

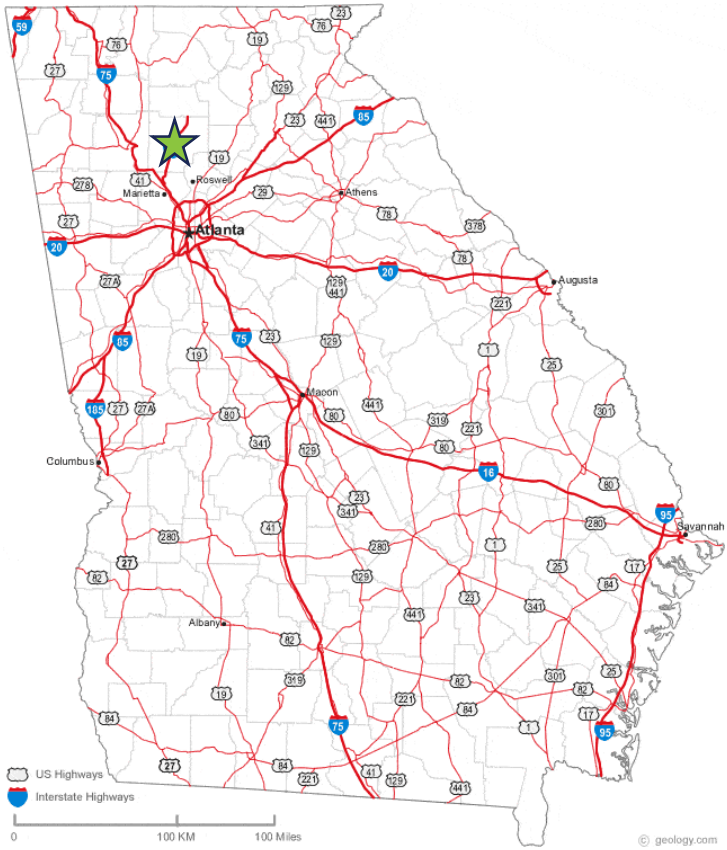
A photograph of Tom Petty performing on stage with his band, The Heartbreakers. He is in the center, wearing a dark jacket and playing a white electric guitar. His right arm is raised in a fist, and his left arm is extended. The background is dark with stage lights, and a large crowd of fans is visible in the foreground, many with their arms raised. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# TOM PETTY

and the **HEARTBREAKERS**  
RUNNIN' DOWN A DREAM

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Misadventures of Zoning, Overlays,  
Form-Based Codes, Variances, and  
Other Such Tales to Realize a Vision



# CITY OF WOODSTOCK



GEORGIA

POP. 32,000 2018 ACS





# RIDGEWALK CORRIDOR BACKGROUND

## Ridgewalk Parkway in Woodstock, GA

- Corridor between I-575 and Main Street/Highway 5
- Northern east-west access for Woodstock
- Residential and undeveloped land near Bell Industrial Park
- Surrounding properties historically zoned Light Industrial
- Topographically difficult with streams and Army Corps property nearby
- Residential development pressure and the desire for workplaces created the need for the first visioning process for the area in 2002

2002 Vision: to set a standard for development that fully integrates those uses that will create a vibrant activity center in a unique style that complements and enhances the natural environment and existing development pattern of the surrounding areas of Woodstock and Cherokee County



## **DREAM #1 MIXED USE TECHNOLOGY PARK**

- Limited residential development to 42% of the district area
- Traditional architectural requirements including 80% brick
- Design standards promoting concentration of density and land conservation
- Kept underlying LI zoning, but allowed uses in the overlay that could produce a mixed-use environment like residential and daily services,
- Prohibited obnoxious uses including some light industrial uses to promote office/residential mix

# DREAM #1 MIXED USE TECHNOLOGY PARK

- Between 2002 and 2012, eight developments were entitled using the Tech Park Overlay
- Of the eight, four received significant variances to achieve the development pattern they wished to achieve
- The other four were entitled under the code, but are all residential developments, taking up most of the 42% land area allowance
- The vision had not been met with any of the developments in this 10-year period



## CASE STUDY RIVER PARK 2004

Originally planned to be a mixed-use community with office and neighborhood commercial in a town center arrangement.

