



Repositioning the Southside

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

APRIL 14-15, 2026

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THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

Shape the future of the built environment for
transformative impact in communities worldwide

MISSION COMMITMENTS

CONNECT active, passionate, diverse members through the
foremost global network of interdisciplinary professionals

INSPIRE best practices for equitable and sustainable land use through
content, education, convening, mentoring, and knowledge sharing

LEAD in solving community and real estate challenges through
applied collective global experience and philanthropic engagement

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ULI ATLANTA'S SCALE AND IMPACT

In Atlanta we like to say that our members are anyone who touches how cities get built and that we are not a think tank but a "do tank" because it's our members who are physically shaping the built environment to advance the aspiration of our global mission.

What we do:

- ✓ Convene meetings and events and educational panel discussions
- ✓ **Organize Technical Assistance Panels assisting communities across the state of Georgia with complex land use challenges**
- ✓ Design programs and initiatives that advance our core mission commitments
- ✓ Develop content and case studies that inspire members to integrate big ideas and emerging trends
- ✓ Provides a forum for sharing of best practices with real estate and land use professionals



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Membership

ULI is the premiere convener of real estate and land use professionals



48,000+

Members in more than 80 countries



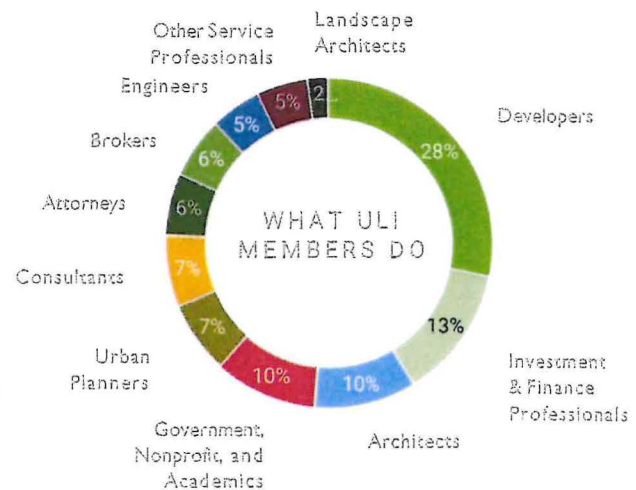
1,400+

Members across the state of Georgia and a satellite in Savannah, GA



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TAPs are called upon to develop rebuilding a community, understand development potential, and proactively identify opportunities for better, healthier life in cities around the world.



In partnership with hundreds of ULI members over **30 years**, TAPs have:

- Solved land use and real estate issues for **more than 150 communities and non-profit organizations throughout ULI Atlanta's statewide geography**
- Made recommendations that have sparked community debate on public priorities; and ensured market viability and economics of community and place
- Utilize local knowledge through stakeholder engagement process to help inform recommendations

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Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

What makes a TAP unique?

- High-level real estate leaders are curated specifically for the clients needs
- Central considerations are market viability and economic realities of community and place

Snapshot of Communities/Orgs Served

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| • All Saints' Episcopal Church | • City of Savannah |
| • Atlanta BeltLine | • City of Tucker |
| • City of Alpharetta | • City of Tybee |
| • City of Augusta | • Clayton Co. |
| • City of Clarkston | • Fulton Co. |
| • City of Doraville | • Hall County |
| • City of Dunwoody | • Invest Atlanta |
| • City of East Point | • MARTA |
| • City of Powder Springs | • Rabun County |
| | • City of Norcross |



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TAP Process

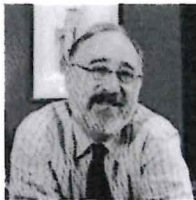
- Briefing documents provided by the City of Savannah
- Study area tour
- Stakeholder interviews with community leaders, businesses owners, tenants, etc.
- Panel discussions
- Recommendation formation



