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CITY OF SNELLVILLE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

REZONE, SPECIAL USE, AND VARIANCE APPLICATION
2380 Wisteria Drive
Snellville, GA

LETTER OF INTENT

Site Description and Current Use

2380 Wisteria Drive is a 2.76-AC property in the City of Snellville, zoned BG (General Business) that is within the Towne Center Overlay District. The property is generally located on the northeast corner of Wisteria Drive and Hugh Drive, across from the Snellville Historical Cemetery. There is a vacant building and large parking lot that exist on site. A portion of the Snellville Greenway crosses the rear property, and another segment runs along Hugh Drive. Surrounded by commercial development and in the heart of the Towne Center, this site is a prime candidate for redevelopment and would provide the City of Snellville the opportunity to expand and enhance the Towne Center corridor.

Proposed Use

The developer is proposing a 5-story, "Towne Center Flat" residential building with 171 units. The mix includes one-, two-, and three- bedroom units. There will be a private amenity area, indoor facilities (gym, leasing), podium parking garage, surface parking, and enhanced architectural features similar in character to the nearby Grove project.

Vehicular access is limited to Wisteria Drive and Hugh Drive, utilizing existing curb cuts. Two points of access are necessary due to the grade change between the two streets, life safety, utility, and service access. Two points of access will also relieve traffic congestion. The segments of the Snellville Greenway within the property will remain and be incorporated into the site design to enhance the pedestrian corridor. Landscape enhancement will be provided throughout the property to meet or exceed the beautification efforts throughout the Towne Center Overlay District. An 8-FT landscape verge and 10-FT sidewalk are proposed along the property frontage.

The ground-floor residential will have elevated ceilings and larger windows to resemble the look of ground-floor commercial. The additional height will also

accommodate service vehicles entering the property from Wisteria Drive. Building materials include brick, stone, hardie board, metal, and stucco. The proposed Towne Center Flats building and associated site plan meets or exceeds the following Use Standards set forth in Section 206 of the City of Snellville Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

Use Standards

Where a Towne Center flat is allowed as a limited or special use, it is subject to the following:

- a. Towne Center flats must be in a conforming walk-up flat or stacked flat building type.*
- b. Ground floor dwelling units may be accessed from the outside or through a conditioned interior hallway, as permitted by building type.*
- c. Dwelling units located above the ground floor must be accessed through a conditioned interior hallway.*
- d. Each dwelling unit must have at least 750 square feet of floor area.*
- e. Sites containing 30 or more Towne Center flat dwelling units must provide a minimum of 5,000 square feet of commercial floor area for each additional 30 Towne Center flats, or fraction thereof, unless a variance is granted by the Board of Appeals in conformance with sentence F.2.f below.*
- f. Variance requests may only be approved when the applicant demonstrates that all Towne Center flat buildings are located within 1,000 feet of at least 15,000 square feet of existing commercial space. This distance is measured by the most direct route of travel on ground in the following manner:*
 - i. From the lobby entrance of each proposed building housing a Towne Center flat;*
 - ii. In a straight line to the nearest public sidewalk, walkway, street, road or highway by the nearest route;*
 - iii. Along such public sidewalk, walkway, street, road or highway by the nearest route;*
 - iv. To the main entrance of the existing commercial floor area.*
- g. When multiple commercial establishments are required to attain 15,000 square feet, this requirement applies to all establishments.*

Intent of Rezone

The intent of this rezone request from BG (General Business) to TC-R (Towne Center Residential) is to allow high-density residential to diversify the housing stock in Snellville. As stated in the Snellville 2045 Comprehensive Plan, one of the City's goals is to focus on high density residential and redevelop commercial corridors due to falling demand for brick-and-mortar retail. Approval of this rezone would provide an opportunity to get closer to that goal and bring flexible development opportunities to an abandoned site in the core of downtown Snellville. As a focal point in the community, this proposed Towne Center Flat development shall meet or exceed the architectural standards set forth in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and enhance the pedestrian corridor through the Towne Center District.

This rezone request is being submitted concurrently with a Special Use Permit application to allow for Towne Center Flats and three variance requests to remove the ground-floor commercial requirement due to proximity to existing commercial and to allow for use of the existing curb cuts along Wisteria Drive and Hugh Drive. See below.

Intent of Special Use Permit

Towne Center Flats proposed in the TC-R Zoning District must be approved as a Special Use within the TC-R zoning category, as stated in the UDO Allowed Use Table (Sec 206-2). This request for Special Use Permit is to meet the requirements of the UDO.

Intent of Variance Requests

Variance #1: UDO Section 206-3.1.F.2.e

Towne Center Flats in the TC-R Zoning District with 30+ units must provide a minimum of 5,000 square feet of commercial floor area for each additional 30 Towne Center Flats, or fraction thereof, unless a variance is granted by the Board of Appeals.

Per the variance requirements set forth in Section 206-3.1.F.2.e of the City of Snellville UDO, the proposed Towne Center Flat building meets the requirement to be within 1,000 FT of at least 15,000 SF of existing commercial space, as measured by the most direct route. Enclosed with the variance application is an exhibit that demonstrates the proposed building meets and exceeds this requirement.

Variance #2: UDO Section 205-1.14 Storefront Street Requirements

B. Except as provided in paragraph C below, curb cuts and driveways are not permitted along any storefront street when vehicular access may be provided from an alternative street located immediately adjacent to a contiguous property.

The property's location at the northeast intersection of Wisteria Drive and Hugh Drive limits access exclusively to designated Storefront Streets. There is an existing curb cut on each road that will be utilized for property access. Two access points are essential because of the grade change between the two streets, ensuring compliance with life safety regulations, facilitating utility and service access, and mitigating traffic congestion.

Variance #3: UDO Section 205-1.14 Storefront Street Requirements

D. Buildings abutting a storefront street are limited to:

1. Mixed-use buildings where a minimum of 80 percent of the ground level/first floor building area is devoted to retail, restaurant, and/or entertainment uses open to the general public, or ground floor dwelling units except when such units are not along a street-facing façade.

2. Shopfronts.

3. Additional building types may be provided to the rear of a conforming mixed-use building or shopfront.

The Grove development stands as a pioneering model for revitalizing downtown Snellville. Building upon this success, the Towne Center Flats project endeavors to introduce higher-density housing options to the city's core. Given the wealth of nearby commercial and retail establishments, and considering prevailing market dynamics, further expanding commercial space by an additional 30,000 square feet seems unnecessary. Instead, the focus should be on enticing residents to reside closer to and bolster the existing

commercial and retail landscape, offering a more sustainable strategy for community growth and support.

The Tomlin apartment complex nearby has thrived without ground floor commercial-retail, showcasing that success can be achieved through a residential-focused approach. Throughout the Towne Center District, there exists a balanced blend of residential and commercial elements, facilitated by a well-defined pedestrian corridor. This alignment closely adheres to the objectives outlined in the Snellville 2045 Comprehensive Plan, underscoring the effectiveness of such a mixed-use approach in fostering a vibrant and sustainable urban environment.

Conclusion

The developer and design team appreciate the opportunity to present this project to the City of Snellville. We are excited about this development and the continued enhancement of the Towne Center Overlay District.

Sincerely,



Mick Kittle, PLA
Senior Land Planner
SPG Planners + Engineers