Much of the commercial remains unbuilt in 2019

# DREAM #1 MIXED USE TECHNOLOGY PARK

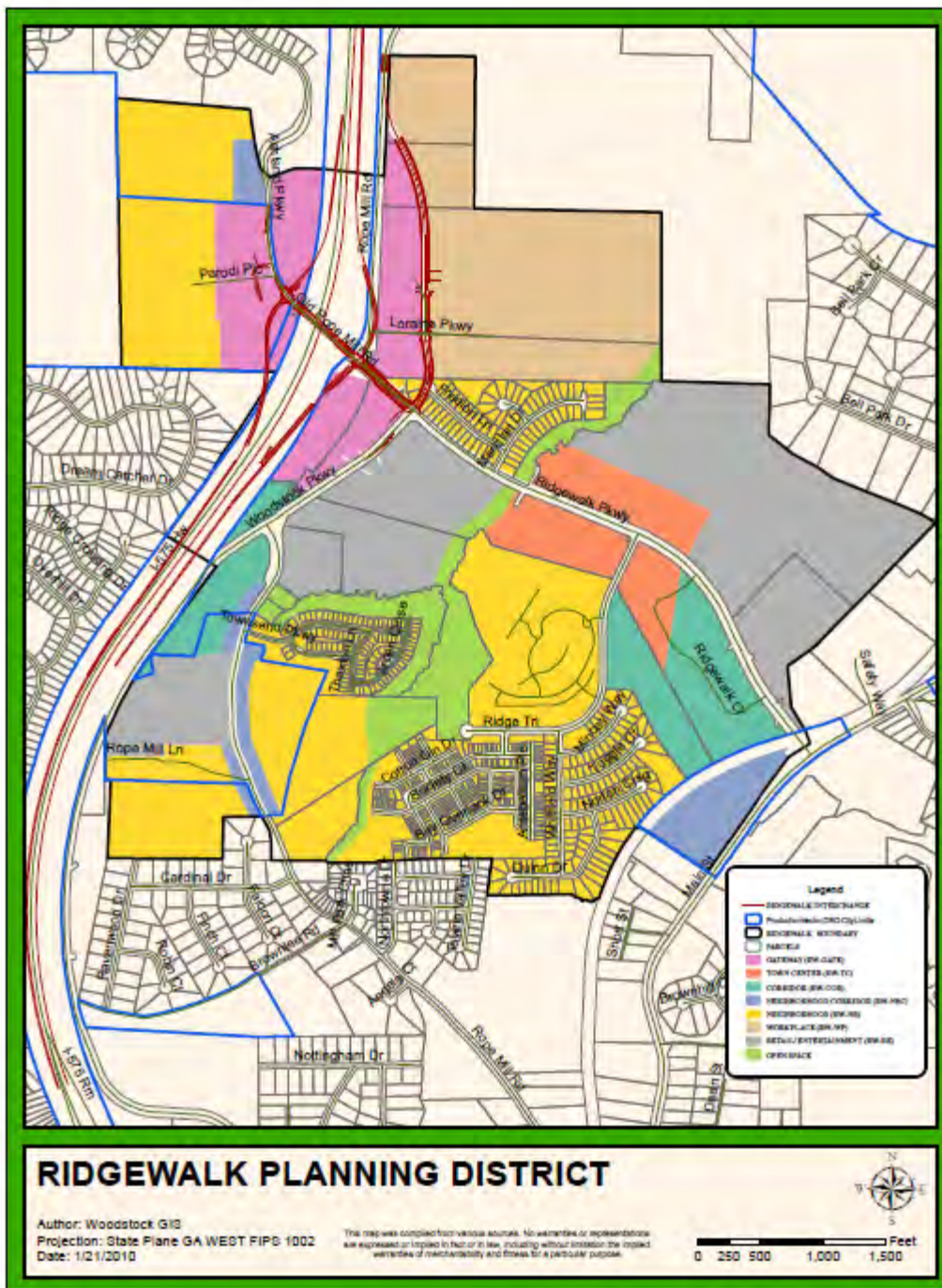
Due to a lack of confidence in the Technology Park Overlay, the City Council directed staff in 2007 to look at ways of updating the zoning code to achieve more predictable development.



# DREAM #2 RIDGEWALK MASTERPLAN

## Regulating Plan Not Adopted

- A public input process was performed with community open houses, and a master plan was drafted
- The Ridgewalk Regulating Plan was presented to Planning Commission and City Council in 2010
- Due to economic issues with the landowners, the Regulating Plan was put on hold and not adopted
- A Ridgewalk Master Plan had been a top priority on the Council Priorities list since 2008



# DREAM #3 FORM BASED CODE

- As the construction of the new interchange progressed, staff realized that the development pressures would become great and reopened the discussion of updating the development regulations in the area.
- At the 2011 retreat, City Council directed staff to produce a Form Based Code as a potential mandatory replacement of the Technology Park Overlay.







