



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2021**

Council Chambers, City Hall, 2342 Oak Road, Snellville, Georgia

Members present: Scott DeForest, Kerry Hetherington; Michael Kissel, and Ann Sechrist (Chairwoman).

Members absent: Al Henry and Antonio Jones.

Planning and Development Department staff present: Jason Thompson, Planning Director.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Sechrist called the September 28th regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed new members Scott DeForest and Michael Kissel to the Planning Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on the approval of tonight's regular meeting agenda.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to approve the agenda for September 28, 2021.

Michael Kissel made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on the approval of the minutes from the March 23, 2021 regular meeting.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 23, 2021 regular meeting.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on the nomination of Chair to the Planning Commission.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to elect Ann Sechrist to serve as Chair of the Planning Commission.

Michael Kissel made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on the nomination of Vice-Chair to the Planning Commission.

Michael Kissel made a motion to elect Kerry Hetherington to serve as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Jason Thompson said it is customary for staff of the Planning Department to serve as Secretary for the Planning Commission.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on the appointment of Secretary to the Planning Commission.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to appoint the Planning Department or designee to serve as Secretary of the Planning Commission.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

ANX 21-02 LUP 21-05 RZ 21-05 – Consideration and Recommendation on applications by Scenic Pointe, LLC (applicant) and the Lillian Margene Moulder Trust (property owner) requesting: 1) annexation to the municipal boundary of the City of Snellville, Georgia; 2) to amend the Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to Commercial Retail; 3) to amend the Official Zoning Map to BG (General Business) District; and 4) request for variances from the Unified Development Ordinance for the 8.93± site tract located at 1498 Scenic Highway, Snellville for a mixed retail, commercial, office subdivision development (Tax Parcel 5074 007).

Planning Director Jason Thompson presented a summary of the applications received for an 8.93± acre site adjacent to the northern municipal limits located at the junction of Scenic Highway and North Road, 1498 Scenic Highway, Snellville.

The applicant intends to subdivide the property into eight (8) parcels for the development of six retail food service lots for various restaurant users; one lot for office, medical, or child day care use; and one parcel to be set aside as open space for a pocket park.

The annexation application will solely be considered by the Mayor and Council. Tonight the Planning Commission is to consider the land use plan amendment application, rezoning application and requested variances.

The triangular shaped property is adjacent to and just north of the Sam's Club, zoned BG (General Business) District. The site is located across Scenic Highway from the Fairfield Farms single-family subdivision, zoned R-100 (Gwinnett County) and located across North Road from the Berkshire Farms and Willow Creek single-family subdivisions, zoned R-100 (Gwinnett County).

The requested Commercial Retail future land use category is the appropriate land use category that corresponds with the requested BG (General Business) zoning district, both of which are the predominate land use and zoning district commonly found along the Scenic Highway North commercial corridor.

The property is located in the northern portion of the Scenic Highway North Character Area on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Development Map. There are two policies in the Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan that provide support for the proposed development. Policy LU-4.1: Develop gateways and a sense of arrival into Snellville and Policy T-1.5: Require interparcel access in new developments.

The submitted site plan accommodates a wider right-of-way along Scenic Highway to allow for future widening of Scenic Highway. North Road is a Gwinnett County D.O.T. maintained right-of-way and Scenic Highway is a Georgia D.O.T. maintained right-of-way. Access requests on these roadways are regulated by the County and State. There is a

There is a proposed signalized full-access intersection located at Scenic Highway across from Stratford Drive serving as one of two access drives to the development from Scenic Highway. A second right-in/right-out access drive is located 500± feet to the south on Scenic Highway. A second full-access drive to North Road is shown across from Willow Bend Way. There is an interparcel access drive located on the southern end of the site where the property abuts Sam's Club. This access point will become operational once both parties enter into a shared access easement agreement.

The applicant is requesting a variance from the required 20-foot undisturbed buffer where approximately 430-feet of the property abuts North Road where the right-of-way is 60-feet wide, and eliminating the undisturbed buffer and instead allow a 10-foot planted landscape strip. The UDO also prohibits access through this undisturbed buffer, therefore an additional variance is necessary to allow the access drive through the buffer. The remaining 740-feet of the property abutting North Road has a 70-foot wide right-of-way with no undisturbed buffer or no access through the buffer requirement. The Planning Department recommends denial of the variance for the elimination of the buffer and instead recommends as a condition that there be a 20-foot undisturbed buffer plus a 10-foot planted landscape strip along the entire length of the property where abutting North Road, except for the two access drives serving the development. The Planning Department recommends approval of the variance to allow access through the no-access buffer.