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TAP Panel



Patrick Shay
GMSHAY
Panel Chair



Eric Bishop
Kimley-Horn



Kathi Cook
City of Alpharetta



Niti Gajjar
Cooper Carry



Kenwin Hayes, Sr.
Georgia Power



Geoff Koski
KB Advisory Group



Fielder Shurling
Regent Partners



Whitney Shephard
Transport Studio



Arman Tolentino
Cooper Carry
Project Manager



Grace Wooten
Pape Dawson

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Scope of Work

1. How should standards for density, height, housing, mobility, and open space be structured to attract investment while delivering community benefits?
2. What type of planning and regulatory framework (overlay, mixed-use, TOD, form-based, or character districts) would best implement the CNU Southside Retrofit Legacy Project to include a variety of uses with connected neighborhoods?
3. How can the redevelopment of the area around the Mall be redeveloped to create a mixed-use hub with strong connections to public space and mobility?



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Scope of Work

4. Which catalyst sites should be prioritized, and what strategies or policy changes are needed to make them market-ready with a phased implementation?
5. How can redevelopment strategies be coordinated with complete streets improvements and Georgia Southern University's Armstrong Campus plans?
6. Which tools (incentives, expedited review processes, design review, or special districts) should be considered for new investment?



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What We Heard

Stakeholders included municipal staff and officials, business leaders, community members, and more

- The area has an identity, but lacks a soul
- Car-centric environment, limited walkability
- Community needs additional services
- Additional housing is needed; affordable, multigenerational
- Abercorn is busy and dangerous
- The area lacks a downtown / center / core
- There are trust issues in the community
- Nothing in the area for people older than 5
- Site has multiple owners, easements, complexities
- Site is large and holds potential
- Tide to Town, park connectivity is promising
- Mall owners would welcome direction
- GSU could be a good partner
- City's job is to shape the public realm
- Need to create a there there
- Start big and start over



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STRENGTHS

- Prime location – Gateway to the Southside, car accessible, access to everything
- Proximity to nature – Mohawk Lake to the north, marshland and river to the west, Bell's Landing to the south
- Proximity to institutional anchors – GSU Armstrong provides opportunity for partnership
- Public resources (library, VA)
- Abercorn provides good connectivity
- Transit service district
- Stable residential market – mix of housing types, active market

WEAKNESSES

- Auto-centric design – Lack of sidewalks and pedestrians
- Lack of true unified community identity – lack of central gathering space
- Fractured land ownership
- Multiple layers of easements, restrictions
- Roadways and utilities create barriers (interrupting connectivity)
- Competing choices in downtown, midtown
- Transit access lacks walkability connections (e.g., bus stop lacks a connecting sidewalk)

