



# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*Perils and Prospects*

**2018 GPA Fall Conference**

# The Problem Statement

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*“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”*

- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1532.

# A Quick Answer

*“The world moves into the future as a result of decisions, not as a result of plans. Plans are significant only insofar as they affect decisions. Planning may be defined in such a way that it is part of the decision-making process; but if it is not it is a bag of wind, a piece of paper or worthless diagram.”*

-Kenneth E. Boulding

# What is Implementation About?

Overcoming inertia



# Implementation Issues - Politics

- ❑ Slow decision making
- ❑ Ward politics/ in-fighting
- ❑ Special interest groups
- ❑ Lack of equity/ environmental justice
- ❑ Lack of popular support - making changes and spending money is always hard to sell voters



# What is Implementation About?

Doing Wheel Stands When Necessary



# Implementation Issues

## Community Organization

- Overcoming grassroots resistance -people are wary of changes, especially if they cost money
- Organization – finding a CHAMPION and building a support system for follow through



# What is Implementation About?

Hard work - heavy lifting - all uphill





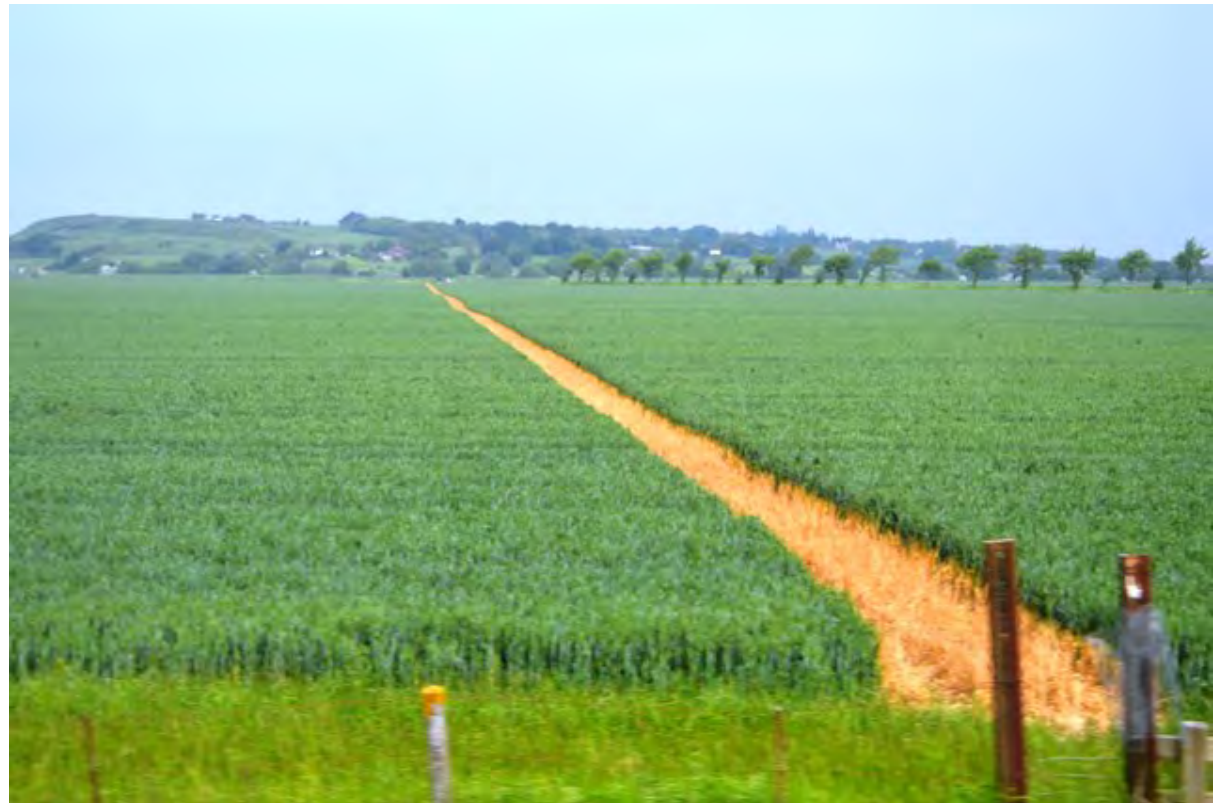
# Implementation Issues

- Property acquisition – not easy to use eminent domain anymore, what are the alternatives?
- Regulatory environment - state/federal approvals even if there is no state/federal money
- Timing – getting the money and the political will together at the same time



# What is Implementation About?

Clearing a pathway



# Common Implementation Barriers

- Fuzzy description of objective and outcome
- No stakeholders identified
- Too costly (?)
- No funding sources
- Death by 1,000 cuts
- Bad timing
- Clumsy/ no roll-out plan

# Ingredients of Implementation Success

- A clear message – related to public interests
- Leadership – need a Champion
- Accountability/ Transparency
- Promotion/ public engagement
- Sound legal foundation for your action plan

# Lots of Stakeholders/ Friends and Foes

- City Council/ County Board of Commissioners
- Other Departments: Community Development, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Water & Sewer, Airport, etc.
- Boards and Authorities: Schools, CIDs, TADs, DDAs
- Planning Commission, Urban Design Commission
- Neighborhood planning organizations
- State Agencies: GDOT, GEFA, DCA, EPD, etc.
- NGOs – Universities, Hospitals, Churches, etc.
- Real Estate community
- Neighborhood organizations

What is their motivation? Track record?

