



Mayor's Message

March 2021

Live, Work, Play, or Understanding Mixed-Use Developments

When Peachtree Corners was founded in 2012, we adopted Gwinnett County's zoning map and codes. One of the many zoning categories was a mixed-use development (MUD) classification. Mixed use refers to developing buildings and communities that blend business, retail and residential in a pedestrian-friendly environment—literally live, work, play. However, Gwinnett's MUD was developed many years ago and was intended to be used county-wide, including along the I-85 corridor, so there were aspects of the MUD that were not a good fit for Peachtree Corners.

Now, eight years later, there is finally some interest in mixed-use development. So, in anticipation of pending projects, the city's community development department staff revised the current MUD regulations to ensure any future projects would enhance our community.

To help you understand the value of a MUD district to a community, below are a series of Q&As which should help explain its purpose and advantages.

What is the purpose of a mixed-use development district?

The purpose is to promote the development of properties that will integrate commercial and/or office with residential land uses, promote pedestrian accessibility, reduce automobile trips, and provide a livable environment for its residents. It also is designed to enhance the value and aesthetics of the surrounding community.

Why did the city decide to amend the current MUD use?

Because the city's MUD zoning classification has been relatively unused, our city staff began looking at ways to enhance and refine the ordinance, especially as a means of encouraging redevelopment efforts whether in Tech Park or along the Holcomb Bridge Road Corridor.

The City Council recently approved an amendment to the city's MUD zoning district which was designed to tailor future MUD developments for our community and to implement the goals of the city's comprehensive plan.

What makes this new MUD unique?

The amended ordinance offers a menu of options that provide developers the opportunity to earn density bonuses for enhancements that might not otherwise be included in projects. As an

example, an incentive item may include creating public greenspace in exchange for allowing additional housing units per acre. Another incentive would allow a developer additional units per acre in exchange for land donated to the city's multi-use trail system. Other incentives include:

- Parking spots made EV ready for charging stations
- Smart technology building enhancements
- LEED, Green Earth or comparable certifications
- Public art feature
- An innovative and remarkable amenity or feature
- Provide parking corral for micro-mobility devices (e-scooters, e-bikes)
- Adaptive reuse of existing building or structure
- Direct connection or location on city's multi-use trail

Are mixed use developments on the rise?

Yes, just a century ago, most development was concentrated in urban areas where people walked from home to work or shop. With the arrival of automobiles, however, that trend changed as we all left cities and headed for the suburbs. Now the pendulum is swinging back making mixed-use developments popular again.

What are the advantages of a mixed-use development?

First it spurs revitalization of properties that are no longer functioning as they were intended, such as large office spaces that have remained empty for an extended time. Secondly, this type of development provides more housing opportunities and choices. It provides for a walkable development which in turn reduces the number of automobile trips thus decreasing traffic.

What is driving this MUD designation?

As your city council, we are tasked with ensuring our city thrives. Just as important as ensuring quality of life for each of you, our task is also to study future development trends. Sometimes that means redeveloping business, commercial, and industrial areas that may benefit from a new use that is in better keeping with our community's current needs.

How will the MUD be used in the future?

It will promote projects that combine multiple uses in a single development. Those type of projects can make more efficient use of land and provide enhanced amenities. Research indicates that mixed-use developments offer a lifestyle that is particularly appealing to millennials and empty-nesters, two segments of our population that are not currently well served with regard to housing options.

***Stay safe everyone,
Mayor Mike Mason***