The applicant also requested a variance from the requirement to replace or compensate for the removal of six specimen trees on the site. An Arborist report was submitted indicating the five of the trees should be disqualified due to the condition of the trees leaving one Loblolly pine as the only qualifying specimen tree. However, the applicant's proposed planting plan shows a net positive balance in tree inches to cover the loss in tree inches of the pine. Therefore, no variance is required.

In conclusion, the requested land use plan amendment to Commercial Retail and zoning request to BG (General Business) District are supported by the City's Comprehensive Plan and consistent with the commercial-retail developments that currently exist along the Scenic Highway North corridor, the Planning Department recommends: *Approval* of #LUP 21-05; *Approval* of #RZ 21-05; *Denial* of the variance for the buffer reduction; and *Approval* of the variance to allow access through the no-access buffer. These recommendations are subject to the attachment of the Conditions (1-12) as recommended and presented in the Staff Report.

Mr. Thompson also mentioned that the applicant wants provide and add a Snellville gateway sign on the pocket park tract.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked if there were any questions of staff.

There were none.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked the applicant to come forward and present the case.

Jack Wilson, Esq., 10 Lumpkin Street, Lawrenceville, Georgia spoke representing his client Ronnie DeThomas and Scenic Pointe, LLC. Mr. Wilson gave some history of the Lillian Moulder Trust property and said the small pocket park would be created and dedicated in her memory.

A mixed-use commercial development is being proposed with the lots fronting Scenic Highway being for retail use while the lot adjacent to North Road would be for office use. The same property went before the Gwinnett County Commissioners for a multi-family residential development that was hotly contested and ultimately denied. Mr. DeThomas was not involved in that application.

Two community meetings were held to present and discuss the proposed project. The scope of the project includes realignment of the roads. County DOT has a plan to convert the North Road and Scenic Highway intersection to a cul-de-sac. The most significant issue is the buffer and we understand that historically the retail uses along Scenic Highway have been buffered along North Road. We propose a slightly small buffer but improved through an enhanced planted buffer since much of the existing vegetation is very sparse and spotty and not dense. The proposed uses are less intensive that what is there now along Scenic Highway. The restaurant uses are further away and do not create the noise. We propose a 20-foot buffer enhanced with a staggered row of plantings. There is a good variation in the plantings in both height and density. The problem with providing a 30-foot undisturbed buffer does not allow the lot for the medical office and may reduce the parking on the other lots. We ask that you approve the buffer variances along with the land use plan and zoning map amendment applications with the staff conditions.

Michael Kissel asked about the large sit-down restaurant and if it meets the distance requirements in the alcoholic beverage ordinance from the school in the rear and church across the street.

Mr. Wilson said they have looked at that and believe they will be okay with meeting the distance requirements.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked if it was possible to move the proposed medical office building closer to Sam's Club and maintain the 20-foot buffer.

Mr. Wilson said they have looked at several lot configurations to try to mediate everyone's concerns. The sit-down restaurant model requires additional parking spaces that would be provided by the medical office site when the offices are closed.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked about the parcel to the extreme right on the site plan and what it will be used for and can it be used for just parking.

Mr. Wilson said that will be a proposed retail restaurant and to lose it for parking, they would not be able to meet the asking price by the Moulder Trust.

Scott DeForest asked about the main-thruway on the site and if there has been any discussion about it becoming the main pathway to Scenic Highway as far as traffic congestion.

Mr. Wilson said that is the intent that has been reviewed by Gwinnett D.O.T.

Michael Kissel asked who would be responsible for maintain the park with the City sign on it.

Mr. Wilson said it is their desire is to dedicate and deed the property to the City.

Kerry Herrington asked about sidewalks along North Road and if there are minimum parking requirements.

Mr. Wilson said installation of the sidewalks is a requirement of the City.

Jason Thompson stated the UDO has both minimum and maximum parking requirements.

Michael Kissel asked about the left parcel on site plan and if it may be a 24-hour fast food restaurant, what can be done to limit the light pollution from the site.

Jason Thompson stated the city's exterior lighting ordinance has regulations that limit the amount the light and spill-over to adjacent properties.

Chairwoman Sechrist opened the meeting to public comments. There will be a total of fifteen (15) minutes for public comments.

