

6 that allows the gate. But they could have the gate with the private road anyway. They are adding the relief for the 25-foot requirement.

The motion passed unanimously. This recommendation will go forward to mayor and city council next month.

At this time the Planning Commission took a five-minute break.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **Recommendation to Council for the transmittal of the Comprehensive Plan 2030.**

Brad Townsend stated that he would start with a little bit of introduction in dealing with the comprehensive plan this evening. They will have their consultant Michelle Alexander from Pond giving a short presentation for that. Townsend does want the Commissioners to know that since their work session on the draft comprehensive plan staff has had a work session with council members as a group, including the mayor and where they went over issues on the 13<sup>th</sup>, they have actually met with all six of the council members today for some pretty lengthy meetings. So, the document that the Commission has in front of them, there will be a lot of word-smithing to clean up the language to make sure the intent is very clear dealing with policies and things of that direction.

What staff is asking for the Commission to do tonight is understand that they are at 30,000 feet, they are dealing with big pictures, they are trying to at least move this process forward. They want to take the Commission's input, the input that the council members have given staff today, redraft the document. They may even send it out to the Commission so that they understand that those, not for another vote, but just so they have the document that we will be giving to the mayor and city council on July 11<sup>th</sup> for them to transmit to DCA.

With that, Brad Townsend turned the discussion over to Michelle Alexander and she will give the Commission a short synopsis as to the process they have gone through and where they can go, and look for the Commissions' input and feedback.

Michelle Alexander clarified that they are conducting a public hearing tonight so for logistics, what would be helpful then is if at the end if one has recommendations that they would like to make changes or recommend that that they let staff collect those here and have a chance to write them all down as they go through so that if the Commission does make a motion that they can collect that and put it all together in their motion.

Alexander introduced herself and stated that she was with Pond ad Co. She has had the great privilege of getting to work on this document and facilitate with the staff and with the committee. There are some members from the citizens

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committee here today. She recognized those members and thanked them for all of the night and work and effort and also some the council members who also attended many of the public meetings. For the purpose, Alexander stated that the last time they met they did go through pretty in depth the organization of the document. Hopefully the Commission has had a chance to review it. She is still going to present, if it pleases the Commission so that the folks in the audience are following the document and also to let the Commission know that any changes from the text from the last time they saw it...one of the Commissioners had asked about that...how are they going to know? The changes were put in red. So, it is essentially the same in the text, the language, the words that the Commission had seen when Alexander last got to speak with them in their work session. Anything that has changed is in red. So that that jumps out as they have gone through it.

The comprehensive plan was a process where they went through an assessment, a large assessment, a document that is available and is available as part of the comprehensive plan. They have gone through community meetings and the document the Commission has tonight is the action plan associated with the overall comprehensive plan. That document is called a Community Agenda. The document the Commission is considering tonight is called the Community Agenda. It is the action item document and policy associated with the comprehensive plan. As the Commission recalls, they had many meetings, staff also had additional meetings to civic groups throughout this process, throughout the year and there were opportunities through the web and other avenues to participate. There was a series of issues and opportunities. This was important. DCA requires that the city come up with a bulleted list, just a list at the beginning of the process, a list of issues and opportunities. That is not the policy or the final outcome it is just to say that these are issues that the city wishes to address and through the public process there was a process for being able to identify priorities. So the document the Commission has is aimed at the policy level to address those priorities in particular.

The document is organized to have several chapters. One is the vision and the development framework. In that development framework there is a map and there is an associated amount of text to describe how the city should develop. There is a bulleted list of opportunities as mentioned and then implementation. What are the policies and goals and programs? And the five-year action plan called the short term work program that the city is going to implement to address that list. Then there is a brief summary of all the month of work put together in the public participation.

The Commission had a draft of a vision, taking the first stab at a vision of how the city overall in 10 through 20 years. It is the 2030 horizon; the vision is what will Roswell become. What will Roswell as a city be characterized as? That vision also added and linked it to the existing mission. There is an adopted city mission

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and they link that back to those strategic goals so that it linked the overall community comprehensive plan to their strategic goals.