## FORM BASED CODE

ROPE MILL ROAD

**1**

Buy-in from Leadership,  
RFQ, Consultant hired

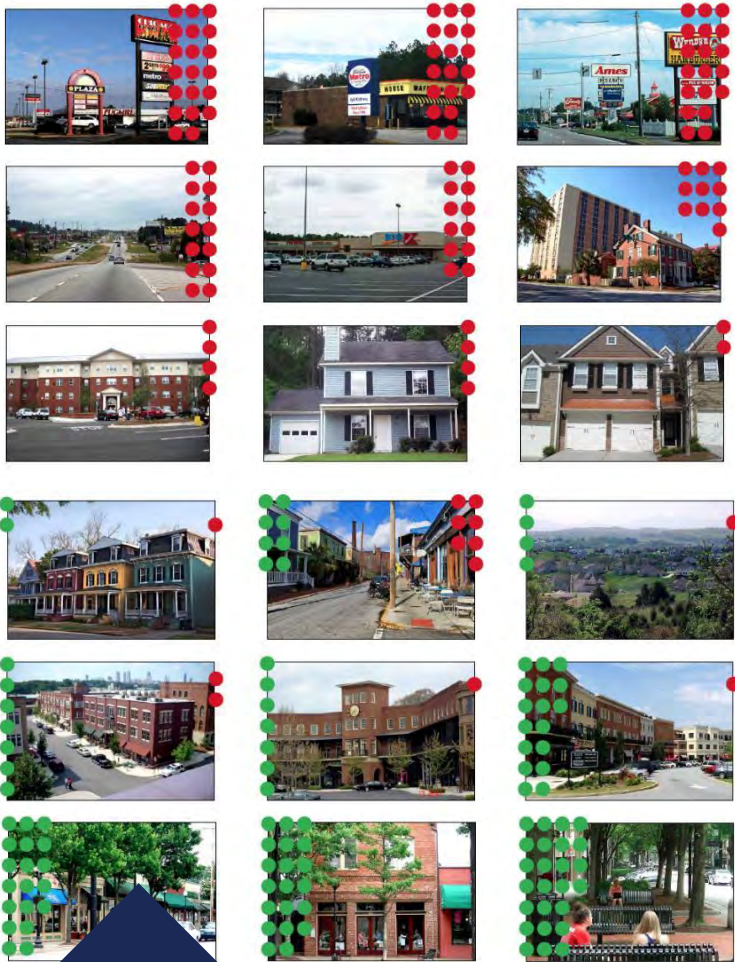
**2**

Community  
Engagement

**3**

Code Drafted, lawsuits,  
Regulating Plan not adopted

Beautiful visioning graphics were produced for each of the defined areas in the corridor and presented to the public



The public input process, branded **ENVISION RIDGEWALK**, included several meetings and an all-day design charette

## DREAM #3 FORM BASED CODE

### Zoning + Transect Standards + Regulating Plan

- Code is transect-based, but is vague and uses words like should rather than shall, may rather than must
- The Regulating Plan is where the real requirements are – transects and street network somewhat pre-determined, developers just fill in the blocks
- Landowners initiated legal actions
- Under the impression that one developer would develop the whole area, the Council did not adopt a regulating plan and left this task to the developer so that the zoning would be flexible to their ideas
- Their ideas ended up being to develop parts of the site piecemeal and with large format uses



RIDGEWALK DISTRICT ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN



# DREAM #3 FORM BASED CODE

- The first two major proposals were for an outlet mall and a mega-church
- The outlet mall was not required to use the FBC because they were vested under Tech Park Overlay
- The outlet mall began to draw regional and auto-centric uses to the corridor
- The mega-church, a large format use, was the first real test of the Form Based Code





## FBC CASE STUDY

# LARGE FORMAT CHURCH

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Technically met the code as much as it could be enforced

- CUP required for church use; project had support
- Applicant agreed to build a street network and keep some parking unpaved to make future building easier
- The church blocked the streets with bollards and does not open them to traffic
- Recently a variance & zoning condition amendment was granted to allow paving of the front parking lot
- At least the architecture looks nice