Gaye Bruce, 1710 Woodberry Run Drive, Snellville spoke on behalf of 152 homeowners in the Woodberry Subdivision. Mrs. Bruce read into the record a prepared statement (copy attached to the minutes) sharing their concerns about the proposed development relating to: (a) buffer along North Road; (b) cut across from Willow Bend Way; (c) landscape strips between each individual parcel/lot; (d) monument signage; (e) denial of the request for additional parking for the development; (f) hours restriction for trash collection and parking lot sweeping; (g) elimination and re-alignment of curb-cuts; (h) analyze loading zones to be able to accommodate large trucks; and any site plan that is approved to be site plan specific and any alterations to the plan require Mayor and Council approval.

Linda Mason, 1521 Willow Creek Court, Snellville, shared suggestions on making the proposed development a better fit for the North Road residents, including: limiting access directly onto North Road; no signage along North Road; berm, fence and trees be placed along North Road; no buildings higher than one-story; restrictions on garbage pickup and delivery hours; site plan to be site-specific and any changes to be approved by the Mayor and Council.

Jessie Hunter, 1434 North Road, Snellville, lives and owns property directly across from the proposed development shared the same concerns and desires as previously mentioned. Understands that the City can deny the request for the second curb-cut on North Road.

Kim Gore, 1844 Webb Gin House Road, Snellville spoke in favor of the proposed development and hopefully some of their concerns can be worked through. The surrounding Brookwood and Grayson communities have been involved in this project.

Betty Ann Kumin, 2155 Woodberry Run Drive, Snellville said the buffer that is behind Wal-mart is nice and thick and asks that a similar buffer be required. The Moulder Trust needs to realize their property may not be valued like they think it is.

Jack Wilson provided rebuttal to address some of the public comments made and thanked everyone for their time.

Michael Kissel asked if the Planning Commission has the ability to prohibit 24-hour restaurant use of a property.

Mr. Thompson said yes, the Planning Commission can recommend a condition be added to the zoning request.

Kerry Hetherington asked if the City already has regulations governing traffic and deliveries.

Mr. Thompson said there is a noise ordinance that addresses various noise levels; however, it does not necessary address the concerns mentioned tonight.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on land use plan amendment LUP 21-05.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to approve LUP 21-05 to amend the City of Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map to Commercial Retail.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on rezoning RZ 21-05.

Michael Kissel made a motion to approve RZ 21-05 to amend the City of Snellville Official Zoning Map to BG (General Business) District with staff recommended conditions and one new condition that 24-hour restaurant use is prohibited.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

Chairwoman Sechrist announced that the case will be considered by the Mayor and Council at the October 25th public hearing.

Kerry Hetherington asked if they have to take action on the two variances.

Mr. Thompson said they are included in the conditions.

UDO 21-01 – Consideration and Recommendation on amendments to the text of The Unified Development Ordinance for the City of Snellville, Georgia (“UDO”), adopted 10-26-2020 to amend: Definitions, Article 2 of Chapter 100, General Provisions; Towne Center Overlay District, Article 5 and Use Provisions, Article 6 of Chapter 200, Zoning and Land Use.

Planning Director Jason Thompson stated the Planning Department identified a few areas of the recently adopted Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that require amending to reduce ambiguity and also to help further the purpose of the Towne Center Overlay District.

More specifically: a) add Hugh Drive to the definition for ‘Storefront Street’ and limit that portion of Oak Road that lies within the TCO; b) reduce the single use, tenant, or occupant building size threshold requirement for a Special Use Permit from 45,000 sq. ft. to 10,000 sq. ft.; c) for properties with any portion within one-half mile radius from the intersection of Oak Road and Clower Street, in lieu of the two-floor requirement, require a minimum building height of 2 stories or 24 feet, whichever is greater; d) require at least 80% of the ground level/first floor building area be devoted to retail, restaurant, and/or entertainment uses which are open to the general public for mixed-use building types; e) amend the Use Provisions table to add several additional group living uses; require as a SUP or remove uses in the TCO and TC-MU districts; add certain medical uses; and add additional residential use types and provide definitions.

The Planning Department recommends approval of the proposed text amendments.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked if there were any questions of staff.

There were none.

Chairwoman Sechrist opened the meeting to public comments.

There were none.

Chairwoman Sechrist asked for a motion on UDO 21-01.

Kerry Hetherington made a motion to approve UDO 21-01 and all proposed text amendments to the Snellville Unified Development Ordinance.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jason Thompson thanked the members on for doing a great job during tonight's meeting. We are still working on getting some training scheduled and will keep you advised. We are getting a new City Planner. It may be awhile before we have another meeting as the next three regular meetings are cancelled with the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday's coming up.