Alexander reminded the Commission that character areas are a tool that divide up the city in planning units. The character is basically what kind of development. What is the character of the future development that one would like to have? So, as this body entertains rezonings in the future, and their elected officials entertain requests to change the zoning, the document that they use is not just a map but they will have both the map identifying a character area and then the language associated with that character area. It goes into some specifics regarding design, intent, use, overall vision. And so each one of the character areas, there is the estate residential, there is suburban residential, which comprises the majority of the city of Roswell, a Hwy 9 corridor, which includes the LCI policies that were adopted in the past, the GA 400/Holcomb Bridge Road node. This chapter is organized a little differently. It had a lot more attention; it has a lot more detail and expectations about change there. Alexander wanted to mention that they changed, as the Commission recommended at their last meeting, on Page 25 they will see that the staff did respond to the request to make the northwest quadrant more encompassing entirely of a village activity center. Although they have existing some of the single family attached, which is what the last map shows, they all indicated...but this is the future. What they want to show is what the future should be and if someone wants to change then let's make sure that their policy allows it. So they expanded that area, the purple area but they have retained most of those principles as they discussed last time.

On the southeast quadrant they included retaining the issue about how to address height changes. They added some graphics in that section to explain how they can have controls over building height to retain that character and feel of Roswell, especially along the corridors.

There is a parkway overlay. That retains essentially a commitment to the existing zoning district overlay. And then the Holcomb Bridge corridor and that name had been changed through the process to de-emphasize the commercial and discuss the intent for a lower density type suburban build out along the corridor. As mentioned they did add a few graphics to try to explain what was meant by controls to manage height. This is to give specific directions so if the city does choose to write a zoning ordinance, to let them achieve the vision in this document. They are given some specific direction on what they want to make sure gets included in that document.

The industrial flex area where there is existing industrial and heavy commercial, they are recommending that they allow flexibility there for change or re-purposing of existing light industrial and heavy commercial buildings there.

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There is the historic downtown and again that retained and incorporated as a policy statement the existing LCI and further the Grove Way charrette area where they now have standards for that section.

The conservation area, which is not actually saying that one wants to build anything it, is just re-emphasizing the city's desire to retain and protect the area.

Bryan Chamberlain stated that he did not want to stop Alexander's momentum but throughout reading this he heard the term charrette. He has no clue what a charrette is. Can Alexander generalize that?

Alexander stated that it was a focused workshop. It is a brain storming session. They had three full days of workshops. One can substitute the word workshop. It really focused on design and intent for an area and it used a lot of mapping exercises to talk about how one wants the principles, what is the vision for this area. It took place over three days where schematics, drawings, sketches were presented of how different groups laid out how they would like to see the area change.

Alexander thanked the Commission for letting her clarify that.

To recap how the document is organized, the components of it, Alexander stated that the policies and goals need to address the issues and opportunities items. If there are things that the Commission does not feel as a group they want to recommend in issues and opportunities. Those are things that perhaps the Commission does not think the city needs to or is able to address through policies or programs or short-term work activities. Then that would be one item to really focus on because they do want to be careful that if they have something in their issues and opportunities, they have a corresponding policy or program or short-term work activity that is going to address that.

That was the speeding through overview because Alexander imagines the Commission has discussion for them and some direction of things they would like to make sure get incorporated or have comment for her as they deliberate.

A review on the next steps, as Brad Townsend mentioned there will be council input obviously. There will be a public hearing schedule for July 11, 2011. Ideally the information that the Commission provides tonight will get put together in a list of recommended changes and then move forward as a recommendation to council when they consider the document. It still has to go through the Department of Community Affairs, that is the state agency responsible for this process and directing how it must be organized and then also through the Atlanta Regional Commission. The ARC also reviews it and will provide comments as necessary. They often give comments, informational comments as well. That is a 60-day review process. So the action that the Planning Commission is recommending is just to transmit the document. This is not an adoption of the

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document; this is just to transmit it. They are not allowed to adopt it for a full 60 days until that review has happened. The state wants to make sure that the city followed the procedures. It will then come back to council once the city receives comments from DCA and ARC to make sure that they get the flying colors. It will come back for the actual adoption. That is not required to be a public hearing, although the city may choose to have one. The council then determines to adopt it that time.

How does this relate to other documents and other projects? There is a process underway to start implementing some of these components. Specifically they do have a corridor study underway at the Holcomb Bridge Road that will build off the results of that intensive workshop or charrette that was mentioned. The results of folks coming out and talking about what they would like to see there and also these policies, whatever the council at the end of the day determines as their final policy direction. That will also be considered. There is also an economic development plan that will be taking place and there is also the recreation and parks master plan that has been underway and that is in draft form. So when all of those things are finalized, it would be recommended and the Planning Commission would come back and revisit this document. They update it and incorporate the results of those findings to keep this as a living, active document.

