



The Student Housing Conundrum

Balancing Need with Community Implications

Georgia Planning Association Fall Conference 2018

September 6, 2018, 2:00 – 3:15 PM

Moderator:

Dana Johnson, Director

Cobb County Community Development Agency

Session Agenda



Definitions and terms

Introductions of Speakers

Presentations

Questions and Answers

Wrap-up

Definition and Terms: PBSH

Purpose Built Student Housing (PBSH)

- Privately-built student housing with which no educational institution has involvement in the permitting, construction or management
 - *a.k.a. private student housing*



Definition and Terms: Key Distinguishing Factors

1. Units leased by the bedroom
 - Contain 1 to 5 bedrooms
2. Lease terms aligned with academic calendar year
3. Traditional and student-friendly amenities
 - Study rooms
 - Swimming pools
 - Exercise rooms
 - Barbecue/picnic areas



The Conundrum: Student Body Growth

Kennesaw State University

- Commuter college → full-fledged residentially-based university
- Significant growth over the past 10-15 years
 - Result: shortage of on-campus housing for students

University of Georgia

- State's flagship institution
 - Record-setting freshman enrollment on a near-annual basis
- On-campus housing is adequate; however,
 - Off-campus living is a popular option

“How has Athens-Clarke County kept up with the demand for off-campus student housing?”

The Conundrum: The Response

Kennesaw State University

- Shortage of on-campus housing has created a market for PBSH

University of Georgia

- Communities have been built for the student housing market
 - Marketed as an investment opportunity for parents/students to be owners/landlords

The Conundrum: The Response

Community Discord

Common complaints near PBSH:

- Excessive noise
- Light pollution
- Parking issues
- Increased vehicular traffic
- Frequent calls to police



Traditional Apartment vs. PBSH Unit



- Almost 1 – 3 Bedroom Typical
- One Half (48%) 2 bedroom
- Average floor area approximately 1075 sq.ft.
- Average lease \$1,269 /mo / unit



- 1-5 Bedroom units available
- Average number of bedrooms not available.
Of the 3 with available information:
 - 1 has 79.6 %
 - 2 have 100% 4 bed / 4 ba units
- Average floor area not available:
 - Floor areas range from 586 sq.ft. in a 1-bed to 2,408 sq. ft. in a 5-bed detached cottage
- Lease by the bedroom
 - Ranging from \$699 in a 4-bed unit to \$1,020 for a 1 bed unit

Speakers

Jason Gaines, AICP

Planning Division Manager, Cobb County

Darryl Simmons

Planning and Zoning Administrator, Kennesaw, GA

Bruce Lonnee, AICP

Senior Planner, Athens-Clarke County, GA





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Jason Gaines, Planning Division Manager

Cobb County Government

Presentation Outline

1. Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area
2. Current Status: Moratorium, Statistics, Community Response, Elected Official's Response
3. Moving Forward: Takeaways from the Study



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area

Why PBSH?

- (Perceived) Lack of on-campus housing options at KSU
- Large demographic cohort in the age range of the “traditional” college student
- Lack of other investment opportunities during the economic downturn ('09-'13)



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area

continued

**KSU: Nearly 39% growth rate
in total enrollment 2004-2013**

- Peak was 2006
 - Annual growth: nearly 7%
- 2012-2013
 - Annual growth rate slowed to less than 2%



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area

continued

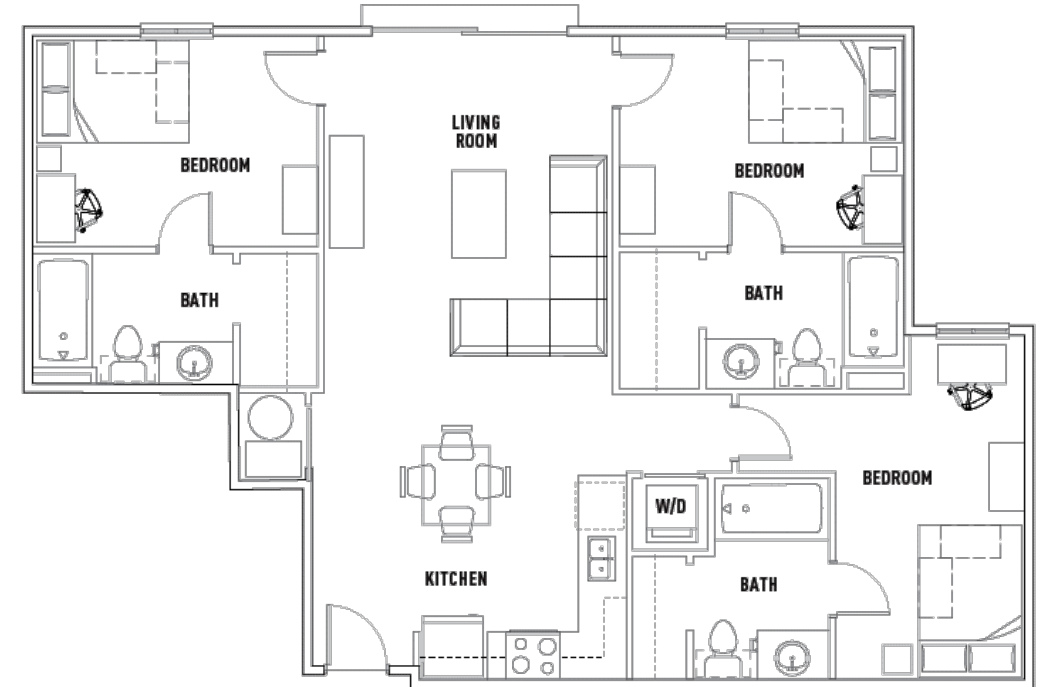
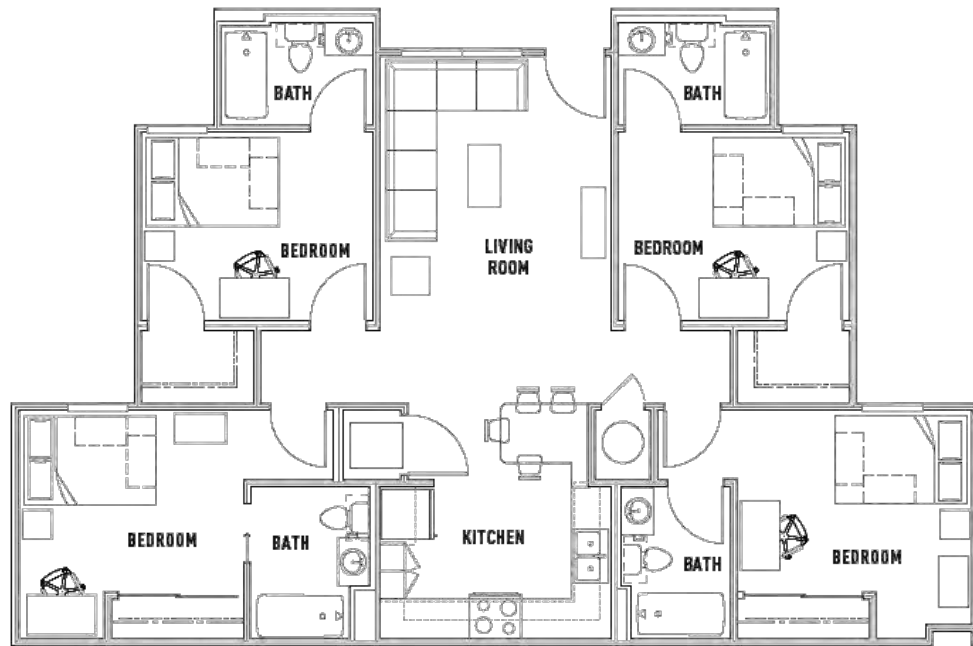
Newfound Concerns