ADJOURNMENT

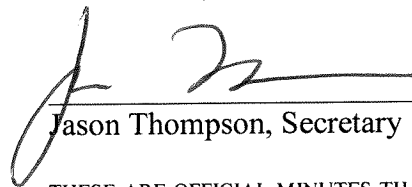
Kerry Hetherington made a motion to adjourn.

Scott DeForest made a second to the motion.

A vote was taken; voted 4 in favor and 0 opposed; motion approved.

The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.


Ann Sechrist, Chairwoman


Jason Thompson, Secretary

THESE ARE OFFICIAL MINUTES THAT WERE APPROVED
BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE DEC 28, 2021
REGULAR MEETING.

Good Evening Planning Commissioners,

My name is Gaye Bruce, 1710 Woodberry Run Drive, Snellville.

As a resident of the City of Snellville, I am here on behalf of the 152 homeowners in the Woodberry subdivision that borders Ridgedale and North Roads, approximately one-half mile from the proposed development.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the applicant, Ronnie De Thomas and his attorney, Jack Wilson, for the time they have invested in the two meetings with members of the community in August.

Woodberry homeowners are excited about the proposed annexation of the Moulder parcel into the City as we feel that annexation would be an asset to the community and would allow Snellville police to patrol the area. We appreciate the applicant's desire to donate a portion of the land to the City for a passive park and honoring the memory of Ms. Moulder. In addition, we agree with the proposed development in principle, but request the following modifications to the list of conditions and modified site plan:

1. For aesthetics and sound buffering for nearby single-family homes, we request a *30-foot buffer with a landscaped berm, plus a 6-foot privacy fence* to be consistent with the precedent that is established along North Road behind Walmart and across from the Woodberry subdivision entrance. **This 30 foot landscaped buffer and berm would include all buildings and parking spaces abutting North Road along the eastern property line where adjacent to the North Road right-of-way. [Show Walmart Berm]**
2. In keeping with established precedent of not having access to commercial businesses along North Road from Pharrs Road north to Scenic Highway, we ask that the proposed curb cut across from Willow Bend Way be eliminated so that all entrances and exits be guided to the new "Stratford Drive Extension" or to Scenic Highway. *This would help to maintain the North Road neighborhood character and support "fewer curb cuts," both of which are mentioned on Pages 97-98 in the Snellville 2040 Comprehensive Plan Technical Addendum. [Show Pages 97 & 98 from Snellville UDO]*
3. Due to existing congestion in the Sam's Club parking lot since the addition of their gas pumps, we request the proposed inter-parcel access stub with Sam's Club be denied. ***Note to Jason Thompson – I did not read this statement since you had indicated earlier in your overview of the project that the City is in favor of this.***
4. We request a landscaping strip be added between each individual parcel.
5. Regarding signage, we ask the development be allotted a main "multi-tenant" identification sign and signage on each building, with no individual monument signs and no signage facing North Road.

6. On Variance Item 5, on Page 3 of 13, we ask that it be restated to read, “Exemption from non-conforming issues on individual parcels created at the time of subdivision *shall be limited to only those described and approved in this rezoning.*” *Note to Jason Thompson – I did not read this statement at the Planning Commission Public Hearing since they were not considering any specific modification variances included with the modified site plan submitted on 9.27.2021.*
7. The City’s Greenway Master Plan includes a path past the Moulder property. [**Show Snellville Greenway Master Plan**]
To promote biking and walking along North Road, we request the variance for an additional 60 parking spaces over the allotted maximum for the retail, medical, office and day care per the site plan ***be denied.***
8. To be consistent with other retail developments in the City located near single-family homes, we request the addition of a deed restriction specifying hours for trash pickup and parking lot cleaning for noise abatement purposes, and that signage be posted at each street entrance to the development.
9. To eliminate traffic back up within the development, we request the curb cut for Pad #1 that is closest to Scenic Highway be eliminated. Also, we request that Pad #2 be “turned” 90 degrees, and the curb cut be moved closer to where the proposed Stratford Drive Extension intersects with North Road [**show edited site plan mock-up**].
10. Some pads in the proposed development show a loading zone and some to not. For the ones that do show a loading zone, they seem randomly placed and not practical for large trucks. We request that the Planning and Development staff analyze loading zones, and the plans be modified for these to be adjusted as necessary to accommodate large trucks and be consistent throughout the development.
11. We request that any approved site plan related to this development be approved as “site plan specific” and any alterations from the approved site plan require approval by the Mayor and City Council.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Note to Jason Thompson – Visuals are on the following pages. Copies of the visuals in landscape orientation that I showed are included in a separate file.