Alexander stated that was the end of her presentation. She thanked the Commission.

Susan Baur asked if there were any questions for Michelle Alexander at this time from the Planning Commission.

Harvey Smith stated that he thought Alexander did a great job with the presentation. He knows everybody put in a lot of good work. He thinks it would be fitting for Dave Schmitt to come up and explain everything that is printed in black. He was just kidding. He stated it was a nice job and he thinks Alexander covered every detail in the city.

Susan Baur stated that on page 8 there is a review of the different character areas. The zoning categories were listed and it says, "in many of the different character areas new high-density, mixed use." That is the language that is used in many of these character areas. Baur is curious why that was the choice of words. For suburban residential for example, that just sounds like, when she reads and what she knows of the character area she does not know if she things new high-density mixed use is the right characterization of a suburban residential character area.

Brad Townsend stated that the discussions that staff had with council members this afternoon is the term will be changed to "higher" instead of "high". That gives them some flexibility and something is currently zoned with an underlying zoning of two units to the acre. If it is appropriate the council may say four, but it doesn't

lock them into a term that is high whereas people who have a higher definition of saying high may be a particular number, which may be two digits that they might want to think of as inappropriate. So the staff will be re-crafting that word in its locations to say higher as directed by council today. So that will probably give the Commission more comfort level in dealing with that.

Susan Baur stated that on that same page, why was the decision made not to put higher density or new high? Now they are saying higher density mixed use under Hwy 9/Alpharetta corridor commercial? Wasn't there a discussion about the possibility of mixed use in that corridor as well?

Alice Wakefield stated that is something that probably should be added to the Alpharetta Hwy/Hwy 9 corridor. If that is the pleasure of this body, when they make their motion include that.

Susan Baur questioned on that same page if it was MPMUD. Alice Wakefield stated that was correct.

Baur stated that on page 15 under character areas Hwy 9/Alpharetta Hwy corridor commercial she is either not understanding the definition of this or it is just a typo. At the bottom of that page it says that "this may include liner buildings". Is that what they intended to say?

Michelle Alexander stated that a liner building refers to the building on the out parcel that lines the street. It is not a typo it is meant to be liner. So if they want a different definition that maybe is more intuitive they can search for another word choice.

Cheryl Greenway stated that while they are talking about that area, the character area Hwy 9/Alpharetta Hwy she stated that she participated in a couple of charrettes and some of the other meetings so forgive her for the basics of her question. She knows they are supposed to be at 30,000 feet but she is looking at the picture on page 17 and it is taking the current K-Mart area and showing the redevelopment there. Where is the parking?

Brad Townsend stated that it was underneath. There is structured parking through the site.

Cheryl Greenway stated that she sees a difficulty there because they are dealing with buildings that are already existing, right now. So they are literally talking about going underneath the existing buildings to put parking there?

Brad Townsend stated that if one looks at that concept the only buildings that are actually staying is the movie theatre buildings. Everything else....Cheryl Greenway clarified that movie theatre and the one that is on the southeast corner. Townsend stated probably Gold's or....Greenway stated that she forgets

what that is right now, it used to be a skating rink at one time and now it is Mimm's she thinks. They are putting houses or mixed use around that and the parking is disappearing. Do they really think that that business and the theatre and such is going to put in underground parking?

Brad Townsend stated that when this LCI was brought through and they were discussing how to handle midtown, that was where they were going, what they felt the development should be directed towards. Staff is carrying those policies and that work forward.

Cheryl Greenway stated that she just does not see the realistic nature of that happening.

Sidney Dodd stated that there is a precedent. He has been involved in developments in California where they refunded equity on the pier type construction. Where they redevelop a site by having a mixed use development where one would have residential and commercial applications. They would literally start with a concrete super structure on the bottom and then they would build piers and they would go up another level and that becomes the building platform. It can be subterranean as well. Dodd is not suggesting to the Commission that this is correct for this area or it will happen in this area. But the 10,000-foot view is if one gives a developer additional density to build residential and commercial that would allow them to absorb the cost of subterranean parking on a pure basis and make it all work. Many of these developments are being labeled live-work type developments where...Dodd thinks John Wieland has started to pursue some of these developments in areas of Smyrna, Vinings and also along 278, which used to be referred as Bankhead Hwy. He thinks they call it something else now. But it is starting to creep into Georgia and they are seeing it slowly take root. Whether it is appropriate or will it happen in Roswell, who knows?