- Over-supply, softened demand
- Not easily absorbed into multi-family market due to floorplans/layouts
 - Pro-forma is based on boarding/multi-tenant living arrangement



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area

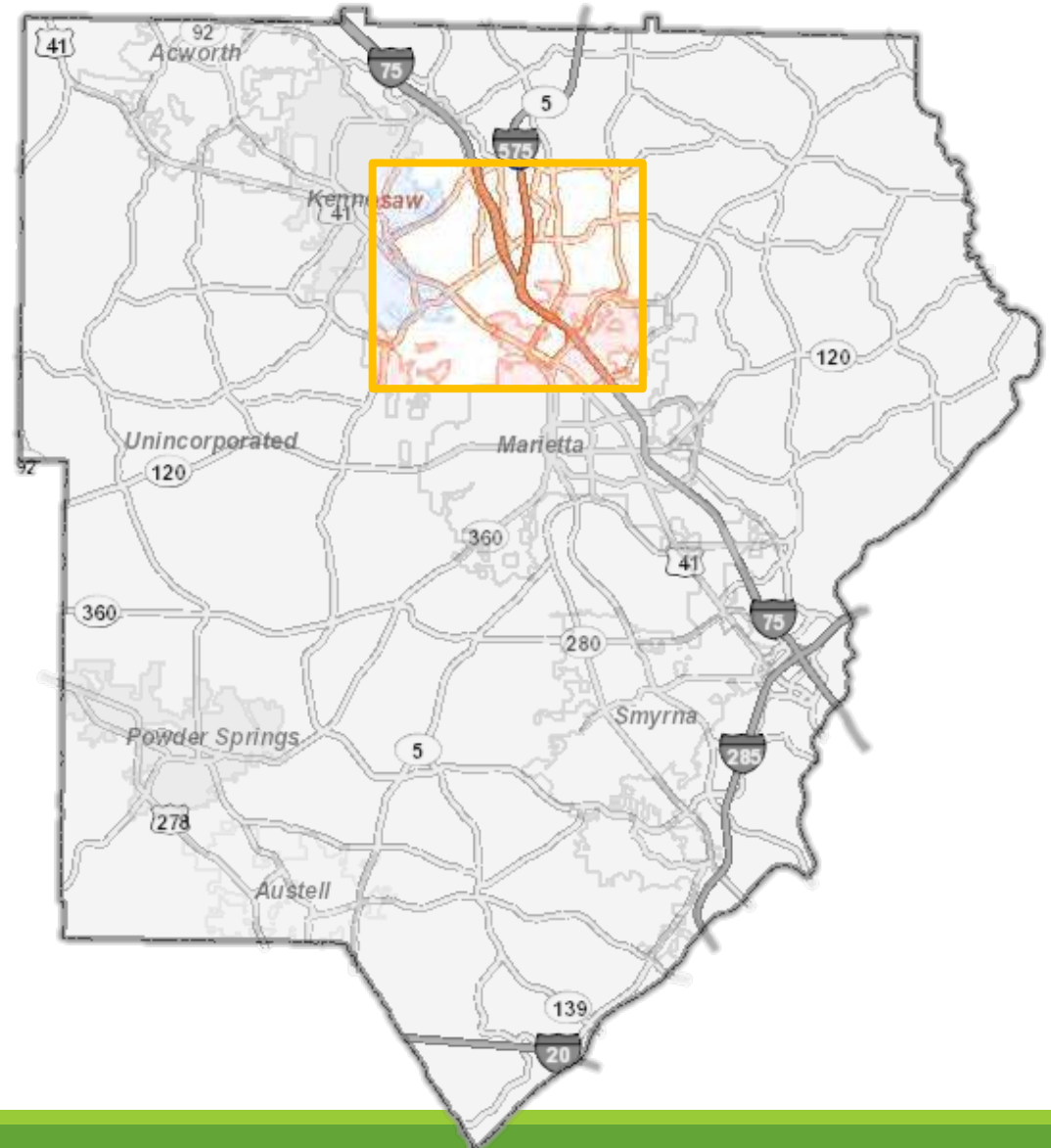
continued



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area *continued*

2013: Analysis of the PBSH market

- Town Center/KSU/Kennesaw submarket



Background of PBSH in Cobb County/KSU Area

2013 Study Key Findings

Market oversaturation

- Decreased enrollment growth at KSU
- Rebounding overall housing market

Softened rents

- All multi-family products across the submarket
- *Including PBSH and conventional apartments*

(Potential) Failure of a PBSH development

- Devastating impacts on all real estate across the submarket

Current Status in Cobb County

Seven (7) PBSH complexes
in the Town Center/KSU/Kennesaw submarket

- Marietta: 1
- Kennesaw: 2
- Unincorporated Cobb: 4

- Six built specifically as student housing
- One conversion from traditional apartment building

Two developments in the permitting process

- Adding 424 units with a minimum of 992 beds



Feedback & Opinions

Nearby Residential Communities

- Negative impact on quality of life
- Want to see PBSH regulated (i.e. zoned away from single-family residential)

