



**From the Mayor's Desk**

**February 2020**

## **Redeveloping the Holcomb Bridge Road Corridor**

When the city was incorporated nearly eight years ago, one of the missions of the City Council was to seek opportunities to reinvigorate and redevelop the Holcomb Bridge Road corridor. This important gateway to our city was once a thriving part of our community filled with busy restaurants, retail stores, businesses and new apartment complexes. But as the northward march of development continued, this area began to show its age.

Today we have 40-year old garden-style apartments and aging retail strips that have long passed their peak years. In a normal cycle, aging buildings, shopping centers and apartment units are replaced by developers who see redevelopment opportunities.

To date, the city has not had success with its efforts to offer developers incentives attractive enough to spur redevelopment of this area.

We are determined to find the right formula that will make this area attractive for redevelopment. To that end the Council and I are considering organizing a Redevelopment Authority to explore new redevelopment opportunities for this key area.

A Redevelopment Authority is an agency of the City created by a resolution of the City Council for the purpose of implementing a Redevelopment Plan within a designated area. Let me explain how a Redevelopment Authority would operate.

### **What does a Redevelopment Authority do?**

The mission of the Redevelopment Authority is to carry out urban redevelopment projects within its area of operation through the implementation of a Redevelopment Plan.

### **What powers does a Redevelopment Authority have?**

It has the same powers as the City Council except it cannot levy taxes, issue general obligation bonds, determine the redevelopment area, determine blight, approve or modify the redevelopment plan.

The Authority can enter into contracts, purchase and lease property, construct projects, hire staff and consultants, apply for grants, borrow money, etc.

### **Where would a Redevelopment Authority have jurisdiction?**

The determination would be made by the City Council based on analysis of existing conditions.

### **What other cities in the area have a Redevelopment Authority?**

Duluth, Dunwoody, Brookhaven, Sandy Springs, Marietta and South Cobb all have redevelopment authorities.

### **How is a Redevelopment Authority formed?**

By Resolution of the City Council (as authorized by O.C.G.A. 36-61-18). The Authority has seven members who serve staggered six-year terms, The Authority establishes its by-laws and must file an annual financial report.

### **What steps are needed to move forward?**

1. Prepare a Redevelopment Plan; identify a redevelopment area; assess existing conditions in that area (i.e. crime, code enforcement activity, building conditions, etc.); identify specific problems; Needed changes, goals, etc.; and create a redevelopment strategy to identify opportunities, solutions, and methods to effect the desired changes.
2. Adopt Three Resolutions: A) Adopt Redevelopment Plan; B) Identify need and declare findings; C) establish a Redevelopment Authority.
3. Activate the Redevelopment Authority Board and appoint board members. Citizen involvement is an important part of this process. To fill the board, the positions will be posted, and candidates interviewed as part of the selection process.

### **Where do we begin?**

City staff has started gathering the data needed for a Redevelopment Plan looking at such statistics as:

- Code enforcement activity, vs comparison of activity in entire city
- Building improvements made within the area over the past six years, comparison of improvements city wide
- Capital improvement by type
- Crime statistics: city-wide vs redevelopment defined area

The next steps in the process would be to hire a consultant to draft a Redevelopment Plan, generate additional statistics from City data base to help inform the plan and draft resolutions.

Part of this process would include holding public hearings, adopting resolution to activate a Redevelopment Authority and implement the city's plan.

This is a complex process that will take time, but the Council and I feel it is an important one for our city. All the meetings will be open to the public. We welcome and encourage you to attend, ask questions and stay informed as we move through the process.

**Sincerely,**

**Mike Mason, Mayor**