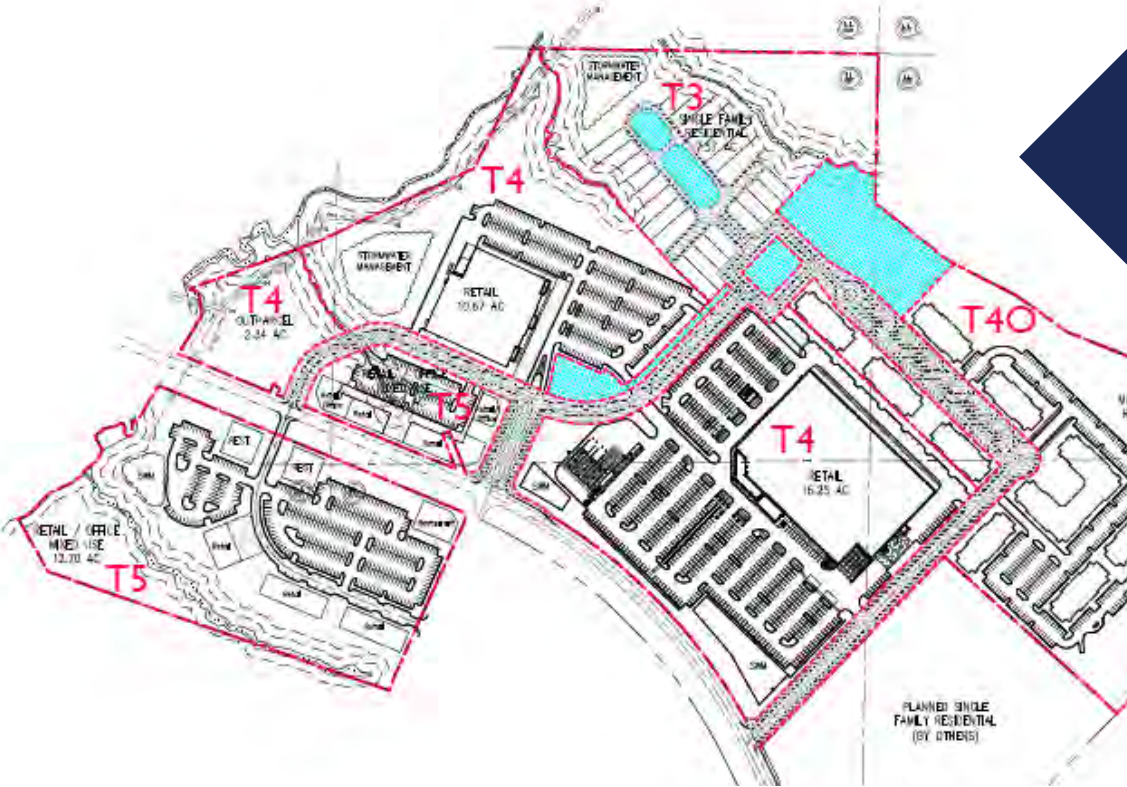


# FBC CASE STUDY COSTCO & OUTPARCELS

## 52 Variances Needed

- Long variance process which included lots of proposals, but was ultimately driven by getting Costco approved
- Because the FBC was weak, 58 conditions of zoning were adopted to try to control the development of a larger area with the approval of Costco
- Conditions designated transects and a street network
- Approval of so many variances set the stage for future difficulty and has not spurred further development that the community desires
- Proposals since the Costco have been for a car dealership, a small strip center, and a car wash

Zoning  
Conditions  
designated  
transects  
and a  
street  
network



The final  
result was  
not quite  
as nice as  
the church





## DREAM #3 FORM BASED CODE

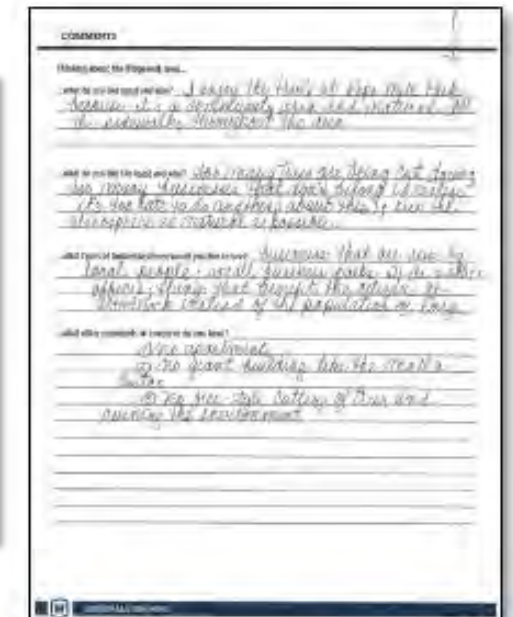
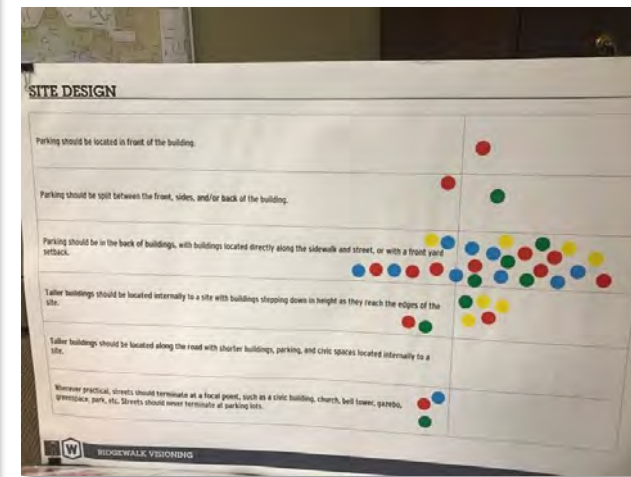
Clearly Not Achieving the Vision