North Road

North Road runs parallel to Scenic Highway from the Towne Center area north, reconnecting with Scenic Highway just north of Snellville city limits near Webb Gin House Road. Today, it is mostly single-family homes on large lots, and as the only road running parallel to Scenic Highway in this part of town, it is often used as an alternative local route for residents looking to avoid regional traffic congestion. Some plans for improvements have already been made, like the roundabout at the intersections of North Road and Pharrs Road and Ridgedale Road, and a bike path connecting the Towne Center to Lawrenceville was proposed as part of the City's Greenway Master Plan in 2017.

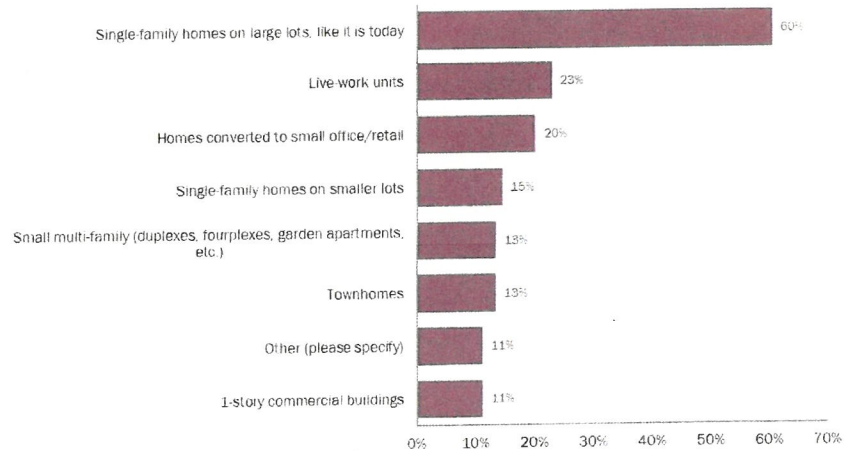
With its unique role, we wanted to understand more about the kind of place people imagine it being in the future. Both in-person participants and online respondents tend to envision a calm, landscaped road that serves local traffic, has few traffic generating uses of its own, and has the character of a neighborhood, not a commercial corridor. Most

survey respondents (60%) envision the uses along North Road will be similar to the single-family homes there today. Live-work units (23%) or homes converted to small offices (20%) were the most popular options for potential additional uses.

Additional comments for North Road included:

- Do not develop uses that generate additional traffic
- **Maintain the neighborhood character**
- Better manage traffic along the corridor
- Consider widening the road
- Add more roundabouts
- Add green space
- More small offices to the south, near the Towne Center
- Manage stormwater runoff

How do you imagine the uses along North Rd in the future? (Check all that you think would be appropriate.)



