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## Ready for change CIDs get favorable responses to redevelopment proposal

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Staff Photo: Jason Braverman  
Dilapidated buildings along Jimmy Carter Boulevard may be prime locations for redevelopment under new plans proposed by the Gwinnett Village and Gwinnett Place community improvement districts. The two CIDs held public meetings Tuesday night to discuss the ideas.



### File Photo

The Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village community improvement districts are creating redevelopment plans that would offer bonuses to developers willing to add greenspace, parking decks and other amenities on

NORCROSS - Promising that a proposed redevelopment plan would help make three local corridors "the hottest areas in Gwinnett," Gwinnett Village Director Chuck Warbington said he was impressed with the amount of thought people gave to the plan - and how pleased they seemed to be with it.

More than 150 people came to two community meetings Tuesday to learn the details of a redevelopment plan jointly authored by the Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village Community Improvement Districts.

Joe Allen, the Gwinnett Place director, said he was wowed by the 40 or so people who came out to comment on the plan, which would provide development incentives on stretches of Pleasant Hill Road, Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway in exchange for amenities such as shared parking decks or open space.

"Everyone liked the vision that was painted," he said. "I'm very, very encouraged that we got some good feedback, some good dialogue."

The plan, which will be voted on by the boards of both CIDs in February, would provide density bonuses to developments that install public art, allow for work force housing, build environmentally friendly buildings or make other changes to the area. Allen said some people at his meeting requested even more incentives for the builders, hoping to lure corporate headquarters to the area.

At the Gwinnett Village meeting, some residents worried about the amount of traffic high-density developments would bring, or how adding more people to the area would impact the schools.

They also asked about progress on a proposed mixed-used development at the OFS plant, which Warbington called a catalyst for the area. He said leaders there are aware of the progress on the plan.

About 130 people attended the Gwinnett Village meeting, and Warbington said while people wanted more details about the plan, he did not hear any negative comments.

"People were really thinking about this thing," he said. "This is cutting-edge material we need to figure out."

property such as the OFS plant on three corridors — Buford Highway, Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road in Gwinnett County.

After the CIDs pass the plan, it will go before the city of Norcross and Gwinnett's planning commission and Board of Commissioners for a vote, Warbington said. There, it may be further altered before it becomes law.

John McHenry, the Gwinnett Village CID's program director, said the plan is necessary because it costs more to redevelop existing buildings than it does to simply build new ones on unaltered land.

The proposal is divided into four tiers, with maximum building heights and development density ranging from five stories to 25 stories depending on their proximity to major intersections or high-use areas, such as Gwinnett Place Mall.

"What's exciting about this stuff is that it's already happening," McHenry said. "We're just adding more fuel to the fire that's taking place."

Overall, residents and business owners seemed pleased with the suggested improvements, even if they had some qualms about the details.

David Baker, who lives in Tucker, said she doesn't think anyone could be in complete agreement with such a wide-ranging proposal, which she hopes will help stabilize the area. But she appreciated the fact that CID leaders took the time to hear what people who have invested in the area think.

"They're actively seeking us. They want to hear our fears, they want to hear what we're happy about," she said. "We're excited other people are finally seeing the advantage of this area. It's like they're singing out of our hymn book."

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