Large-format uses and regular inquiries from highway-commercial, national brand businesses

# VISIONING IN 2018

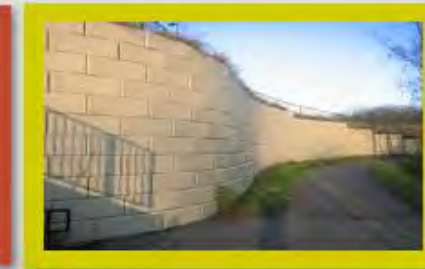
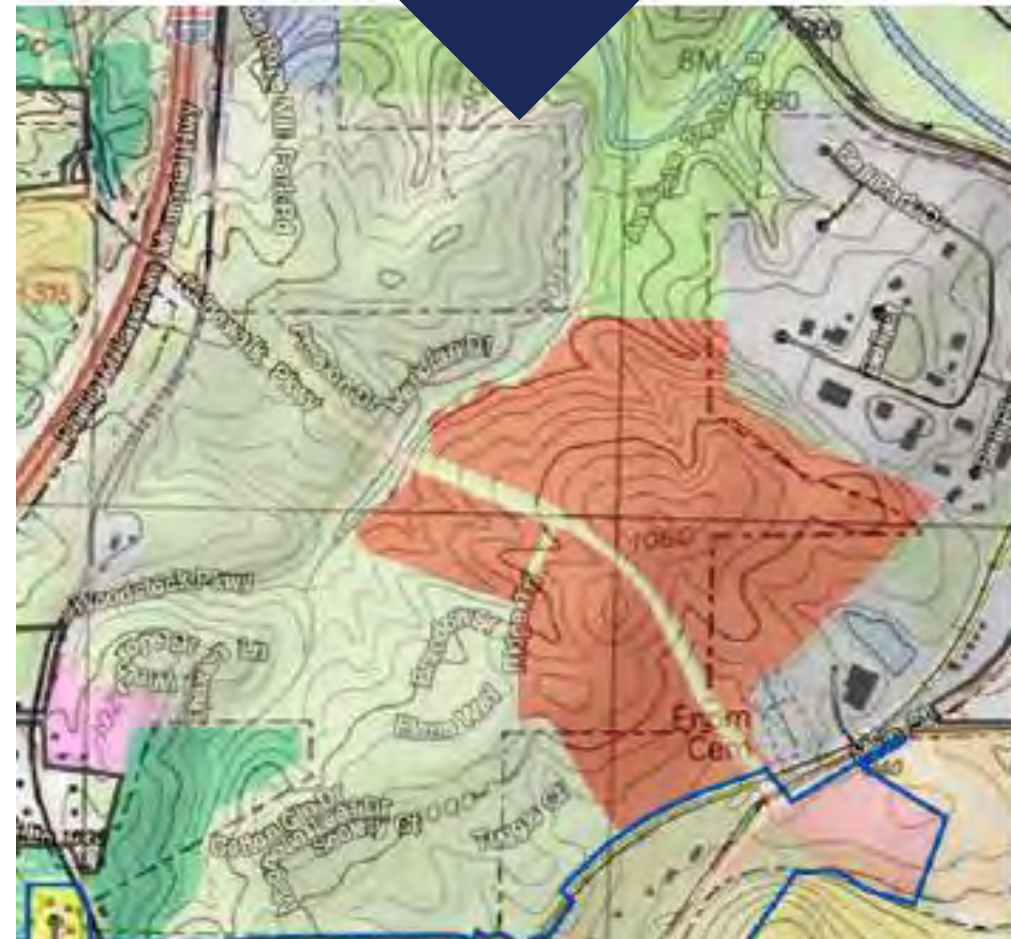
- Five total Input Meetings held (185 participants)
  - Four HOA meetings and one general public meeting
- Six visioning boards
  - Architecture, Civic Space, Use, Retaining Walls, Character, and Site Design
- Comment Cards
  - Written responses that were categorized and compiled
- Two meetings held with commercial stakeholders and developers
  - What barriers may keep them from developing architecture and design that the community prefers