General Concerns

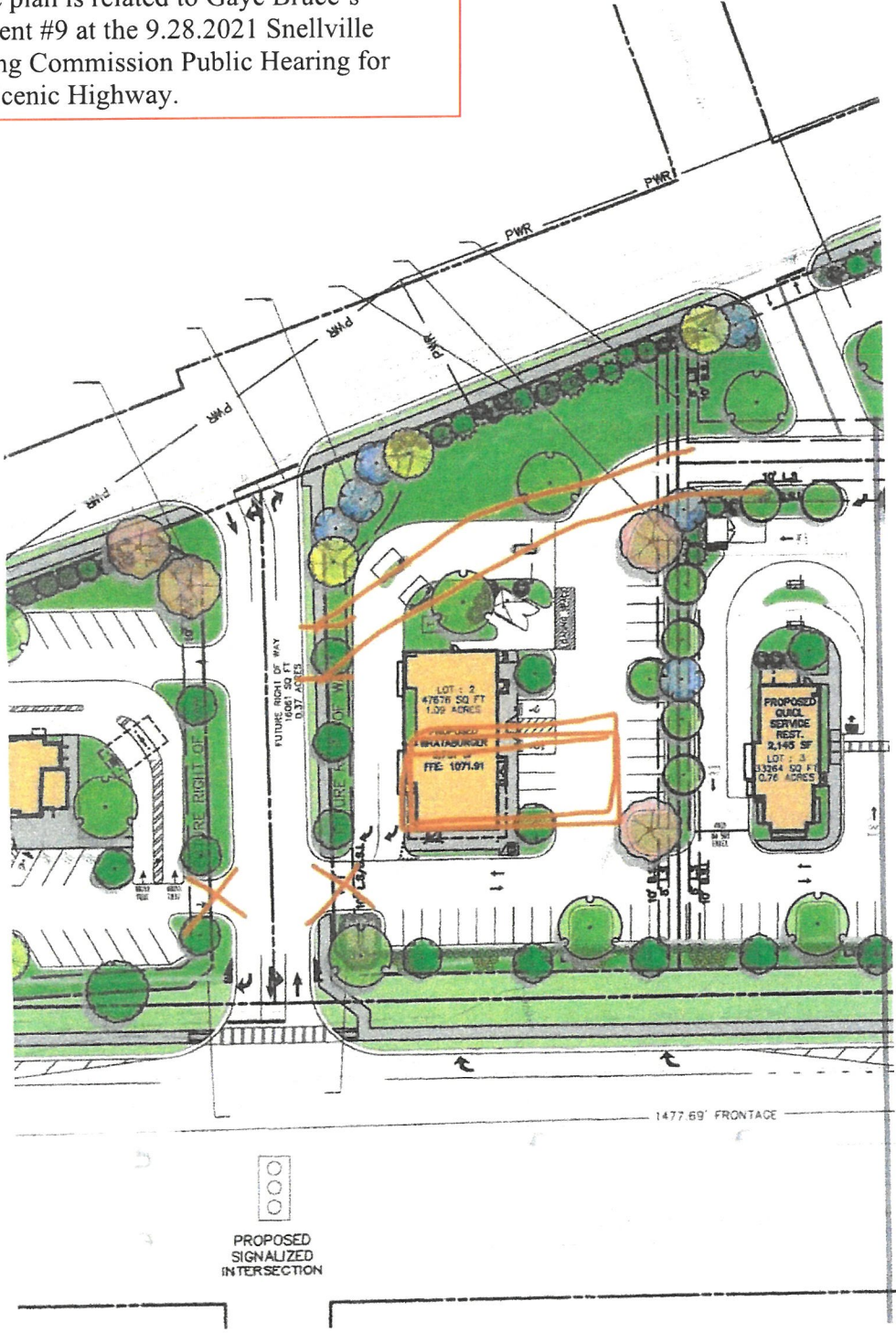
We asked respondents to share any other ideas or concerns about these or other major corridors in Snellville. Alleviating traffic congestion is the top concern. They also mentioned:

- Consider broad changes to brick and mortar retail and plan ahead to avoid major shopping center vacancies and deterioration
- Focus on renovating existing buildings before building new ones
- Limit future development along major corridors
- Make sure infrastructure is built in pace with new development
- Better maintain of roads and landscaping
- Plant more street trees
- Synchronize traffic signals
- Fewer curb cuts
- Improve connections between shopping centers (interparcel access)
- Add center medians
- Consolidate shopping plaza entrances

- Improve pedestrian crossing safety
- Provide alternative transportation options, like bike paths
- Formalize a Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) bus plaza by the park and ride lot on Henry Clower Blvd
- Develop parallel routes to provide alternatives to the main highways
- Concentrate higher intensity, new development in a walkable Towne Center
- Coordinated, visible signage
- Reduce excess parking at shopping centers
- Make stronger east-west connections
- Address congestion at: Main St and Athens Hwy; US 78 and Cambridge St; SR 124 and Ronald Reagan Blvd
- Implement traffic calming coming out of the WalMart Neighborhood Market on Cambridge Street