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OPPORTUNITIES

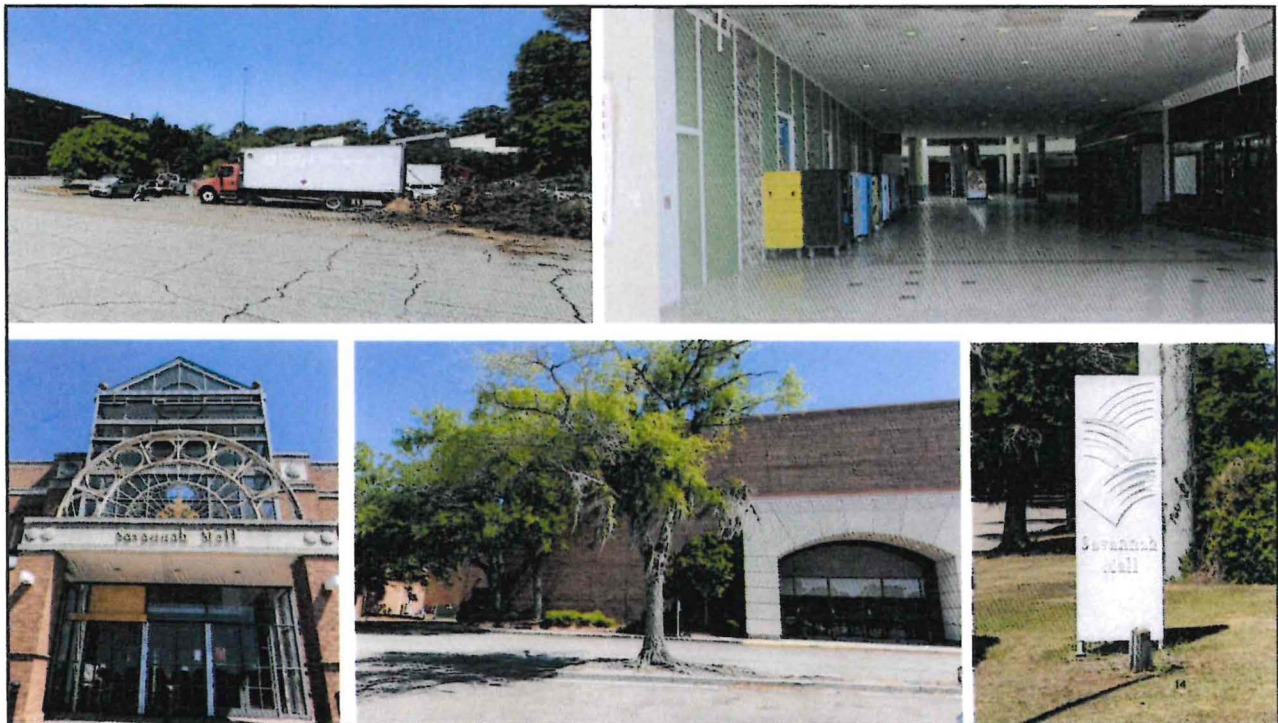
- Connect to Tide to Town trail
- There is an existing market commuting further south
- The scale allows for an entirely new identity
- New Hyundai Plant 35 min to the west
- Create a community gathering space
- Southside is for the people (make this Savannah for the people)
- Existing workforce
- Building upon the existing diverse housing types (lifecycle housing for multiple generations, co-housing, etc.)
- Potential to link to GSU students and other anchor institutions
- Potential new anchor site
- Sports-anchor, mixed-use development
- Youth sports complex (driving hotels, restaurants, entertainment)
- Bring nature in – trees, water – all of the things people think about when they think of Savannah

THREATS

- Status quo – threat of doing nothing
- Long-term process to reshape such a large property
- Continued decline is a drag on the neighborhood
- Crime (non-violent crime) is an issue
- Prevalence of unhoused population
- Competing community interests, distrust, lack of action
- Lack of planning infrastructure
- Competing growth nodes
- Not enough corporate strength to bring a new location here and associated white-collar workers
- Transit is weak
- Anchors are operating in silos with little connectivity or interaction

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Key Themes

- City-driven process – control the site
- Put the tools in place (the City's part of a P3)
- Issue the RFP

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SAVANNAH MALL SITE – VISION

CNU 26, Savannah Legacy Project, 2018: Create a long-term vision to establish a vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use and walkable neighborhood center on the City's Southside with opportunities for education, housing, jobs, entertainment, and access to multiple modes of transportation.

IDENTITY &
CULTURE

CIVIC HUB



COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS

LAND USE &
DEVELOPMENT



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SAVANNAH MALL SITE – VISION

IDENTITY & CIVIC HEART



Cultural & Natural Heritage

Honoring Gullah Geechee history, historic churches, and the area's unique waterfront tree canopy.



City Hall South & Civic Hub

A central gathering space providing resident services, library access, and multigenerational programming.



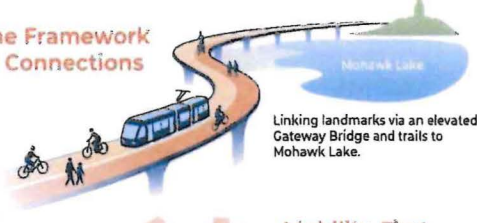
5-10 Acre Public Park

Creating a major recreation greenspace complemented by linear parks and enhanced Tide to Town segments



CONNECTIVITY & DEVELOPMENT

The Framework of Connections



Linking landmarks via an elevated Gateway Bridge and trails to Mohawk Lake.



Mobility-First Infrastructure

Prioritizing safe walking, biking, and expanded transit as the primary means of transportation.