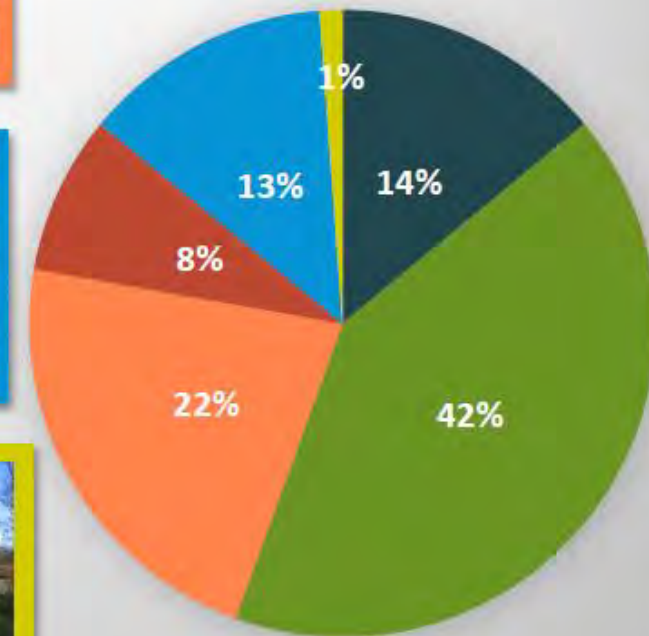


# VISIONING TAILORED TO THE CORRIDOR

The Ridgewalk area has extreme topography, so most developments will require a visible retaining wall. The majority of public participants found terraced walls with landscaping most appealing. Having a requirement for the design of retaining walls could be used to form a consistent streetscape.



## Retaining Walls



# DREAM #4 RIDGEWALK OVERLAY

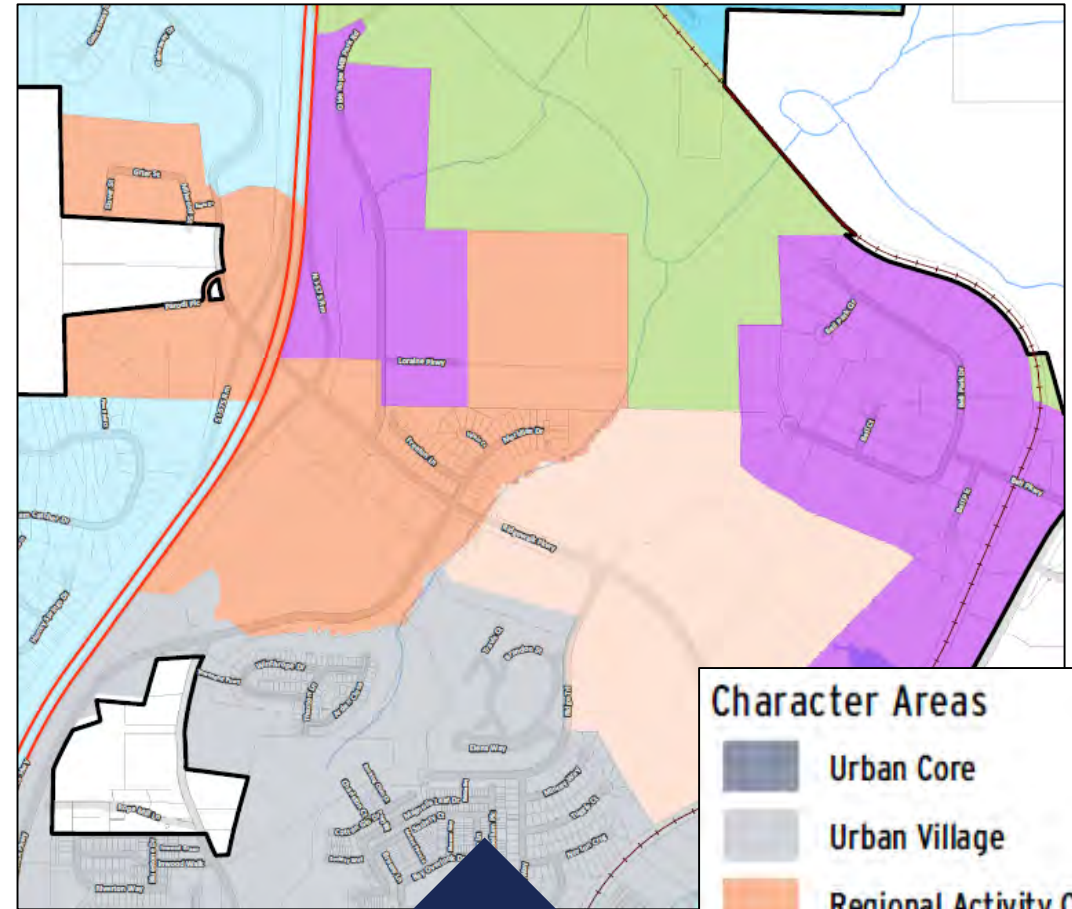
Moving from Form Based Code back to Traditional Underlying Zoning with a Design Overlay

