BALANCING PRESERVATION AND GROWTH IN HISTORIC ROSWELL

CITY OF ROSWELL HISTORIC DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

Georgia Planning Association
Fall Conference
September 24, 2020
Purpose & Process

PROJECT PURPOSE
PROCESS
BACKGROUND

• 544-acre historic district
• Historic commercial areas, historic residential areas, and SR 9
• Physical and social heart of Roswell
• Popular destination for restaurants and events
• Unified Development Ordinance
• Recent residential and mixed-use developments, *sometimes* controversial
PROJECT PURPOSE

• Creating a **preservation-focused** master plan for the district

• Establish a **detailed vision** for the district as a **sustainable and thriving** downtown that **protects** historic character and resources

• Recommend potential changes to City **regulations and standards** to support the vision

Commitment to preserving **local identity**
# Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Conditions &amp; Historic Patterns Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Previous Plan Review</td>
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<td>• Mapping</td>
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<td>• Site Walks</td>
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<td>• Historic Patterns Analysis</td>
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<td>• Visioning</td>
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<th>Master Plan Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Historic District Concept Plan</td>
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<td>• Context Areas Concept Plans</td>
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<td>• Additional graphics, charts, tables</td>
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<tr>
<th>Implementation Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Master Plan City Council Approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Code &amp; Regulation Recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<th>Final Deliverables &amp; Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Final report document</td>
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<td>• Final presentation to Council with all recommendations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Discovery
WALKING TOUR
MAPPING EXISTING CONDITIONS
HISTORIC FORM ANALYSIS
Walking Tour Results

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD
• Mimosa Boulevard Route
• Canton Street / Green Street Route

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH
• Canton Street / Green Street Route

80+ People BOTH Days!
HISTORIC PATTERNS ANALYSIS

• Contributing historic structures
• On-the-ground documentation with photographs and measurements
• GIS analysis to measure setbacks and document frontage types, building heights, street experience for the entire study area
• Maps created based on each criterion that show patterns on each block
HISTORIC PATTERNS ANALYSIS

• Lot Metrics analyzed:
  • Frontage (Building)
  • Frontage (Yard)
  • Front and Side Yard Measurements
  • Lot Coverage
  • Building Heights
FRONTAGE - Porch, Landscape
FRONTAGE - Porch, Landscape
FRONTAGE - Porch, Parking
SHOPFRONT - Gallery, No Yard
HISTORIC PATTERNS
ANALYSIS

Canton House Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Metric</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Coverage</td>
<td>10% - 20% (Avg. 14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback Range</td>
<td>37' to 56'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Side Setback Range</td>
<td>4' to 20'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Height</td>
<td>1.5 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Frontage</td>
<td>Porch or Half Porch (&gt;50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard Frontage</td>
<td>Landscape (&gt;50%)</td>
</tr>
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HISTORIC PATTERNS
ANALYSIS

Mill Village Pattern

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<tr>
<td>Lot Coverage</td>
<td>10-20% (Avg. 19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback Range</td>
<td>10’ - 30’ (Avg. 21’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Side Setback Range</td>
<td>7’ - 15’ (Avg. 10’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Height</td>
<td>1.5 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Frontage</td>
<td>Full Porch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yard Frontage</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
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Charrette

PUBLIC DROP-INS
INTERVIEWS
FACILITATED EXERCISES
UNFACILITATED EXERCISES
FACILITATED EXERCISES

FOUR DESIGN TABLES

- LAND USE & DESIGN
- TEST SITE DISCUSSION
- TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY
- ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

FOCUSED HIGHWAY 9 TRANSPORTATION TABLE
UNFACILITATED EXERCISES

• WHERE DO YOU LIVE IN ROSWELL?

• REVIEW EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS & HISTORIC PATTERNS ANALYSIS
UNFACILITATED EXERCISES

• VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY
• DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES
• PRESERVATION PREFERENCES
TEST SITES
CONCEPT PLANS

• Legend for Map:
  • Current Development Projects
  • Test Sites We Drew
TEST SITES
CONCEPT PLANS

• Potential redevelopment sites
• UDC-compliant concepts that showed what is allowed by-right today
• Concept Plans using historic compatibility (photo, right)
Recommendations

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

LAND USE

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

TRANSPORTATION
HOW DID WE GET HERE?

• Step 1: Reviewed Character Areas of the Historic District - some overlap.

• Step 2: Analyzed lots and buildings to better understand patterns.

• Step 3: Listened!

There are no consistent patterns across the historic district. They vary by character area, but also by street.
COMPATIBILITY RULE - Process

- Explored several options for “compatibility”
- Used real sites to understand options
COMPATIBILITY RULE - Initial Concept

Step 1: Establish the compatibility zone.

• Measure 300’ from property lines (all sides, including across streets)

• Identify properties along the same primary street


• If none, stop; the rule does not apply
COMPATIBILITY RULE - Test Site

Steps 1 and 2:

- Test Site
- Official Historic Buildings
- 300’ buffer
- Primary Street
- Compatibility Zone
Step 3: Analyze lot metrics of official historic building in the compatibility zone

Step 4: Define the public frontage
OPTION: Compatibility Rule
OPTION: Building Heights

All two-story buildings
OPTION 1A: Compatibility Rule
OPTION 1B: Building Heights

All two-story buildings
We like the idea, but...

• It’s too complicated

• It’s still too limiting - do we really care what happens behind a building?