# Find the Common Ground

**Flexible  
Zoning**

**Focus on  
Activity Centers**

**Mixed-Use  
Community**

**Walkable  
Community**

Consumer /  
Residents

Consumer / Residents

Producer / Builder

Producer /  
Builder

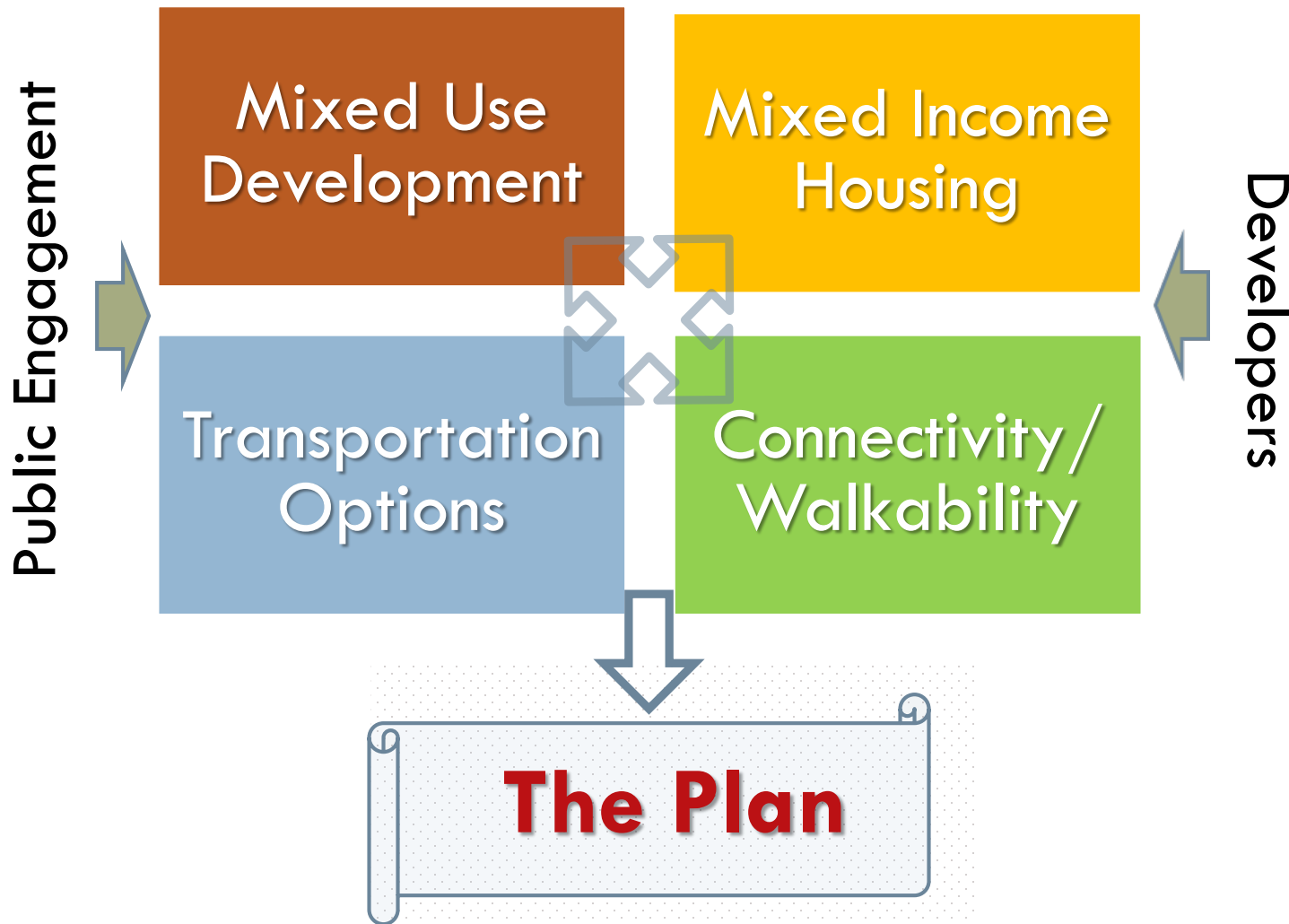
Government/  
Community

Other /  
Special Interests

Government / Community



# Putting the Technical Pieces Together



# What is Implementation About?

Finding the *Money*





# Implementation Issues - Money

- Federal and state support is gone.
- Local governments are searching for ways to raise revenues without raising property tax millage:
  - SPLOSTs, CIDs, TADs, Impact Fees
- Project lists are subject to behind the scenes politics
- Public private partnerships are good in theory – what's in it for the private sector partner?
- Foundation grants -private foundations sometimes come to the rescue, but that is subject to control by special interests (PATH, Arthur Blank, Woodruff Foundation)
- Local governments need people who know where to find the money. Will that be you?

# Implementation Barriers

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## External events and the Unknown

- ▣ Foreseeable: Elections
- ▣ Unforeseeable: Newsworthy events – media coverage changes public opinion
- ▣ Recession!