Elected Officials

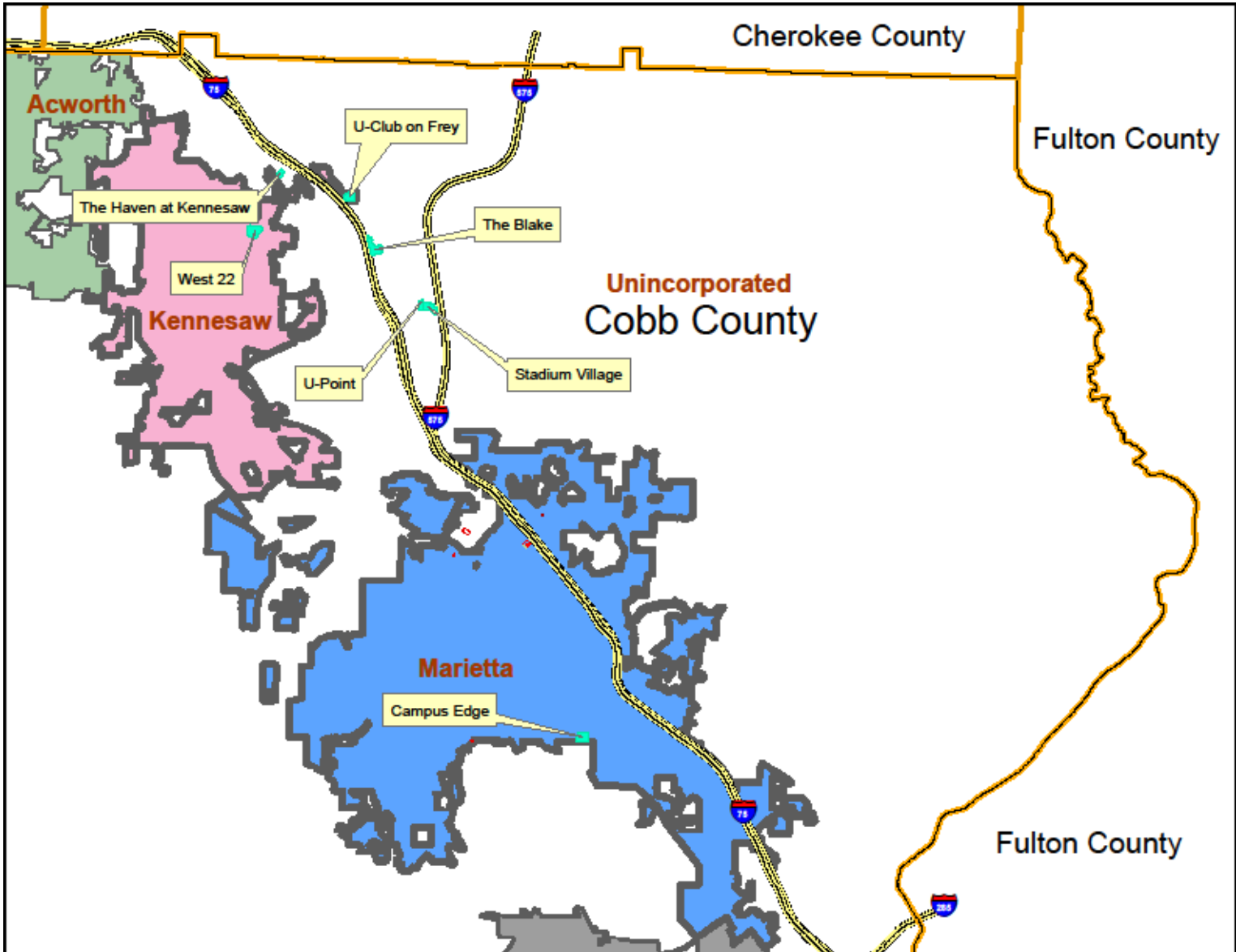
- More information needed to aid in creation of policy
- Request Staff to update and expand upon prior analysis from 2013

PBSH Moratorium

Currently in effect on new PBSH

- Zoning, Site Plans/Permits, Building Plans/Permits

PBSH
Locations



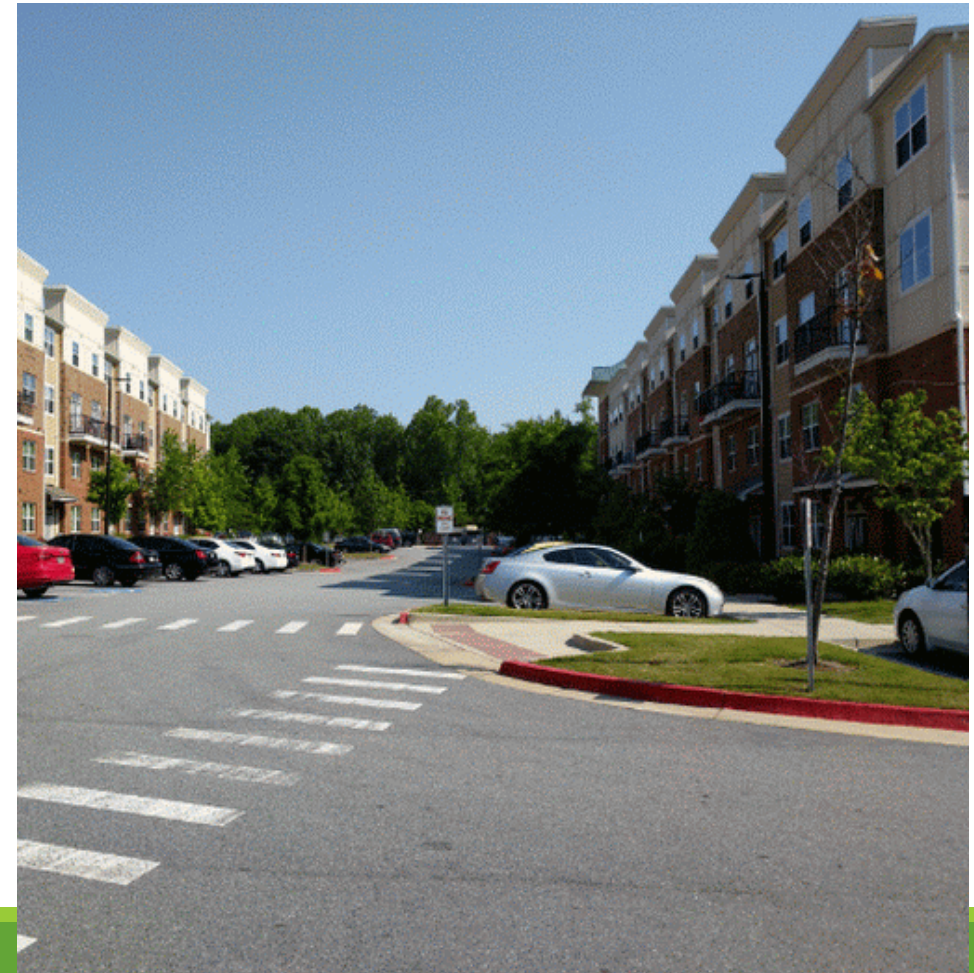
Current PBSH Analysis

Findings To-Date

Nationally, colleges/universities have not invested in on-campus housing at a rate that keeps pace with growing student enrollment

Density is necessary for PBSH production

- Focus on creative design rather than separation via zoning (*i.e. Euclidean Zoning*)



Current PBSH Analysis

Findings To-Date *(continued)*

Implementation strategies employed in “college towns”

- Designate specific high-density zoning districts to allow PBSH
- Load up on zoning stipulations
- Require special permits with specific criteria



Current PBSH Analysis

Findings To-Date

Some communities are at/approaching the point of being over-built with PBSH (*The case of Greenville, NC*)

“What will happen to PBSH if the market is not there to support it?”

Potential re-use options are unappealing to the public and community leaders

- Affordable housing
- Nursing homes/assisted living facilities
- Communal housing

Contact Information

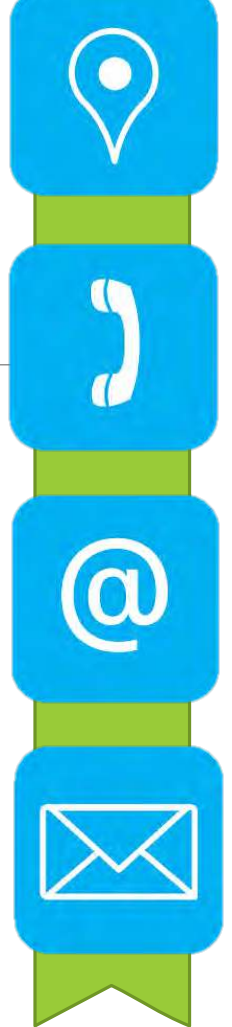
Jason Gaines, *Planning Division Manager*

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Address: Cobb County
Community Development Agency
Planning Division
P.O. Box 649
Marietta, Georgia 30061-0649

Phone: (770) 528-2018

Email: jason.gaines@cobbcounty.org

Website: www.cobbcounty.org/planning



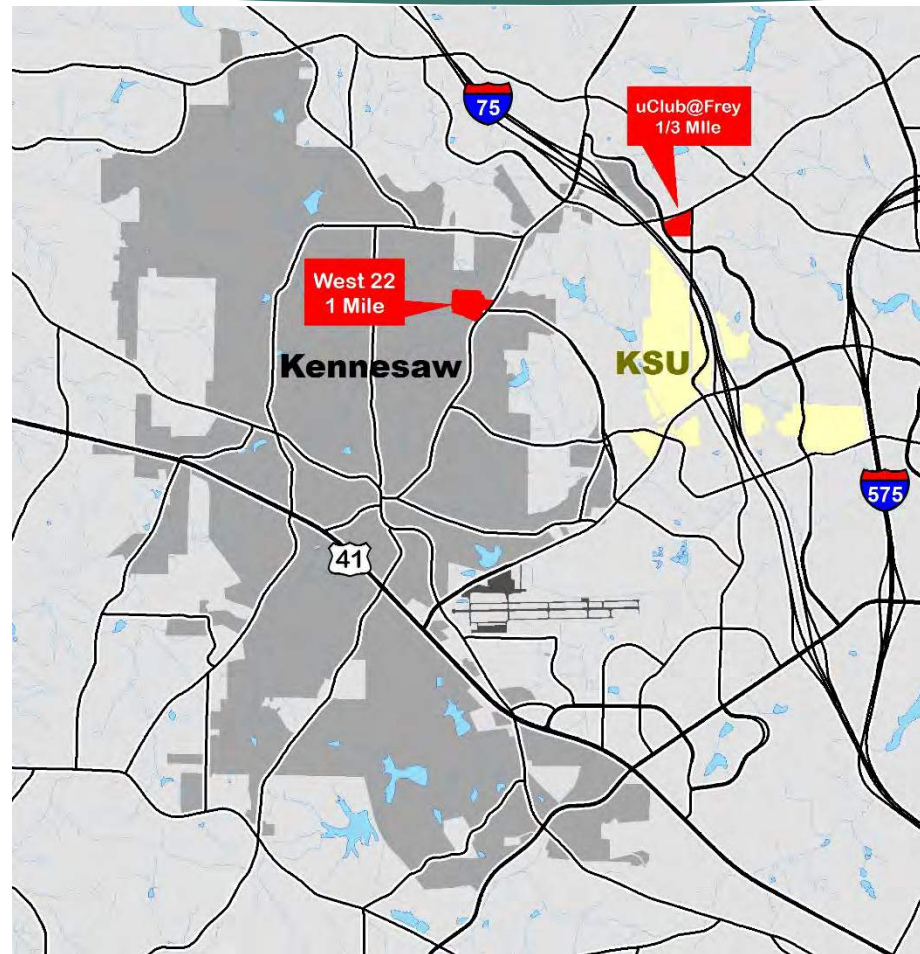
Private Student Housing

City of Kennesaw

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Student Housing Locations



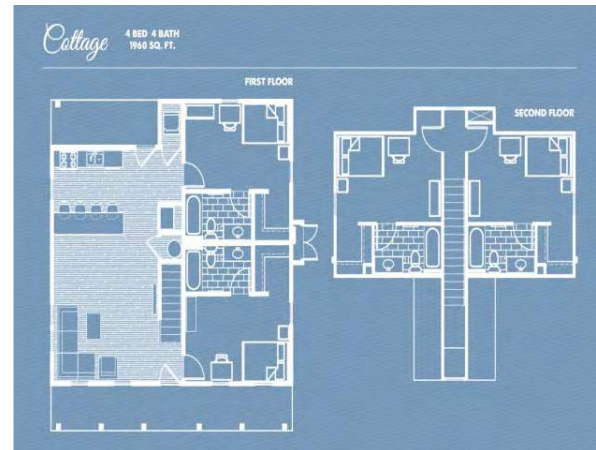
Kennesaw State University

- ▶ Ranking: #231 National University (2018)
- ▶ Total Enrollment: 35,846
- ▶ Undergraduate: 32,945
Graduate: 2,901
- ▶ Full-time: 25,773
Part-time: 10,073
- ▶ Male: 52%
Female: 48%
- ▶ offers more than 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees

West 22

- ▶ 245 units- 850 beds
- ▶ May 2011-Obtained rezoning approval to multifamily zoning district RM-12 with accompanying conditions and variances
- ▶ Shuttle service to Kennesaw State University West 22 Started 7/2012 to 8/2014
- ▶ Total acreage of site-23.98 Acres
- ▶ Construction completed in August 2014

WEST 22



UCLUB@Frey

- ▶ September 2010-Obtained rezoning and annexation approval for multifamily zoning district RM-12 with conditions and variances
- ▶ Project built in two phases
- ▶ Phase I construction completed 7/2012
- ▶ 12.83 Acres
- ▶ 135 Units
- ▶ 504 Beds
- ▶ Phase II construction completed 7/2014
- ▶ 6.315 acres
- ▶ 102 Units
- ▶ 408 Beds

UCLUB@Frey



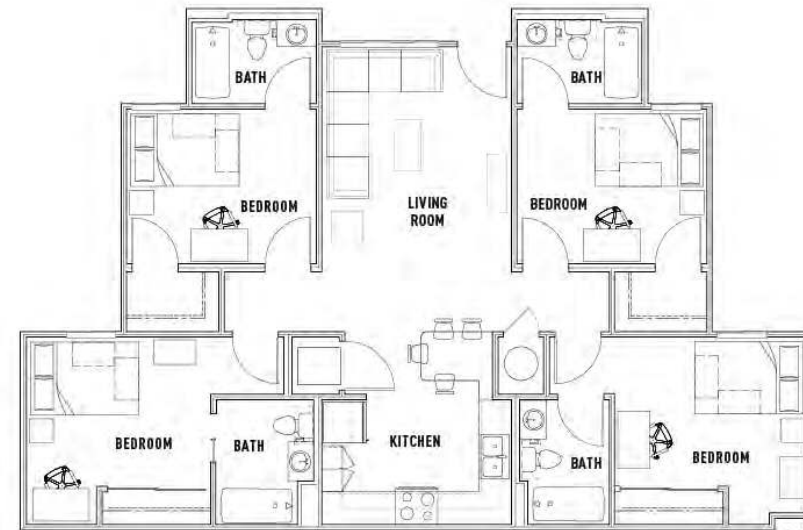
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



UCLUB@Frey



Approval process, land use planning opportunities/partnerships

- ▶ Student housing use currently placed under multifamily zoning district with site specific conditions under zoning actions
- ▶ City of Kennesaw unified development code (UDC) does not specifically address the density, infrastructure or design implications of this use
- ▶ The City of Kennesaw will be addressing this issue with drafts of specific standards for this use that must be adopted into the zoning ordinance and the comprehensive plan
- ▶ A continuous dialogue exists with the City of Kennesaw, Cobb County and Kennesaw State University to pursue future solutions that addresses this planning issue

Community Desires and Challenges

- ▶ **Students**- sense of place, independence, less car dependency, security, campus connectivity, amenities, activities, town connectivity
- ▶ **Parents**- affordability, location, security, structured environment, increased life skills achieved by students
- ▶ **University**- alignment with university growth master plan, safety for the students, lowered impact for on-campus parking infrastructure, partnerships with local government authority
- ▶ **City of Kennesaw Planning and Zoning staff**- diversity of housing types, providing a community need, compliance with city comprehensive plan goals
- ▶ **Adjoining residents and business owners**- NIMBY, perception versus facts regarding safety, traffic, crime, character of the community

Emerging Trends

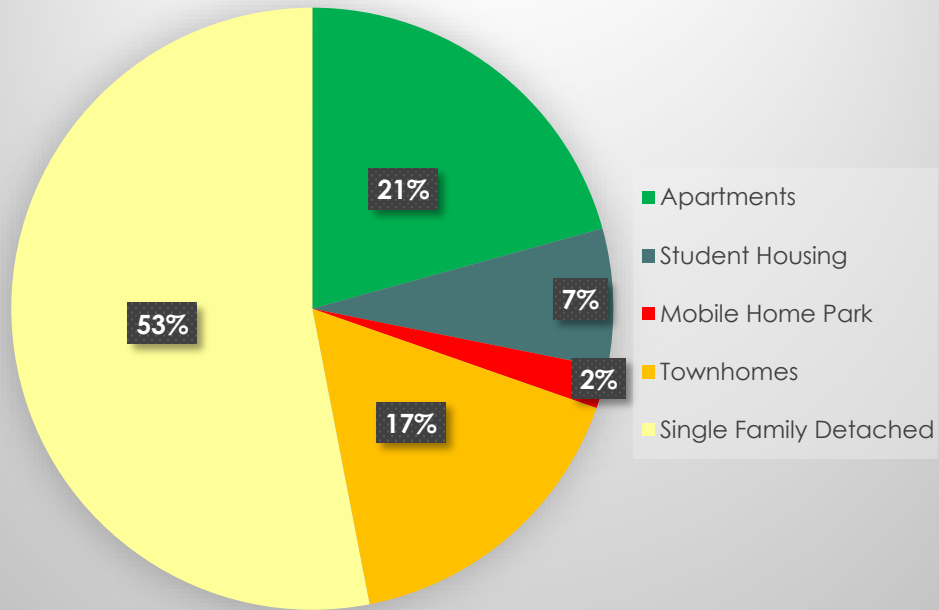
- ▶ City of Kennesaw in the short term continues to receive interest from student housing builders
- ▶ Diverse workforce and need for post graduate affordable housing
- ▶ Student housing and infrastructure needs will continue to increase
- ▶ Future infusion of demographic shifts with growing senior population, transplants and maturing young families

Conclusions and Goals

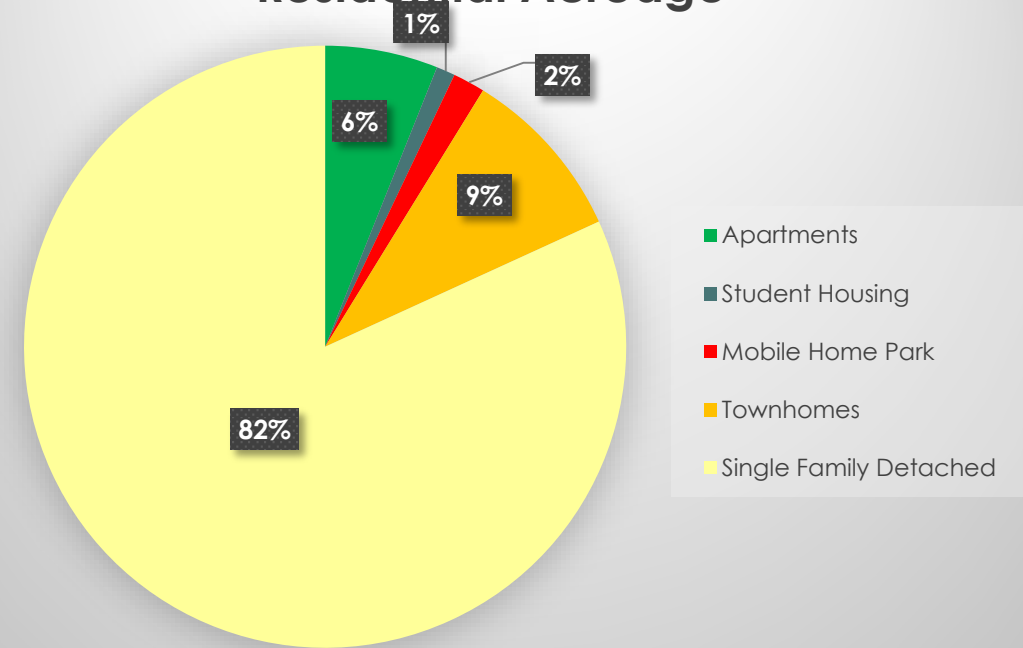
- ▶ City must plan for the future by diligent education through community outreach regarding this residential use
- ▶ City of Kennesaw will identify areas of opportunities best suited for these uses that meet the planning goals of both Kennesaw State University University, Cobb County and City of Kennesaw
- ▶ Future adoption of purpose built student housing standards

City of Kennesaw housing data

Residential Units

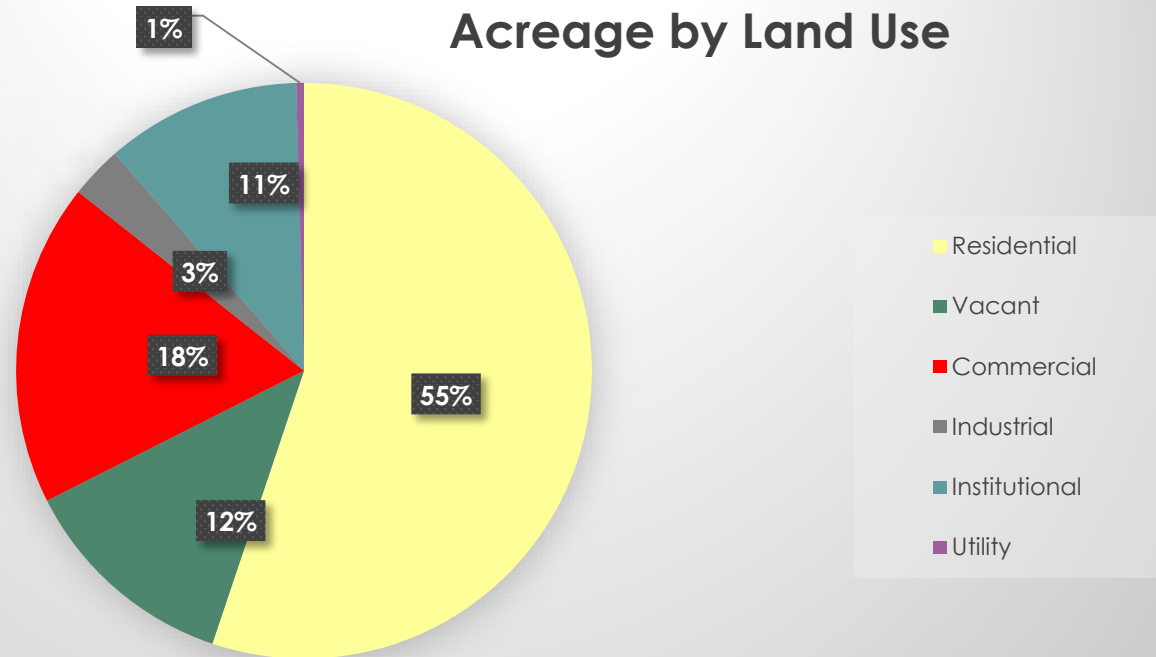


Residential Acreage



City of Kennesaw Housing Data

Acreage by Land Use



Questions

- ▶ Contact: City of Kennesaw
- ▶ Darryl Simmons-Planning and Zoning Administrator- 770-590-8268
- ▶ dsimmons@kennesaw-ga.gov
- ▶ City website www.kennesaw-ga.gov
- ▶ Thank You GPA!

PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT HOUSING

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA



2018 GPA Fall Conference

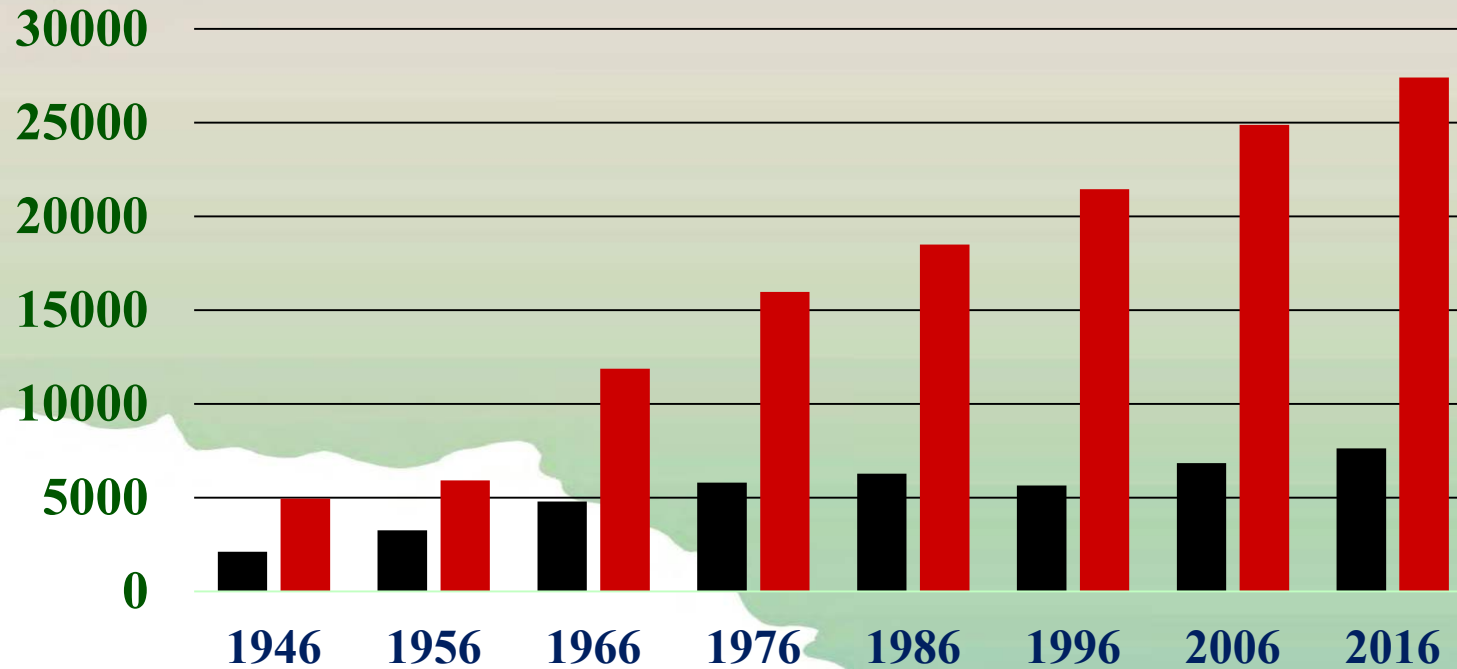
Purpose Built Student Housing

Defined

- Multi-unit and/or multi-structure format.
- Buildings designed for residential use only.
- 1:1 bedroom-to-bathroom ratio.
- Amenities that appeal to 18-24 year olds.
- 1:1 bedroom-to-parking space ratio
- 1- 5 bedrooms per unit

University of Georgia (1946-2016)

On-Campus Housing & Enrollment



■ On-Campus Housing
■ Undergrad Enrollment

Source: UGA Office of Institutional Research

Purpose Built Student Housing

Athens Timeline & Typology

1940s-50s	Subletted spaces; first low-rise apartments
1950s-60s	Low-rise apartments away from campus
1960s-70s	Duplexes and Mobile Home Parks
1970s-80s	Large-tract, Suburban apartment complexes
1980s-90s	Duplexes & Suburban apartment complexes
1993	First HOPE Scholarships awarded
1990s-2000	Condo Townhomes; Apartment complexes
2000s	Detached cottage developments
2010s	Downtown High-rise Apartments

Purpose Built Student Housing

Athens Regulatory Responses - Adopted

- **Single-family Occupancy definition adopted**
- **Duplex zoning removed; Mixed Use in all C Zones**
- **Neighborhood Parking Permits**
- **Counting bedrooms instead of units**
- **200 beds/acre in Commercial-Downtown district**
- **Multi-family design requirements**
 - **Architectural features; Block requirements; Landscaping & Open Space**

Multi-family Development Design Standards



c.1996

c.2006



Purpose Built Student Housing

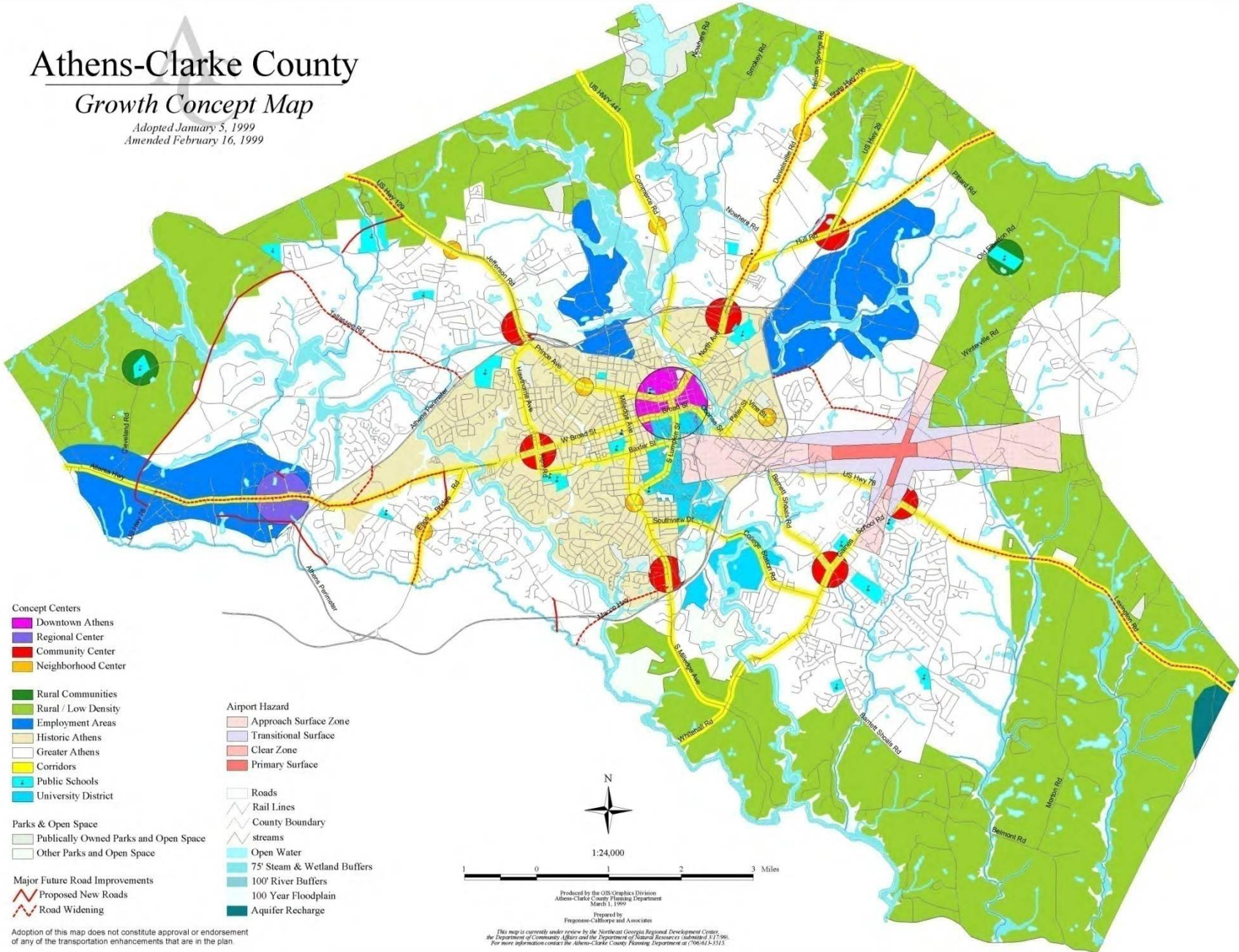
Athens Regulatory Responses - Dropped

- **Accessory Dwelling Unit standards**
- **Rental Registration Program**
- **Detailed Property Maintenance Code**
- **Enhanced Multi-Family Design Standards to encourage family occupancy**