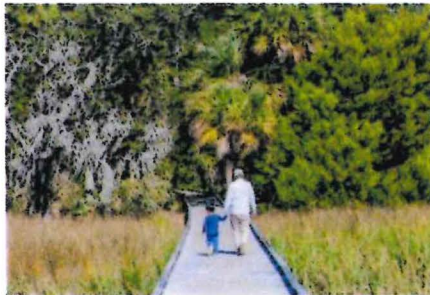
Diverse & Dense Housing

Focusing population growth through mixed-income and dense housing typologies within activity centers.

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IDENTITY & CULTURE



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CIVIC HUB



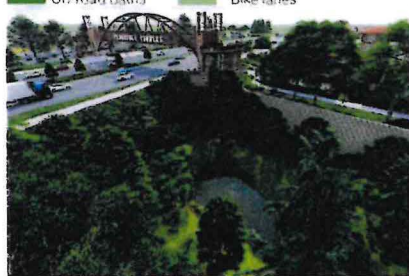
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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



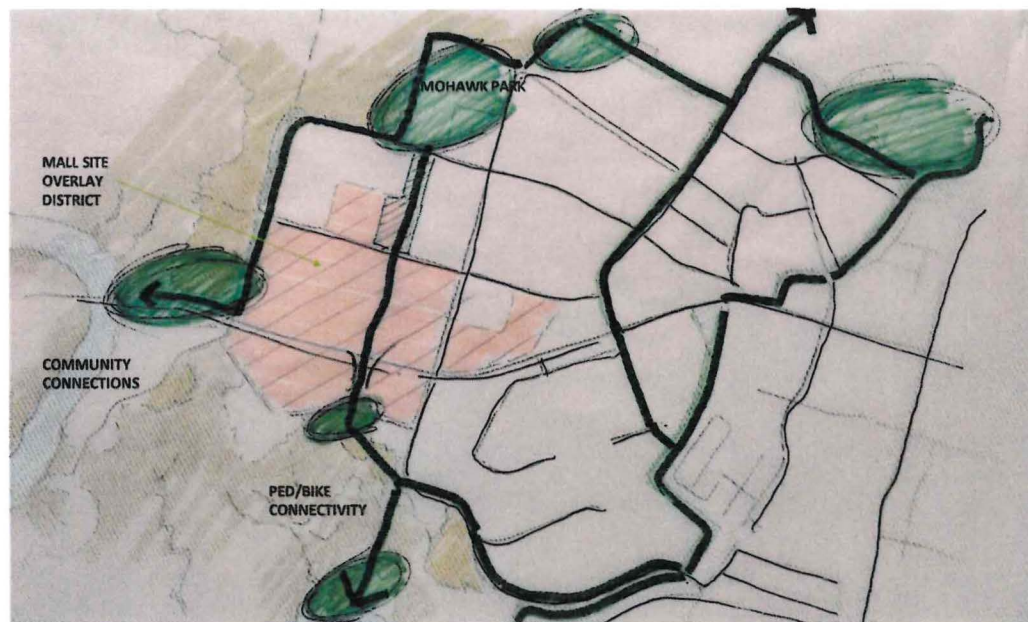
Off-road paths Bike lanes



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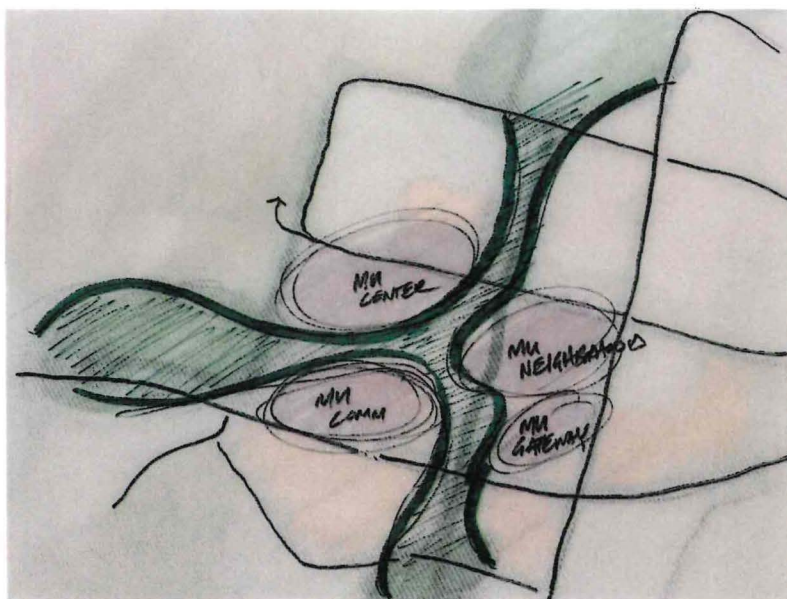
LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT



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FRAMEWORK PLAN – OPTION A

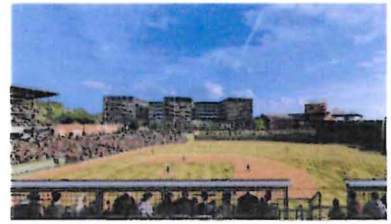
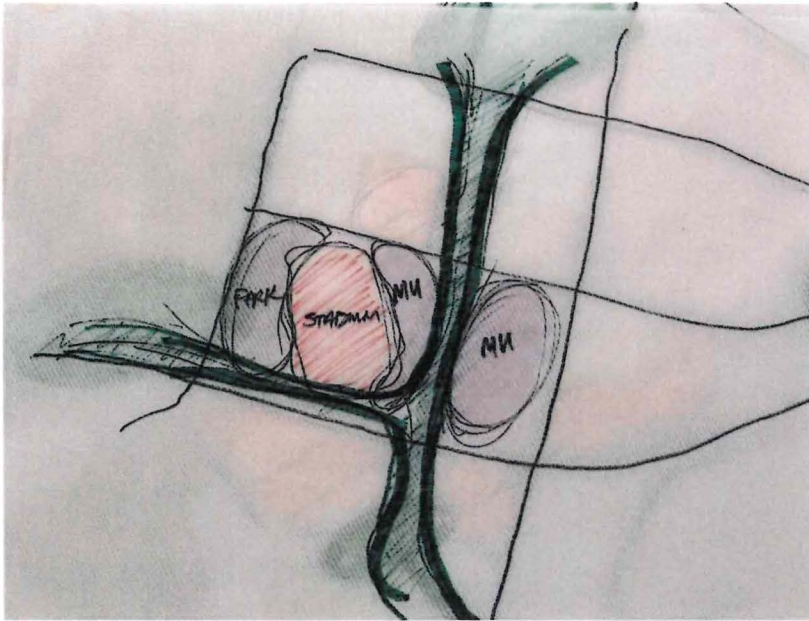


Suwanee Town Center

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FRAMEWORK PLAN – OPTION B

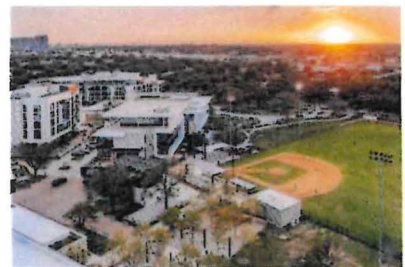
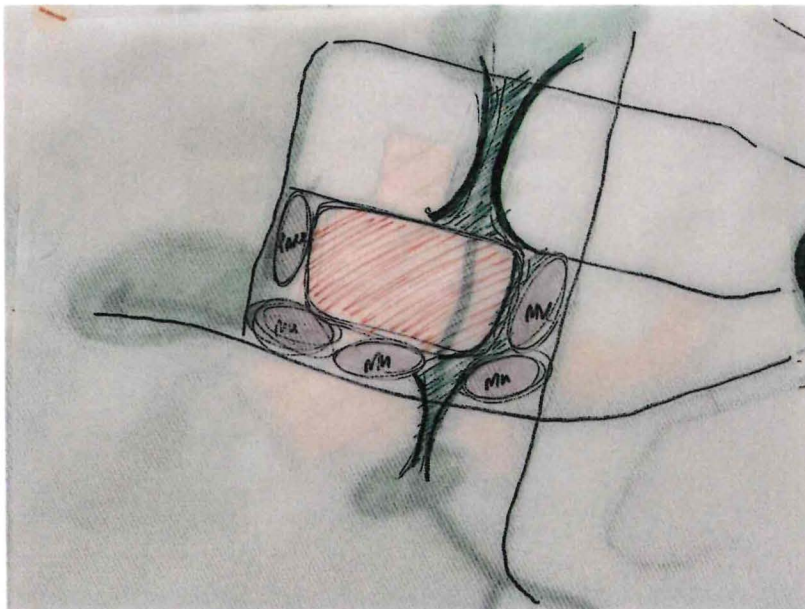