# If all else fails... wait for a CRISIS



Timing is  
**EVERYTHING!**



Never let a good  
**CRISIS** go to waste

# What You Wish You Could Do

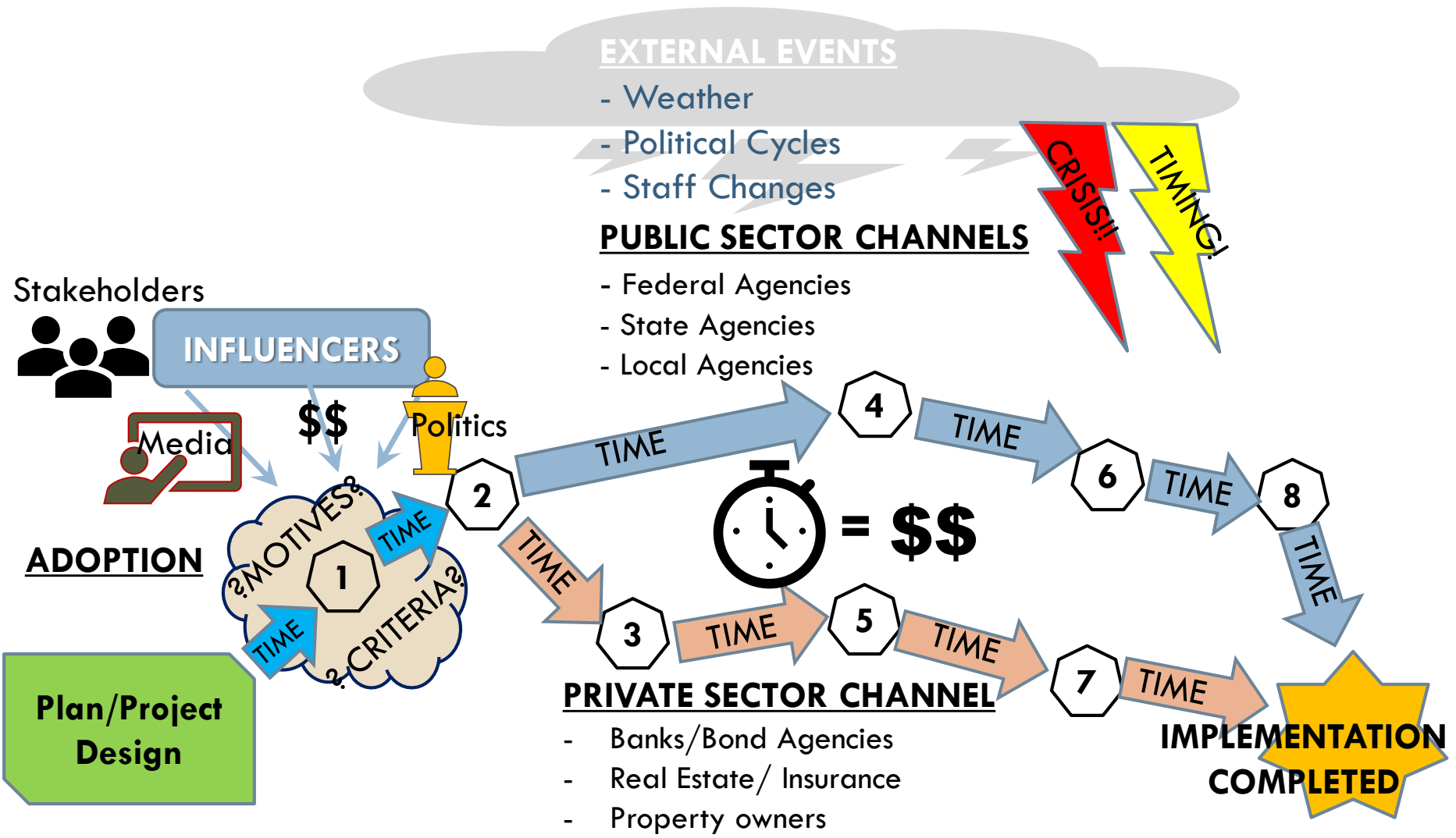
## Declaring Victory and Transferring Ownership



# What You Have to Do

- Explain the true cost of “No Action”
- Do Stakeholder Analysis
- Involve active, vocal, and well-positioned stakeholders
- Get commitment of (or create) an accountable lead organization and a Champion
- Find a dedicated source of funding
- Map the “Action Channels”

# Mapping Action Channels



# The Livable Centers Initiative Program

## Goals

- Providing access to a variety of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking
- Encouraging mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation options
- Developing an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders

# The Livable Centers Initiative Program

## **Programmatic Elements**

- Mixed Use Development
- Affordable Housing
- Connectivity of streets
- Walkability
- Transit
- Public Engagement



# Breaking the Plan into its Parts

## The Plan

### Private Sector Actions

- Financing
- Land Assembly
- DRI Application
- Rezoning Application

### Public Sector Actions

- Plan Amendment
- Streetscape projects
- Trail projects
- Transit projects
- Road Improvement projects
- Financial Incentives

