

## Commission to consider rezonings for high-rises

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From staff reports

LAWRENCEVILLE — Gwinnett County commissioners will review an eclectic mix of high-profile rezonings tonight.

The most notable would allow Gwinnett County's first high-rise.

The two 25-story condo towers would go on Steve Reynolds Boulevard near Interstate 85, and their bases would be connected by a mini-shopping mall.

The zoning change is being sought by Yamasaki Associates, an architectural firm based in Troy, Mich., whose founder designed the World Trade Center.

There has been no public opposition to the rezoning, and nearby condo owners have supported it, saying it will help property values in the Gwinnett Place commercial district.

Gwinnett planning commissioners and regional agencies have endorsed the rezoning, but with a twist. Because of the traffic it would generate, planning commissioners are urging that just one tower be allowed if the developers cannot build a second driveway.

Recent plans have shown only one driveway onto Steve Reynolds Boulevard, and because of a median, shoppers and residents would only be able to turn right out of the property,

forcing those who want I-85 to make a U-turn at the next traffic light.

The second drive would link the 300-foot-tall towers to either Shackelford Road or Club Drive, but Yamasaki has previously been unable to cut a deal with adjacent property owners whose land they must cross.

Their attorney has previously indicated the one-tower limit could jeopardize the project, which calls for 263 condo units.

Going from urban to suburban, another rezoning would allow commercial buildings and 383 cluster homes at a semi-rural intersection near Dacula.

Unlike the high-rise, the plans for the Rabbit Hill Road-Hurricane Shoals Road intersection has garnered public opposition.

Last week Bighorn Investments LLC offered to trim its project by increasing the lot size of one of the subdivisions, but the Planning Commission is recommending the proposal be further shaved.

The advisory panel favors allowing only low-density subdivisions with no commercial development on the three intersection corners that Bighorn has purchased. A sprinkling of cluster homes would be allowed in one subdivision.

Nearby residents oppose Bighorn's plans, saying the development would exacerbate traffic congestion and school overcrowding. They favor the Planning Commission's recommendation.

Another rezoning that would allow a trash transfer station on the edge of one of the county's first subdivisions is also on tonight's agenda.

The 6 acres just off Buford Highway near Doraville are already zoned industrial, but Advanced Disposal, of Jacksonville, Fla., needs it changed to a different industrial status.

If the rezoning is approved, it would settle a lawsuit Advanced filed against the commission two years ago after it denied a similar rezoning off Oakbrook Parkway near I-85.

Residents in the Mechanicsville neighborhood have complained about the prospect of having a garbage transfer station as a neighbor. They say it would hurt their property values.

Up to 100 garbage trucks would travel to the center on Jones Bridge Road daily, bringing

400 tons of refuse that would be packed into semi-trailers destined for a landfill outside Gwinnett.

A ventilator and odor neutralizer system would be installed to eliminate odors, and all liquid waste would be captured on site and delivered to a wastewater treatment plant, according to plans filed by Advanced Disposal.

Since its creation decades ago, industrial development has sprouted around Mechanicsville, making it a residential island of sorts.

**What:** Gwinnett Board of Commissioners

**When:** 7 p.m. tonight

**Where:** Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville