buildings there could be even taller.

No specific development plans for the Venture Drive district have been announced. Supporters say the district will encourage redevelopment in an area that has seen better times.

“We hope something great will happen,” said Glenn Wisdom, operations director for the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District, which includes the new zoning district. “We don’t know. We’ve never tried it before.”

No one spoke against the district at a public hearing Tuesday.

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