### ENTITLEMENT

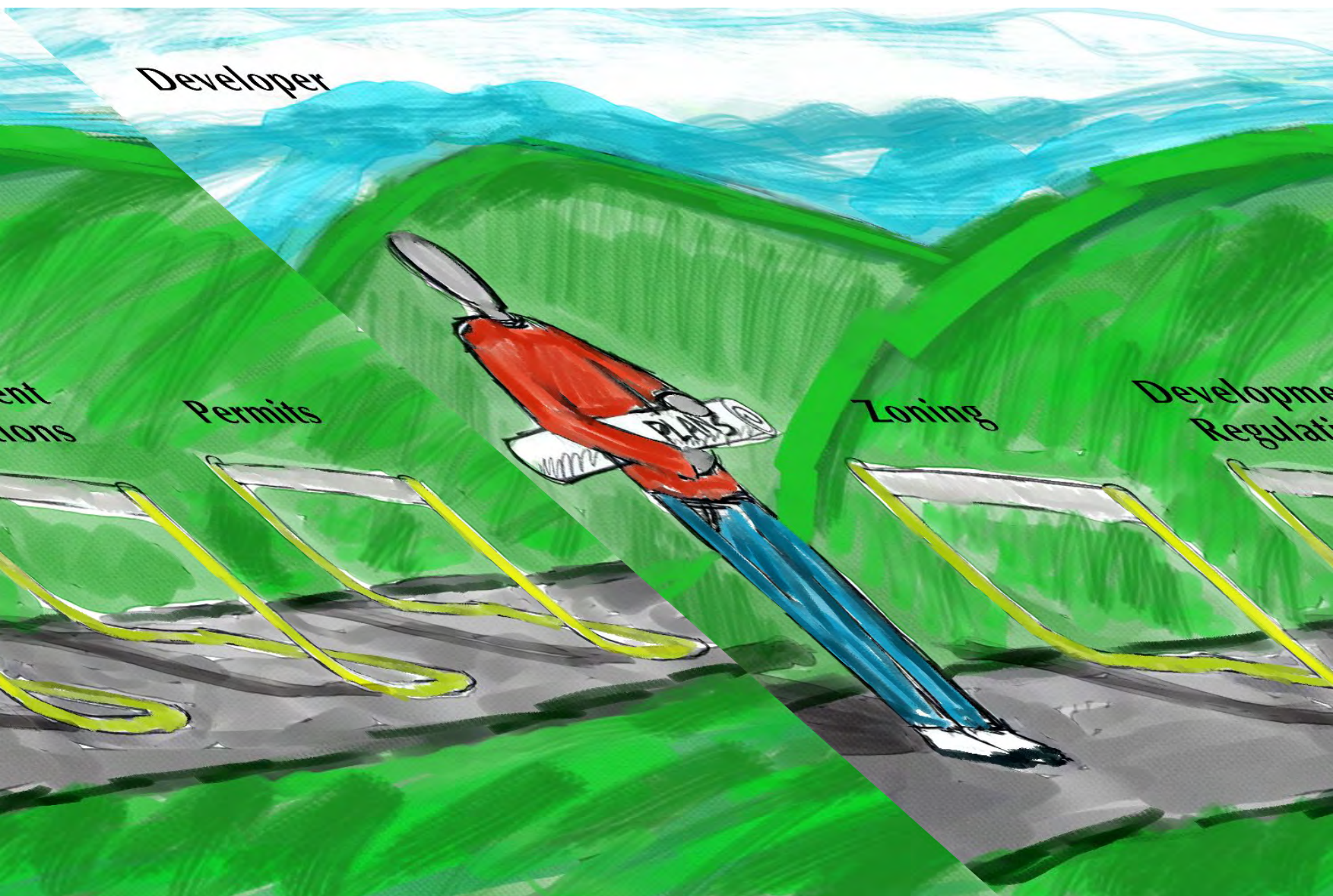
- Rezoning
- Plan Review
- Permitting

# Map Public Sector Implementation Strategy

## Action Planning Matrix

No.	Action	Time Frame	Lead Agency/Responsibility	Partners	Likely Cost	Funding Sources
1						
2						
3...						

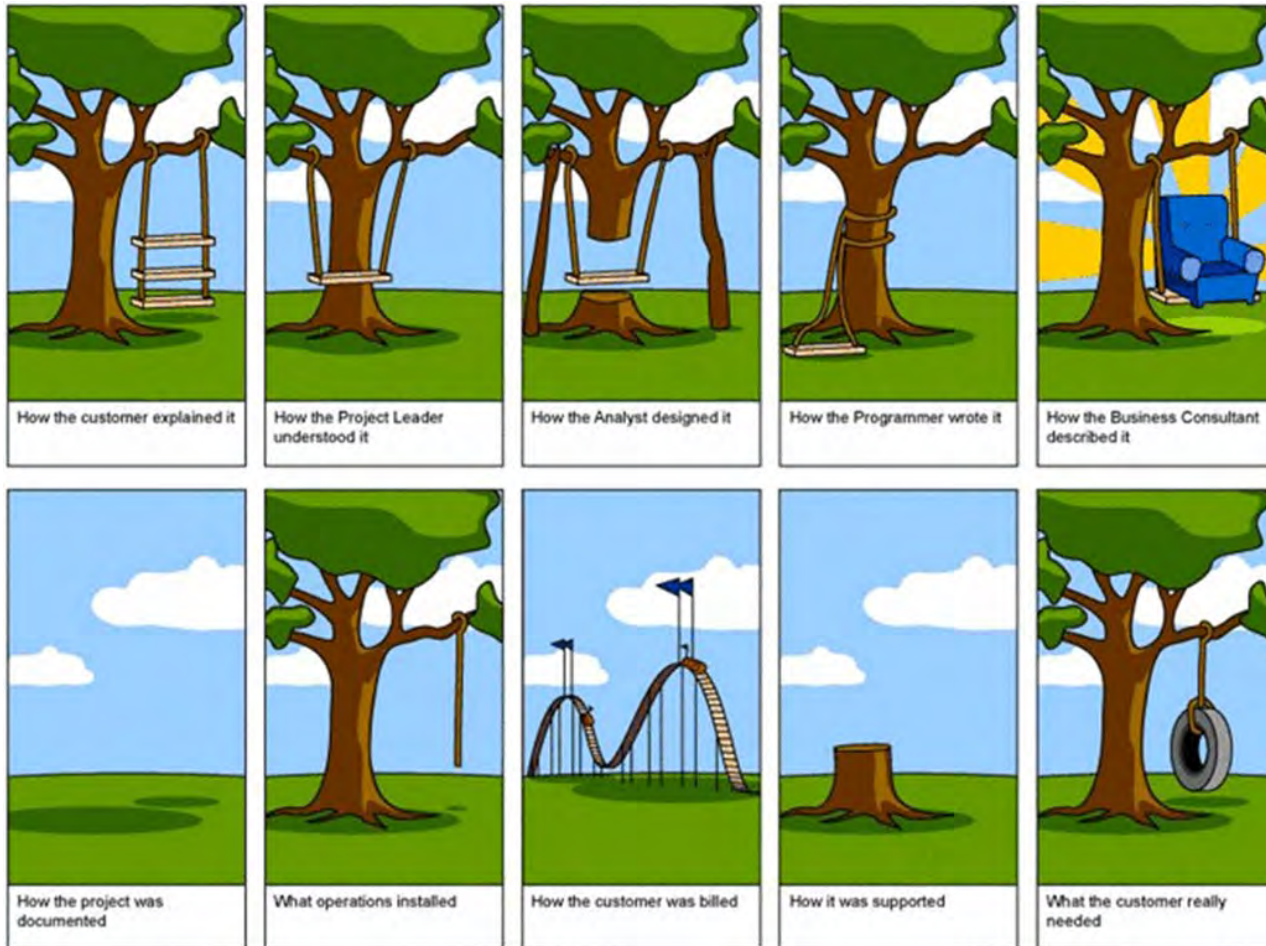
# Map Private Sector Implementation Path



# Can you streamline the Entitlement?



# Pay Attention to the Details



# Issues that Make Entitlements Difficult

- Vertically Mixed Use Development
- Density limits from max, building height and parking ratios
- Tree protection
- Buffers/ landscaping strips between properties
- Stream buffers
- Stormwater and drainage
- Parking requirements
- Existing non-conformities

# Some Examples from Practice

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**Jeff Rader, FAICP**

**Presiding Officer, DeKalb County Board of  
Commissioners**

# SOME EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

## **Medline LCI**

From Concept to Implementation

Jeff Rader, FAICP  
Presiding Officer, DeKalb County  
Board of Commissioners



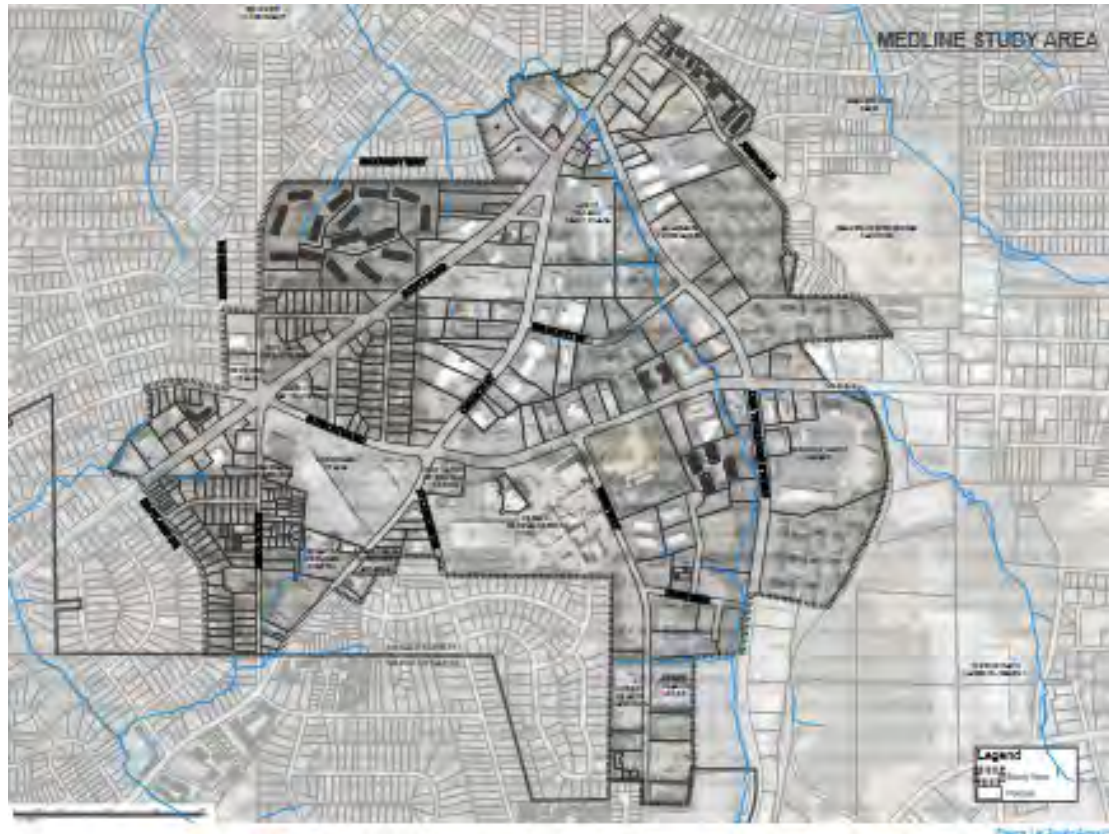


**DOWNTOWN ATLANTA**

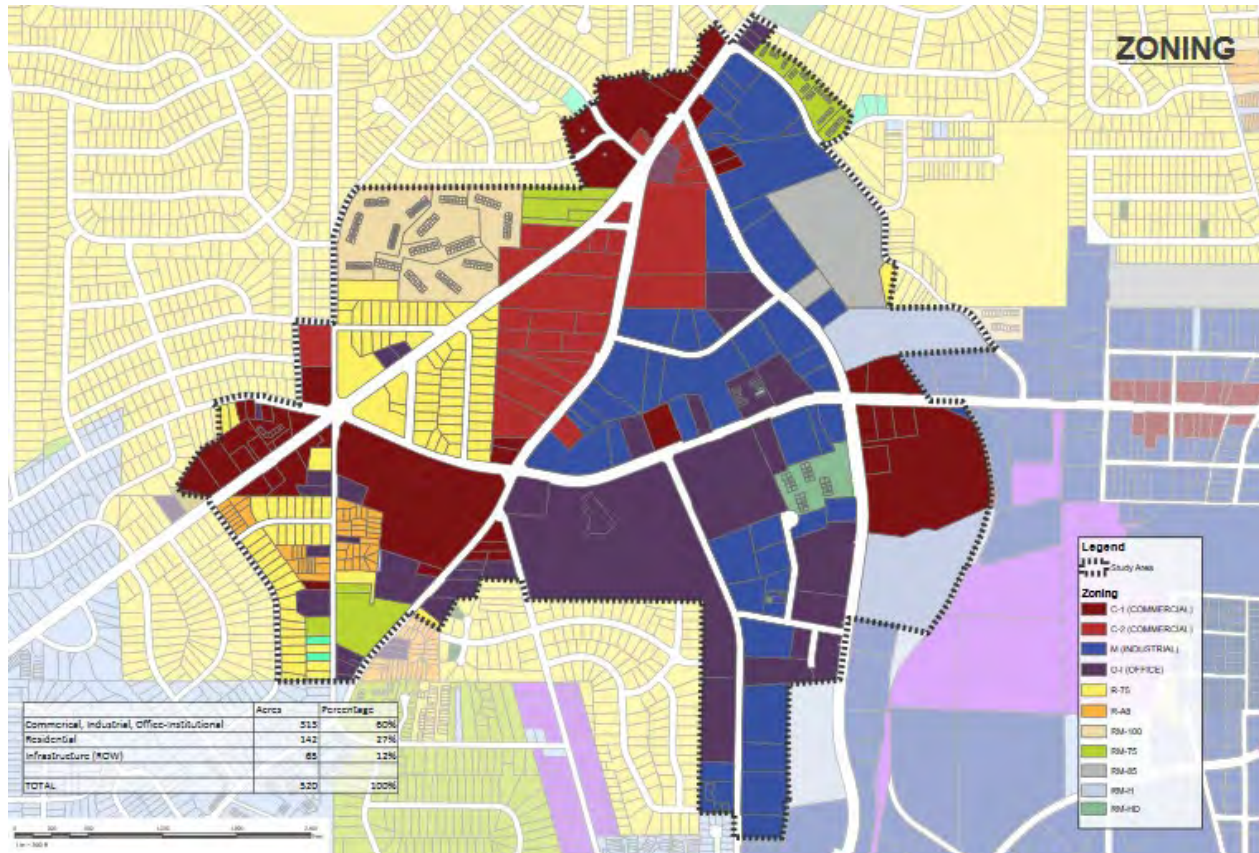
**DOWNTOWN DECATUR**

**MEDLINE LCI**

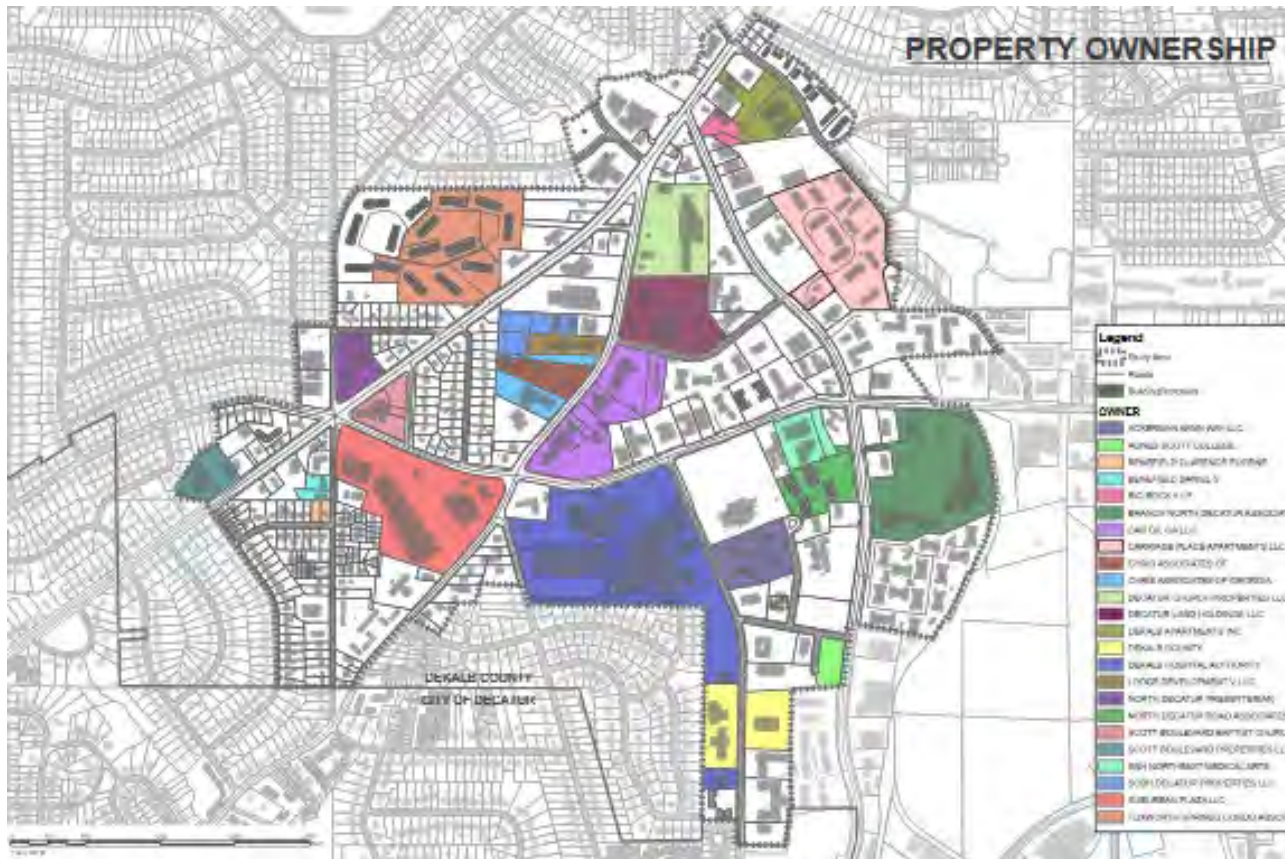
# Medline LCI Study Area



## The North Decatur/Suburban Plaza District was Typical Suburban Strip



## Property Ownership Patterns Were the Legacy of Former Land Uses



The Medline LCI Plan is an Elegant Expression of Community Vision and Goals





Figure 3d: Charrette - Medical District Map

**Medical District**



Figure 3e: Charrette - Retrofit/Cultural District Map

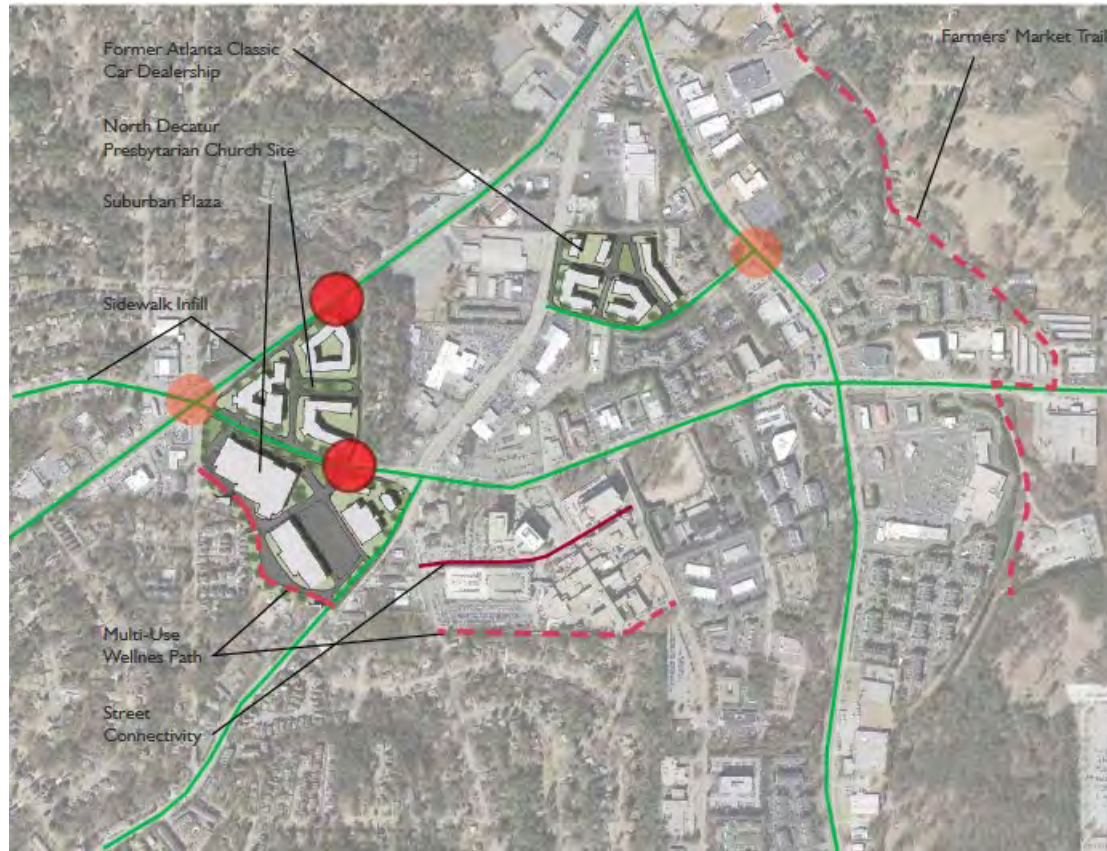
**Retrofit/Cultural District**



Figure 3f: Charrette - Neighborhood District Map

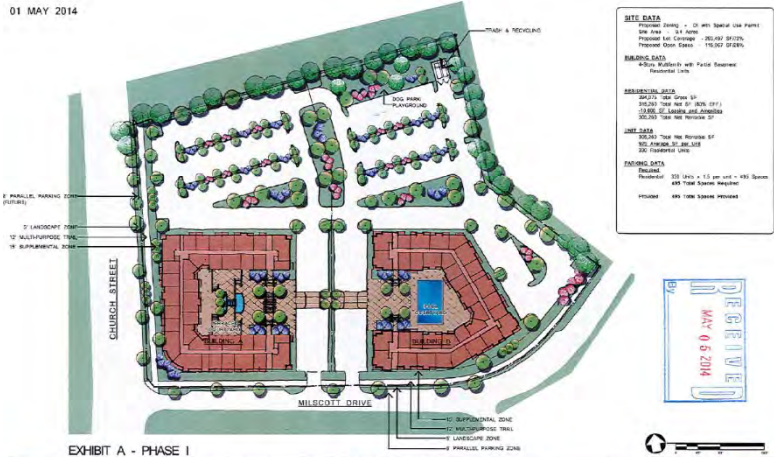
**Neighborhood District**

## Thought was Given to Staged Implementation





01 MAY 2014



**SITE DATA**  
 Proposed Density: 1.0 (with Special Use Permit)  
 Site Area: 3.41 Acres  
 Proposed Lot Coverage: 68.00% (20.00%)  
 Proposed Open Space: 15.00% (5.00%)