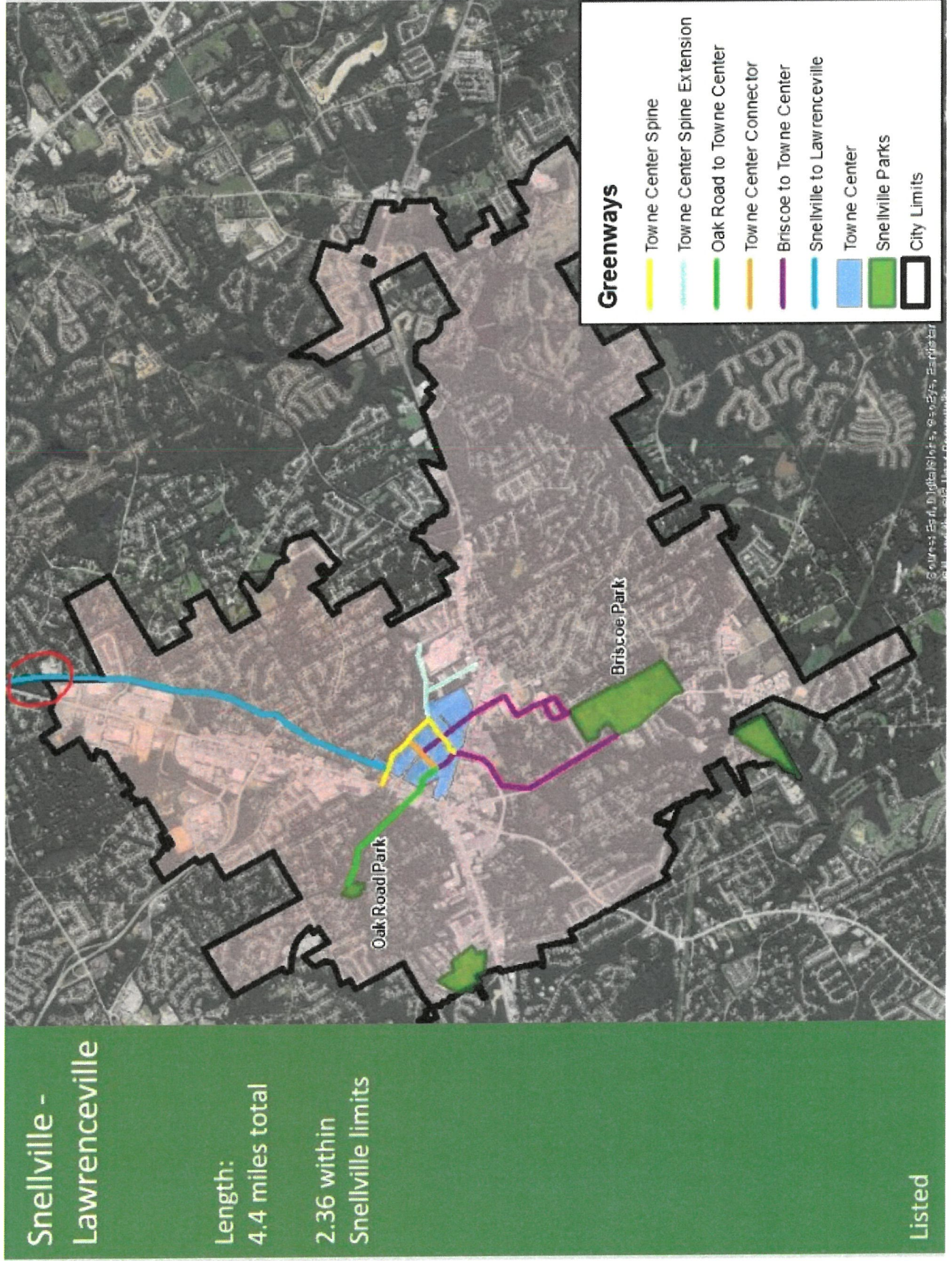
Who took the survey? Most were Snellville residents (68%) between the ages of 45-64 (55%) or over 65 (27%).

This suggested modification improvement to the site plan is related to Gaye Bruce's Comment #9 at the 9.28.2021 Snellville Planning Commission Public Hearing for 1498 Scenic Highway.



Snellville to Lawrenceville Segment of City of Snellville Greenway Master Plan Includes Moulder Property Along North Road