• We don’t want the same approach to preservation everywhere!
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Compatibility Rule

H-1. **Update the UDC to establish Character Area-based regulations.**

- Amend HC Overlay and DT Districts
- Build on existing identified Character Areas
- Reflect diverse existing patterns
- Provide the greatest protection in areas with the most historic resources
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Compatibility Rule

H-1. Update the UDC to establish Character Area-based regulations.

- Focus on the “Protected View Zone”

The area between the property line next to the primary street and the official historic building’s front façade (extending the entire width of the site), plus 40 feet. Protected view zone also includes any additional area between a secondary street property line and the official historic building’s side façade, plus 25 feet. On sites with more than one building, protected view zone is calculated separately, but its depth is averaged for the portion of the site between two adjacent official historic buildings.
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<th>CHARACTER AREA (see Regulatory Character Areas Map, page 45)</th>
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<th>Building Style</th>
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*Building Types: Regulatory Character Area compatibility

**Per Existing Guidelines:**

- All: Max. 60 ft.
- All Houses: Max. 60 ft.
- All Other: Max. 170 ft.
- Façades 80 feet or less in width: max. per UDC + a required stepback above 2nd story
- Façades over 80 feet in width: max. 2 stories

**Setbacks**:

- Side Street (minimum, larger allowed for open space)
- Side Interior Rear
- Rear

**UDC**

- Central Alpharetta/Atlanta Street
- North Alpharetta/Atlanta Street
- Lower Canton Street
- Upper Canton Street
- Other Areas
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<td></td>
<td>In Protected View Zone</td>
<td>Remainder of Site</td>
<td>Primary Street (minimum, larger allowed for open space)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullcloh Avenue</td>
<td>70% (7 of 10)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All: Max. 60 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>Max. 3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Village</td>
<td>54% (40 of 74)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All Houses: Max. 60 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>Max. 3 stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimosa Boulevard</td>
<td>71% (32 of 45)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All Houses: Max. 60 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>Max. 3 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Alpharetta/Atlanta Street</td>
<td>26% (12 of 47)</td>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All: Max. 200 ft.</td>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>UDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Alpharetta/Atlanta Street</td>
<td>83% (5 of 6)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All: Max. 100 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>UDC</td>
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<td>North Alpharetta/Atlanta Street</td>
<td>21% (13 of 61)</td>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>All: Max. 200 ft.</td>
<td>UDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Canton Street</td>
<td>83% (19 of 23)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>Max. 70 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>Max. 3 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Canton Street</td>
<td>87% (34 of 39)</td>
<td>Regulatory Character Area compatibility</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>Max. 70 ft.</td>
<td>Max. 2 stories</td>
<td>Max. 3 stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Areas</td>
<td>6% (19 of 325)</td>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>Per Existing Guidelines</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>UDC</td>
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</table>
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Compatibility Rule

H-1. Update the UDC to establish Character Area-based regulations.

- Incorporate existing officially designated historic buildings
- Use a “Regulating Plan” for site-specific setbacks (no buildings in front of historic buildings)
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Alternative Compliance

H-1. Update the UDC to establish Character Area-based regulations.

Allow the HPC to approve alternative compliance when:

• There are clear and compelling reasons that are not purely financial why the standard cannot be met;

• The alternative design approach satisfies the intent of the -HOD;

• The alternative design approach satisfies the criteria for CAs;

• The alternative approach demonstrates exceptional conformance with HPC Guidelines; and

• The alternative approach conforms with the Comp. Plan and the Historic District Master Plan.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Compatibility Rule

H-2. Continue to use type of the “compatibility rule” contained in the Historic District Design Guidelines to regulate architecture.

Would not be allowed under the proposed rules
Would not be allowed under the proposed rules
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Compatibility Rule

H-6. **Restrict** all exterior materials in areas not subject to the compatibility rule to exterior materials **found on historic buildings in Roswell**, subject to HPC review.

H-7. Require the design of **compatible front yards**.

H-8. Require the preservation and replanting of **trees that are visible from the street**.
ADOPTION

• STRONG PUBLIC AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUPPORT

• MASTER PLAN ADOPTED 8/12/19

• UDC AMENDMENTS ADOPTED 3/9/20 WITHOUT ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

• UDC AMENDMENTS ADOPTED 7/13/20 WITH ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE
Lessons Learned

PROCESS
CONTENT
CHAMPIONS
Lessons Learned

1. ENGAGE DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS TO CREATE CHAMPIONS

- Preservationists
- Boards and commissions
- Environmentalists
- Business community
- Property owners
- Residents
Lessons Learned

2. **FOCUS ON THE KEY FEATURES THAT DEFINE A PLACE**

- Areas seen from public streets
- Other views
- Character-defining features
3. REMEMBER THE END GOAL

- Filter recommendations through the lens of historic regulations and zoning
- Capture and record tangential ideas, but don’t let them take control
Lessons Learned

4. ALLOCATE PLENTY OF TIME FOR REVIEW

• Advisory committee
• General public
• Elected officials
Lessons Learned

5. PREPARE A FLEXIBLE SCOPE OF WORK

• Emphasize flexibility from the beginning
• Focus on outcomes, not specific tasks
Lessons Learned

6. REGULARLY UPDATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Preservation can be a “sensitive” topic
- Proactively address red flags to reduce speculation
Lessons Learned

7. USE VISUALS TO EXPLAIN IDEAS

• Photos, at a minimum
• Customized plans and graphics, when possible
Thank You!

Q&A

Caleb Racicot  
TSW  
cracicot@tsw-design.com

Jackie Deibel  
City of Roswell  
jdeibel@roswellgov.com