**MARKING DATA**  
 10' Open Markings with 5' Parallel Markings  
 Residential Lots

**RESIDENTIAL DATA**  
 Density: 100 Units/acre  
 300,000 Total Area of 300,000 SF  
 1,000 SF of Landscaping and Greenhouse  
 100,000 Total Area of 100,000 SF

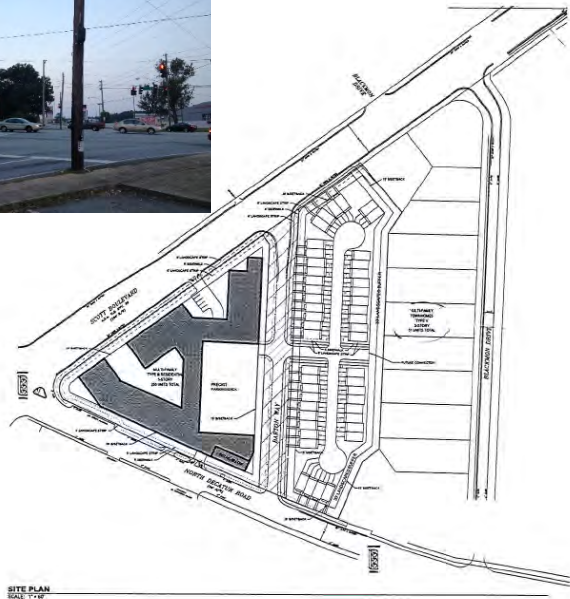
**LAND DATA**  
 100,000 Total Area of 100,000 SF  
 100,000 Total Area of 100,000 SF

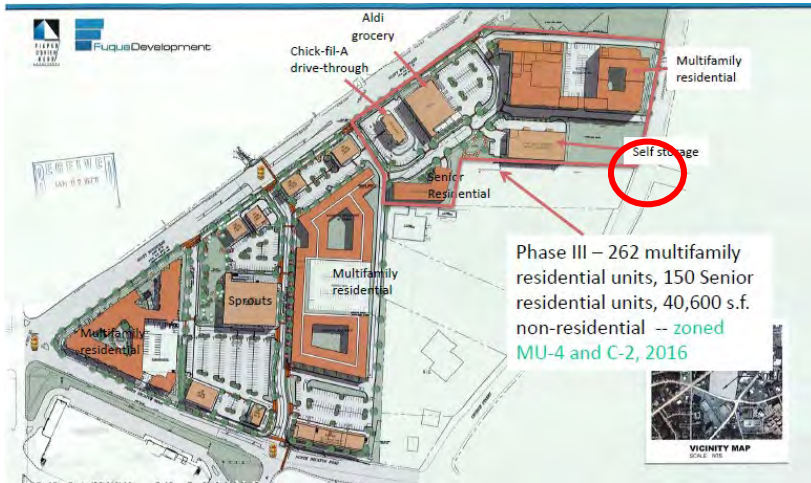
**PARKING DATA**  
 Proposed: 100 Units x 1.5 per unit = 150 Spaces  
 400 Total Spaces Required  
 Provided: 400 Total Spaces Provided





## But Project Imperatives and Property Rights Considerations Shaped Outcomes







# Next Steps??



# Questions? Comments!