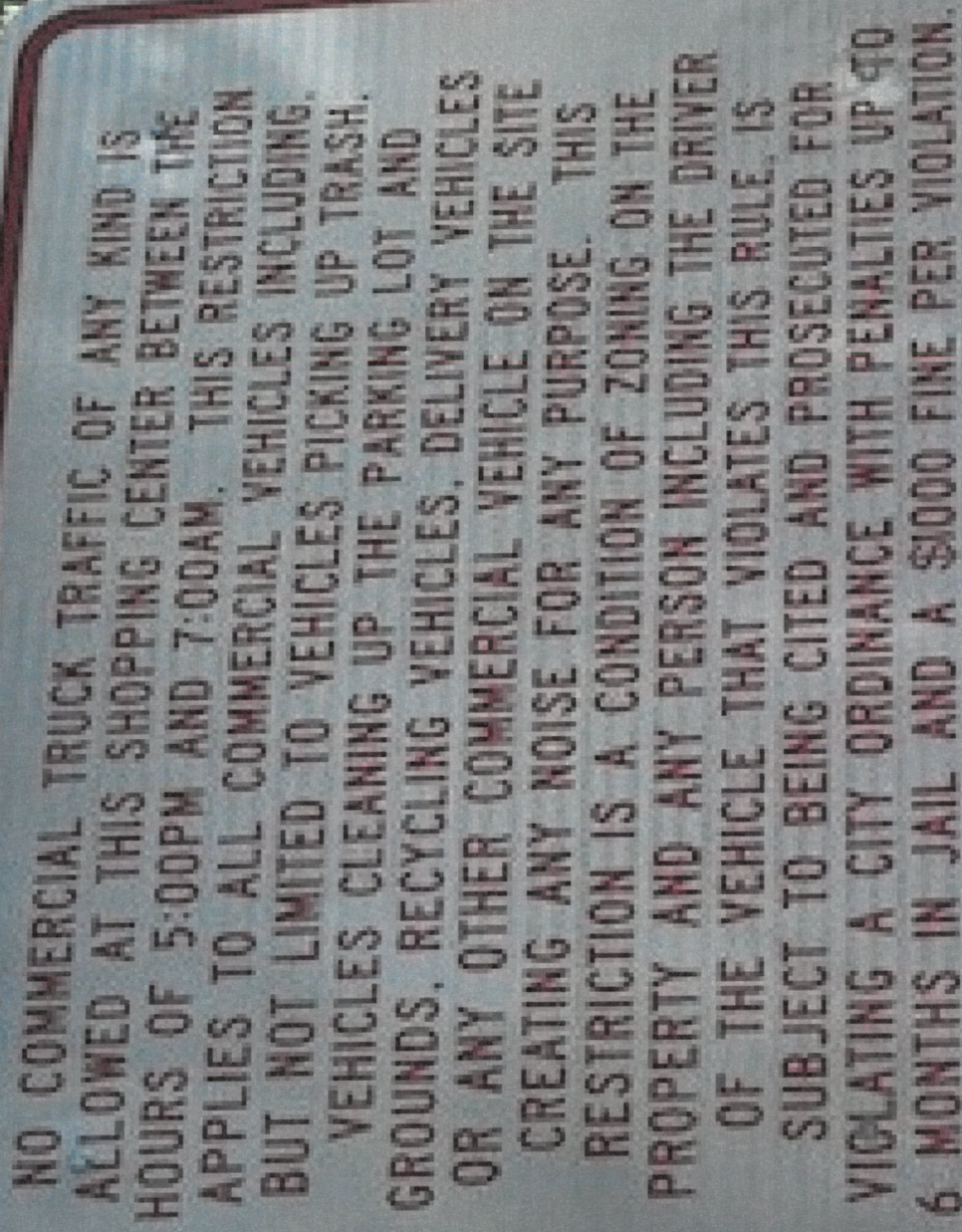
Source: City of Snellville Greenway Master Plan, November 2017



**Existing Buffer with Berm and 6 Foot Fence on North Road Behind Walmart,
Across from Woodberry Subdivision Entrance**



**Current Commercial Truck Traffic Restrictions Sign at Kohl's Shopping Center within Snellville
City Limits, Near Single Family Residential Homes.**



NO COMMERCIAL TRUCK TRAFFIC OF ANY KIND IS
ALLOWED AT THIS SHOPPING CENTER BETWEEN THE
HOURS OF 5:00PM AND 7:00AM. THIS RESTRICTION
APPLIES TO ALL COMMERCIAL VEHICLES INCLUDING,
BUT NOT LIMITED TO VEHICLES PICKING UP TRASH,
VEHICLES CLEANING UP THE PARKING LOT AND
GROUNDS, RECYCLING VEHICLES, DELIVERY VEHICLES
OR ANY OTHER COMMERCIAL VEHICLE ON THE SITE
CREATING ANY NOISE FOR ANY PURPOSE. THIS
RESTRICTION IS A CONDITION OF ZONING ON THE
PROPERTY AND ANY PERSON INCLUDING THE DRIVER
OF THE VEHICLE THAT VIOLATES THIS RULE, IS
SUBJECT TO BEING CITED AND PROSECUTED FOR
VIOLATING A CITY ORDINANCE WITH PENALTIES UP TO
6 MONTHS IN JAIL AND A \$1000 FINE PER VIOLATION.