Erlanger Park, Chattanooga

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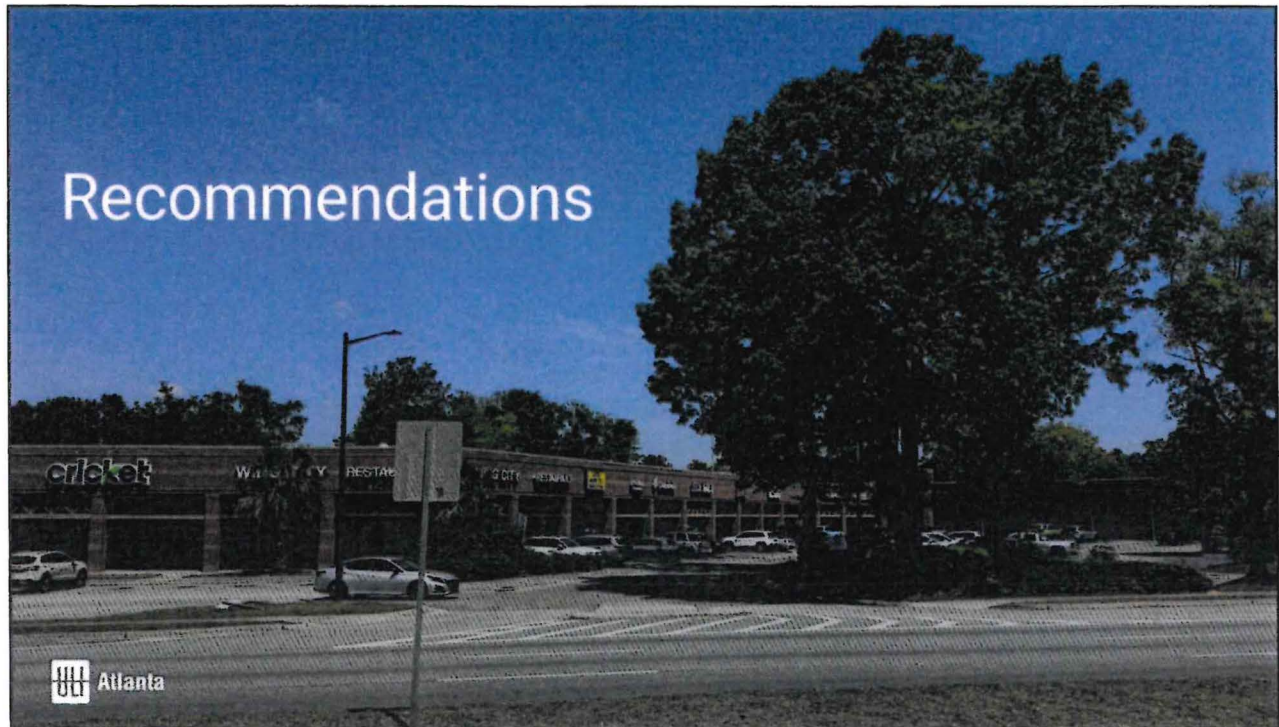
FRAMEWORK PLAN – OPTION C