Athens-Clarke County

Growth Concept Map

Adopted January 5, 1999
Amended February 16, 1999

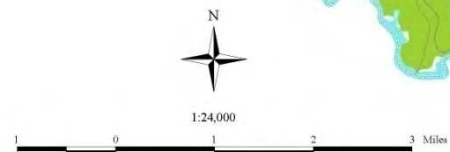


- Concept Centers**
- Downtown Athens
 - Regional Center
 - Community Center
 - Neighborhood Center

- Parks & Open Space**
- Publicly Owned Parks and Open Space
 - Other Parks and Open Space

- Major Future Road Improvements**
- Proposed New Roads
 - Road Widening

- Airport Hazard**
- Approach Surface Zone
 - Transitional Surface
 - Clear Zone
 - Primary Surface
- Other Features**
- Roads
 - Rail Lines
 - County Boundary
 - streams
 - Open Water
 - 75' Stream & Wetland Buffers
 - 100' River Buffers
 - 100 Year Floodplain
 - Aquifer Recharge



Produced by the GIS Graphics Division
Athens-Clarke County Planning Department
March 1, 1999

Prepared by
Ferguson-Calthorpe and Associates

This map is currently under review by the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center, the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Natural Resources (last revised 1/15/99). For more information contact the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department at (706-611-1313).

Adoption of this map does not constitute approval or endorsement of any of the transportation enhancements that are in the plan.

Recent Development #1:

The Standard

- **Former Athens Hardware site**
- **Two mixed-use buildings with structured parking**
- **Total of 483,800 s.f., and 612 bedrooms**
- **\$40 million project.**
- **Completed Fall 2014**





Recent Development #2:

Georgia Heights

- **Former SunTrust Bank Parking Lot**
- **164,455 sq.ft. and 292 bedrooms**
- **Six-story mixed use development**
- **CVS is anchor commercial tenant**
- **\$50 million project**
- **Completed in Summer 2015**

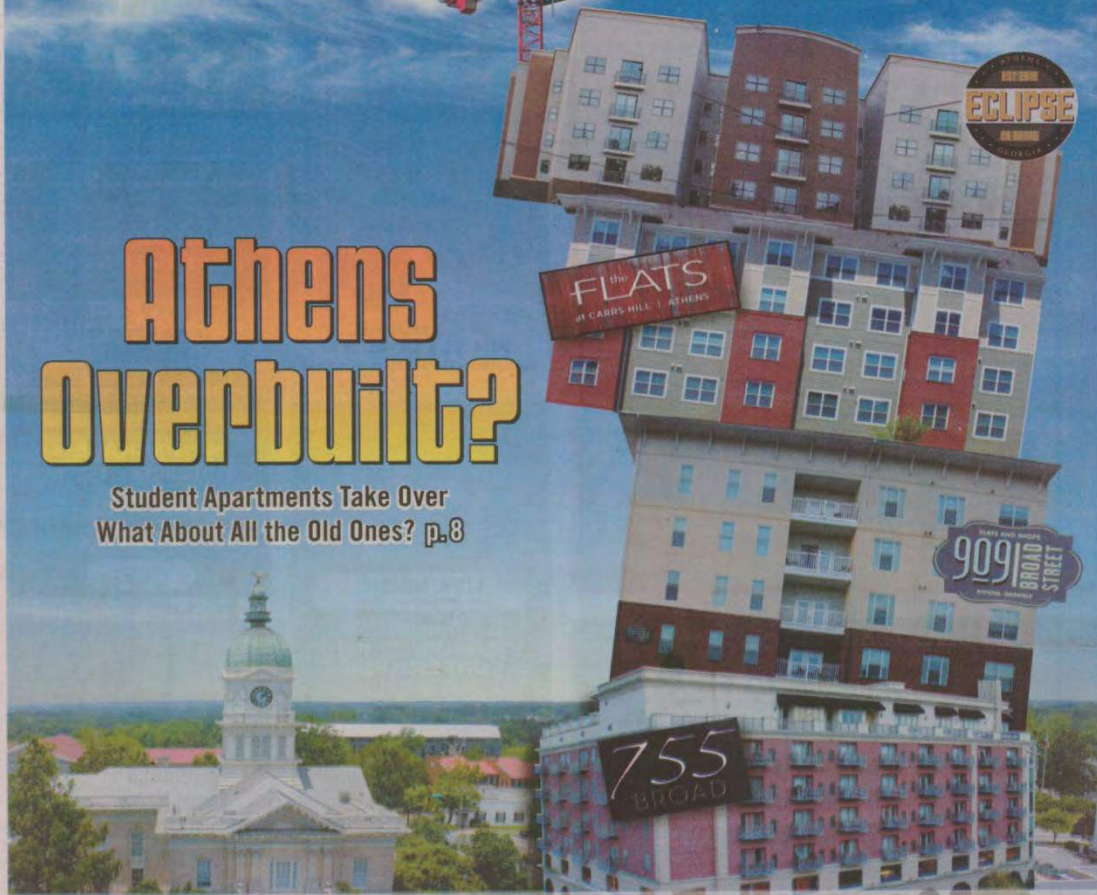


COLORBEARER OF ATHENS LOOKING FOR SPACE

flagpole

LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1987

SEPTEMBER 11, 2013 · VOL. 27 · NO. 36 · FREE



Athens Overbuilt?

Student Apartments Take Over
What About All the Old Ones? p.8



Athens Zombified

A Plague So Pleasant Filmed Here
And Ready for Your Viewing Fun p.17



Athens in a High Hat

Benefit Brings Back Performers
From an Iconic Athens Club p.18

Purpose Built Student Housing

Future Trends & Issues

- **Housing cycle impact on older developments**
- **Zoned land available for new developments**
- **Emphasis on Redevelopment Sites**
- **Strain on infrastructure**
- **University enrollment & housing policy**
- **Community reaction & expectations**

Thank-You!

**This presentation was prepared by the
Athens-Clarke County Planning Department.**

**If you have questions, or desire additional
information please contact us at**

(706) 613-3515

or

planning@accgov.com

[or accgov.com/planning](http://accgov.com/planning)



August 2009