## Regional Activity Center > General Commercial:

- Area surrounding interchange
- Wide range of uses, including LI uses
- More versatile than Light Industrial w/Tech Park Overlay
- Includes employment uses and light manufacturing

## Community Village Center > Neighborhood Commercial:

- Area closer to Main Street & residential
- Smaller, neighborhood uses
- Primarily professional office, retail, restaurants
- Max area of 8,000 SF per use (CUP available) to keep control over the scale



The Comprehensive Plan informed the choice of zoning district

# DREAM #4

## RIDGEWALK OVERLAY

- Certain consistent streetscape elements required for all projects (trees, lights, walls)
- Size limits for certain uses
- Architectural requirements – mercantile features/character
- Requirements for pedestrian connectivity and trails
- Points system (scoring matrix) for site layout, streetscape, civic space, landscaping



Design Overlay was heavily influenced by citizen ideas and feedback, and was peer reviewed by a few developers against real projects.



# DREAM #4

## RIDGEWALK OVERLAY

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### Scoring Matrix for Aesthetics

#### Process:

- Creating a flexible framework for site planning
- Providing a standard streetscape, with some flexibility for minor adjustments
- Providing a menu of options for consideration, both on and off-site
- Providing the opportunity for on-site options to counter off-site deficiencies
- The goal is to reduce the need for variances and provide for flexibility with administrative approval



Seeking to promote & encourage creativity to achieve the overall community vision.

# POINTS MATRIX WITH SLIDING SCALE

Acres	Streetscape Minimum	Site Minimum	Total Minimum
<1	5 Points	2 Points	7 Points
1.1 - 5	5 Points	4 Points	9 Points
5.1 - 10	6 Points	4 Points	13 Points
10.1-15	7 Points	5 Points	15 Points
15.1+	8 Points	7 Points	20 Points

## Points Matrix Process:

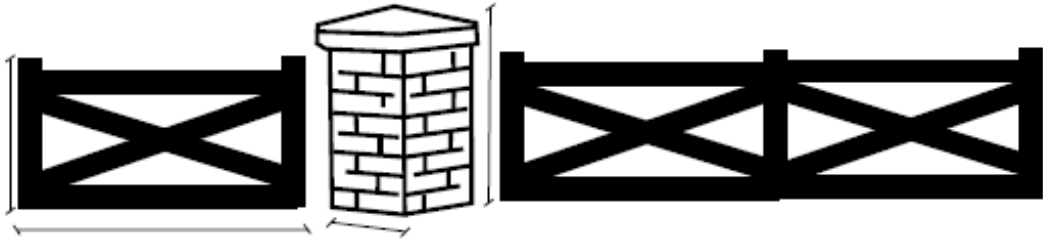
- Developer fills in points worksheet
- Staff reviews for compliance
- DPC votes on points calculation results
- Applicants may appeal points allocation decisions to the Mayor and Council

100	Required Ridgeway Streetscape Features	Points Max
101	Sidewalk - 5' or 10' wide	1
102	Decorative Lighting	1
103	Brick/Stone Piers with Fence	1
104	Landscape Strip - 7' wide	1
105	Street Trees	1
106	Public Art	2
107	Add'l Landscaping	1
108	Street Furniture	1
109	Additional Landscape Zone	1
110	Corner plaza	2
111	Open space/pocket park	2
112	Monument Sign with decorative base	2
113	Retaining wall with decorative masonry	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Deducts</b>	
	Reduced 10' Wide Sidewalk	-1
	Reduced or eliminated sidewalk	-1
	Reduced Decorative Lighting	-1
	Reduced Brick/Stone Piers with Fence	-1
	Reduced Landscape Strip	-1
	Reduced Streets Trees	-1
	<b>TOTAL DEDUCTS</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Additional Site Points</b>	<b>2</b>