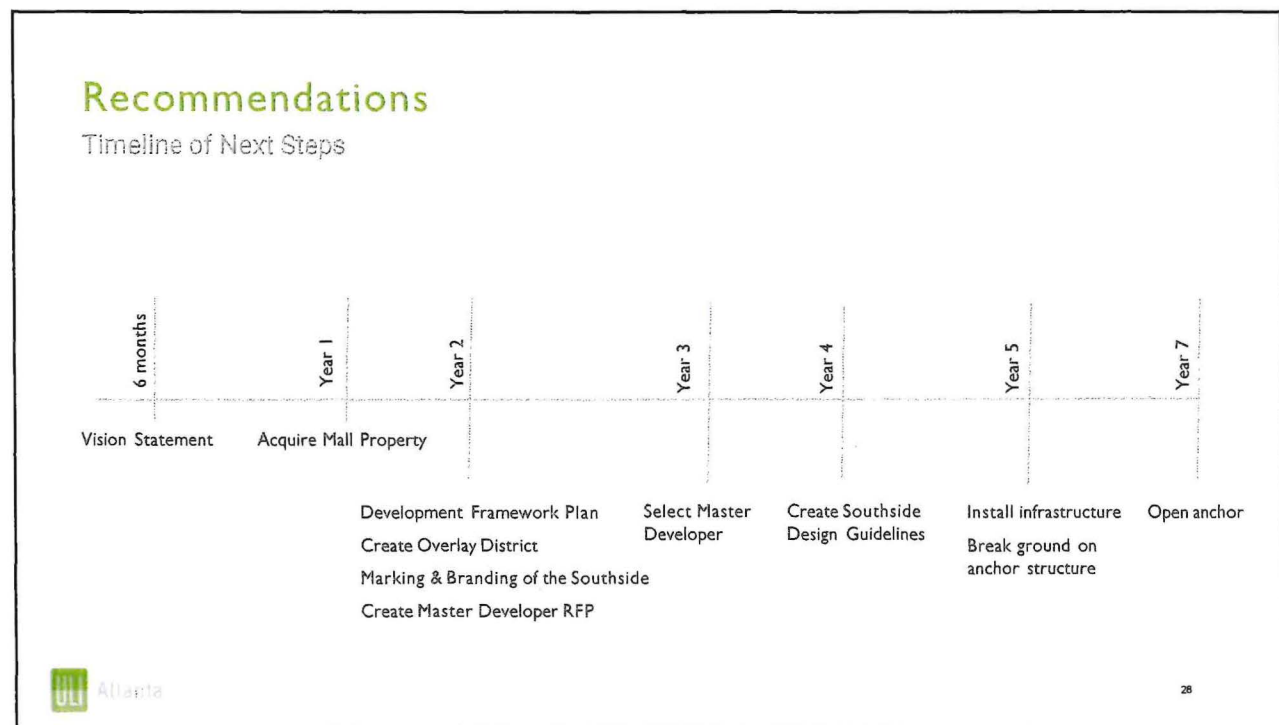
The Dallas Village

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Recommendations

Next Steps

SHORT TERM

- Understand this is a city-driven process
- Get control of the mall property, including Target and Dillard's, including all easements



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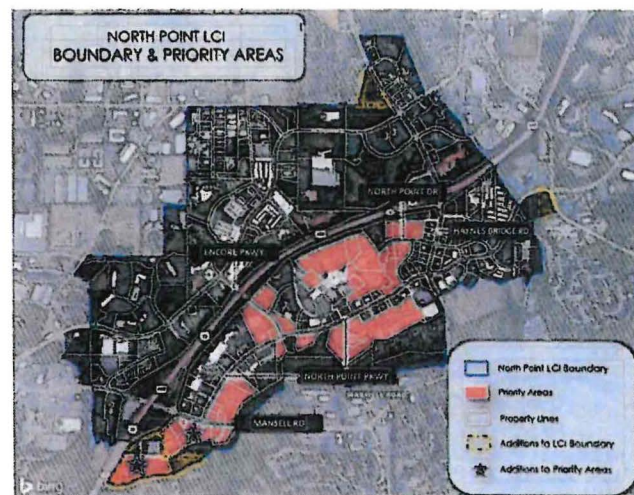
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Recommendations

Next Steps

MEDIUM TERM

- Create a Vision Statement
- Create and adopt a Development Framework Plan for the Southside District that includes:
 - Public Infrastructure
 - Public transit
 - Public space
- Create an Overlay District
 - Identify areas that prioritize density (4-5 stories)
 - Specify mix of uses
 - Reduced setbacks
 - Reduced parking requirements



