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Redevelopment plan passed by CIDs

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DULUTH - A plan that would offer incentives to developers in certain areas who improve their property has been given the go-ahead.

The boards of two local community improvement districts passed draft plans of the redevelopment ordinance, which is now being vetted by Gwinnett County and Norcross officials.

The plan, created by the Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village CIDs, would provide density bonuses to developments that install public art, allow for work force housing, build environmentally friendly buildings or make other changes to stretches of Pleasant Hill Road, Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway.

"This will continue to change as it moves through the county process," Gwinnett Place CID director Joe Allen said. "It will continue to evolve and change. This is something that's going to be a spark."

Because it costs more to redevelop existing buildings than it does to build new ones on unaltered land, the plan provides incentives if developers have amenities like shared parking decks or open space in their projects.

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.

John McHenry, the Gwinnett Village CID's program director, said he expects some changes to the plan before the draft becomes an ordinance, but thinks the fact that people have been asking how their properties can be included is a good sign for the plan's acceptance by residents.

"I'm pumped up about it," he said. "Considering that it's a very challenging market right now, there's still a lot of interest in southwest Gwinnett."

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