Site Features	Points Max
5' Wide Sidewalk	1
Pedestrian Connectivity	1
10' Wide Sidewalk	2
Completion of Public Trail Segment	5
Corner Plaza	1
Pocket Park	2
Front Yard	1
Open Space	1
Interparcel Connectivity	1
Decorative Walls/Fences	1
Terminated Vista	2
Terraced Retaining Wall	2
Decorative Retaining Wall	2
Public Art	2
Fountain	1
Sustainability Measures	3
Civic Building/land donation	1
Stormwater Feature	1
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Additional Site Points</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>

# RIDGEWALK OVERLAY STREETScape STANDARDS

- i. Sidewalk - 5' wide along the northside of Ridgewalk Parkway and 10' wide along the southside.
- ii. Landscape strip - 7' between the back of curb and the sidewalk.
- iii. Decorative lighting - every 100' (o.c.) in the landscape strip.
- iv. Street trees - every 50 feet on center (o.c.) in the landscape strip.
- v. Brick/Stone Piers every 100 feet on center (o.c.) with the decorative fence in between.



< 45" x 45" x 5.5'



32" x 32" x 5' >



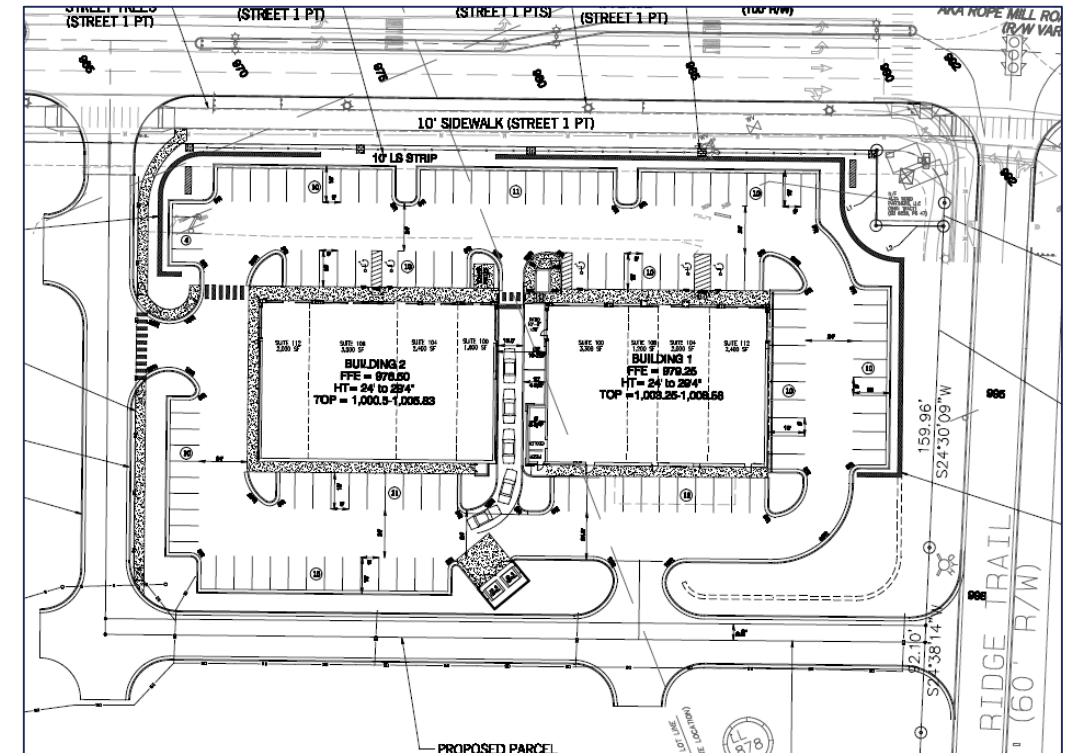


- As the matrix is used, limitations will be evaluated
- Matrix will be adjusted through amendments to improve

## DREAM #4 RIDGEWALK OVERLAY

### Outlook

- Working on the first project now - shopping center site
- Currently receiving feedback from designers



# PANEL DISCUSSION



CITY OF  
**WOODSTOCK**

Google Earth GEORGIA