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Recommendations

Next Steps

MEDIUM TERM

- Consider potential economic development tools
- Assess optionality
 - Conduct a market study
 - Consider partnering with a sports complex consultant
- Consider potential anchors / potential scenarios
 - Public green space
 - Public athletic complex
 - Sports anchor mixed-use development
- Create a Marketing & Branding Strategy for the Savannah Mall site



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Examples of Economic Development Tools/Incentives

LOCAL LAND VALUE-CAPTURE

- Tax Allocation Districts (TADs)
- Special Service Districts (SSDs)
- Community/Business Improvement Districts (CIDs/BIDs)
- Impact Fees

LOCAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP TOOLS

- Tax "Abatements"/Bond-for-Title
- Land Banking
- Land Trusts

FINANCIAL TOOLS (State/Federal)

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)
- New Market Tax Credits
- Enterprise Zones
- Federal Opportunity Zones
- Job Tax Credits/ State Opportunity Zones
- Sales and Use Tax Exemptions

LOCAL FINANCIAL TOOLS

- Façade Improvement Grants
- Entrepreneurship/Small Business Grants
- Revolving Loan Funds
- Brownfield Remediation Funds

LOCAL NON-FINANCIAL TOOLS

- Expedited Permitting
- Reduction/Waiving of Fees
- Density Bonuses

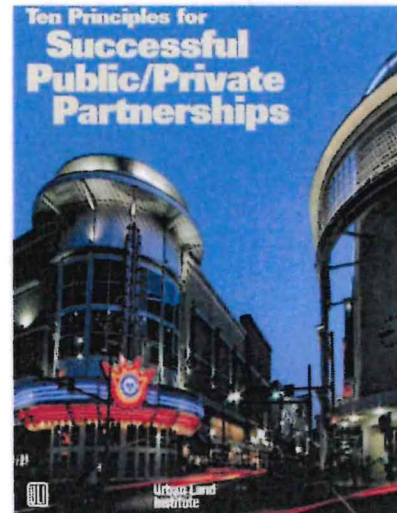
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Create a Marketing and Branding Strategy

- “Community branding” provides the City with the opportunity to establish an authentic narrative about the Southside area and the progress being made
- Communicate
 - Regularly with partners about goals, decisions, and activities
 - Early and often
 - Internal communication
 - External communication

“A transparent process, achieved through open communication, information-sharing, and participation in the decision process, increases the potential for broad support for public/private partnership projects, particularly from non stakeholders”



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Recommendations

Next Steps

MEDIUM TERM

- Create a Master Developer RFP for the Savannah Mall site
 - Include requirements for housing and/or community-oriented uses
 - Include a requirement to adopt portions of the Framework Plan
- Create Design Guidelines for the Southside District
 - Coordinate with the Master Developer
 - Use the Savannah Mall site as an example

LONG TERM

- Reconfigure infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, public spaces)
- Break ground and build out the anchor structure
- Attract further redevelopment
- Build out the Framework Plan

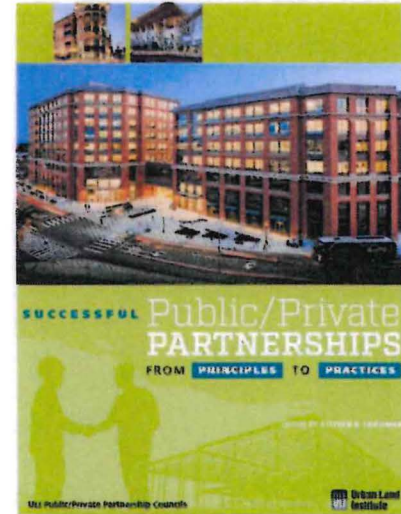


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Create a Master Developer RFP for the Savannah Mall Site

- "The public entity bears a unique responsibility to fully define what is being sought and to seek proposals that fully address complex public issues"
- In Public/Private Partnerships . . .
 - "development project deals are typically negotiated"



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City-driven process
Put the tools in place
Issue the RFP



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