



Towne Center Library, City Market Plans revealed

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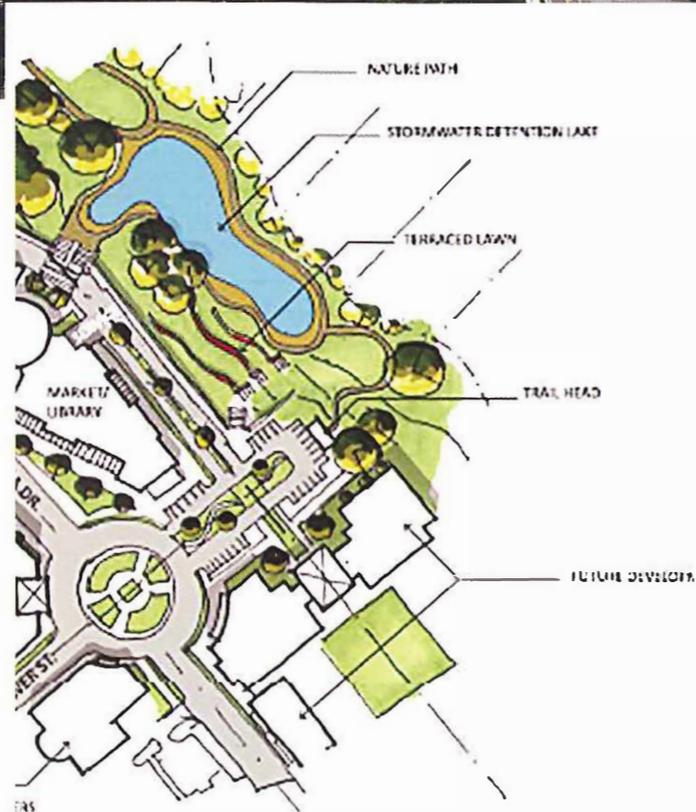
A standing room only crowd heard the city's plans for a library and city market for the Towne Center on Oct. 19.

It is the next step in the process of creating a vibrant, walkable downtown Snellville, complete with shops, attractions and residential space.

City leaders announced their desire to move the Elizabeth H. Williams Library to a new facility in the city's planned Towne Center. The new library would be located in a more centralized and convenient location on Wisteria Drive near the Police Department and City Hall and be a real driver for the Towne Center.

The city has invested wisely in property for future development on Wisteria Drive, and Mayor Tom Witts, fellow councilmembers and city officials stated that they had begun a conversation with county officials regarding the potential of funding for the construction of the new library in the county's 2017 Special Local Option Sales Tax renewal.

Plans for the library would be developed in a partnership with Gwinnett County much like the new Lilburn library. The city's vision also includes a connected City Market that would be home to retail market space, restaurants, bistros, outside dining and pedestrian space and patterned after ultra-successful market developments such as Krog Street Market and Sweet Auburn Curb Market which have revitalized their adjacent neighborhoods.



City officials also believe new construction should include open building space that would be available for uses from education to civic events.

City leaders hailed the proposals for the library and City Market as vital catalysts for moving Snellville's Towne Center Plan forward. The projects will serve as big steps and major anchors for the future Towne Center. The crowd in attendance agreed wholeheartedly through their positive comments and input.

The announcement is the latest regarding the future of the Towne Center. The Livable Centers Initiative Study funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission was completed in 2003 and

provided the first real plan for the Towne Center. In 2005, the construction of the new City Hall and Senior Center was complete and the city was awarded a \$2 million LCI grant from the ARC to construct sidewalks and other downtown improvements complete with trees, underground utilities and on-street parking, in the planned Towne Center area. This project was finished in the summer of 2005. In 2006, city leaders moved forward to demolish the small retail strip center fronting Highway 78 on what is now the Towne Green. In 2008, the city bought 8.5 acres of property on Wisteria Drive which was proposed to be a mixed-use residential and commercial development. In 2011, more credence was given to the Towne Center plan and it is now the top priority of city officials.

Also at the meeting, residents learned of the future of the Georgia Department of Transportation intersection project. While right of way issues came up, city officials made clear it is the state, not the city, which is responsible for all property acquisition and the construction of the planned Divergent Left Turn intersection. Scott Shelton of Gresham, Smith and Partners, the lead engineer for the project, said actual construction could take two years to complete. Currently the state and landowners are in land acquisition talks and construction is slated to begin next summer.

Shelton's presentation, which concentrated on explaining how traffic would flow in the new design and the history of the project, can be found at www.snellville.org.

A Plan for a New Library in Snellville

- A Vital Step In Moving The Towne Center Vision Forward
- New State of The Art Facility and Equipment
- Funded By Potential SPLOST Dollars
- More convenient location

About the New Library Proposal

For years, the residents of Snellville have asked for a new library in a centralized and convenient location for all citizens to enjoy.

The city of Snellville has proposed moving the Elizabeth H. Williams Library to a new facility as part of its Towne Center plan.

The city currently owns property on Wisteria Drive and has requested that Gwinnett County devote funding from the 2017 SPLOST for the construction of the facility if the SPLOST is renewed.

The city looks forward to more detailed discussion with county and library officials.



A City Market

In addition to a potential new library, the city has plans for a City Market that would be home to retail market space, restaurants, bistros, outside dining and food trucks.



Catalyst for the Towne Center

The proposed library relocation and new City Market will serve as a vital catalyst in moving Snellville's Towne Center Plan forward as they will be the first step and major anchor for the future Towne Center.



When Snellville's Development Code Renovation process kicked off July 12, the sizable crowd of residents and business owners in attendance were given opportunity to fill out comment cards reflecting their own ideas and concerns about future growth in Snellville.

Those comments have now been compiled and are available for your review - at www.snellvilledevelopmentcode.org.

We're cleaning up the inconsistencies in Snellville's existing regulations, simplifying content, increasing flexibility, and encouraging the kind of redevelopment — like our Towne Center plan — envisioned by the community, all in one unified, user-friendly ordinance.

Taken collectively, the comments collected reflect a mix of hopes, aspirations, and concerns. But they also demonstrate the trade-offs often required to achieve a wide range of strategic objectives.

For example: On the one hand, concerns over traffic lead some to call for limited or prohibited development, particularly as it relates to density. But other residents differ, stating "I would like to see more mixed use development. Live, work, play." And "would love to see retail with loft above." And "condos, townhomes for empty-nesters."

Such conflicting interests demonstrate exactly what planning is all about: An effort to reconcile competing priorities in ways that result in the widest array of win-win scenarios.

Perhaps the answer is not so much about prohibiting denser development as it is about making sure that such development occurs in the right places — places that contribute to city goals (like a walkable, mixed-use Towne Center) while allowing for the preservation of existing neighborhood character in other areas of the city.

This is the balancing act that needs to be perfected over the next 12 to 14 months. Successfully accomplished, we'll emerge with a set of updated and revised development rules tailored to, as we say, "building a better Snellville."

Stay tuned. The Towne Center portion of the UDO is slated to be voted on Dec. 12.