Cheryl Greenway clarified that in those developments they are digging down underneath the building putting the pier structure underneath and having the parking underneath. Sidney Dodd stated that was correct and that is where the parking is because aesthetically it looks better. And it costs a little more to do it that way. Obviously, structured parking is much more expensive or more expensive than surface parking. However, the developer is getting more density overall to recoup those costs, i.e. in commercial residential and his FAR, floor area ratio has increased to compensate for the fact that he has more hard costs in the development itself and the infrastructure.

Atlantic Station is another example of where this is taking place. That is on a much greater scale. That is 80 acres that they developed and the when they came and...Dodd was with the bank that did the development for Atlantic Station. They didn't know if it would work simply because their infrastructure cost would be so high. Well, that is when the city of Atlanta stepped in and gave them a

greater density for development. So their yield and their development costs of infrastructure would be at equilibrium. Dodd thinks that is what is generally intended here, generally.

Cheryl Greenway stated that conceptually she see it if they are building it from the ground, there is nothing there or they take down what is there and build something new. What her hesitation was is that this is not building new. It is leaving the buildings there that are there now. So what is the karat for those people to incur this cost when the building is already there? It is not somebody new coming in and constructing it through losing their parking lot that they already have now.

Sidney Dodd stated from a feasibility standpoint he does not even know that one would entertain this as a developer unless he could take these low-density commercial uses and probably start over again.

Cheryl Greenway stated that was her concern. To do this she thinks they would have to basically take down and build over and that is not what this is showing here.

Dodd stated that was a valid point.

Alice Wakefield asked if she could try to clarify something again. This is strictly the concept that came from the midtown LCI. It is just a concept of what a developer could do. A developer could come in and he could take them all down rebuild. So this is not saying that this is an absolute of what will be there. It is just a concept that came out of the LCI, which Wakefield thinks was done several years ago. As Brad Townsend said, they are just pulling forward what took place or what was approved in those other plans. It is not saying that this existing shopping center has to stay there; it is just a concept of how one could build around an existing shopping center.

Sidney Dodd stated that he understand and as a last reference point in Dunwoody, along Abernathy, Semblar did a development that is very similar to what they are talking about right here where they had much older commercial-type existing development. They went in and redeveloped it with a mixed use property and they did go vertical. And they did have to add parking structures to tie it all together. Surprisingly, it sold out; Dodd is speaking of the residential portion. The residential portion sold out within a year. They were all kind of surprised. Obviously they are in a different market place today but from an aesthetic and does it work, does the community like what they have, he thinks everyone will be well served to drive that Abernathy project where the Super Target, Outback and Mimi's Café and then there is a large high-rise residential condominium that is just right behind it. Just as a point of reference.

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Bryan Chamberlain stated that in reading page 53 Land Use it says that the city of Roswell is essentially built out at current densities. That seems to be somewhat of a driving factor in the ideas of reuse, redevelopment and then mixing in with that connectivity, mixed use. Throughout the document there is a significant, it seems to Chamberlain to be there's a significant emphasis on acquiring additional park lands, park spaces to facilitate connectivity, accessibility to park spaces by those who are currently farther away than could be reached by foot or bicycle or other non-vehicle modes of transportation. He is seeing this fight between they are already built out, they have limited land available and there seems to be a heavy focus on and they must dedicate even more land to park space, which means it is not available for income producing businesses or residential development. Not that that is bad but what comes to Chamberlain's mind is, is there some vision for how much is needed for park space beyond what they have now. How much from a tax base absorption can they no longer get taxes from additional land because it is park space? Is there some type of grand plan on that that influences this 2030 plan and other things that they are doing as a city?

Alice Wakefield stated that basically, and they will have to go through here because she does not think the intent was necessarily to say they would buy more park land, buy more park land, although that is great. When they talk about park land for connectivity she thinks they are more talking about as property is redeveloped that that development incorporates pedestrian access and trails and that type of thing. Maybe linear parks that would connect the riverside with Big Creek. Wakefield thinks that is the intent. She does not know if Michelle Alexander wants to expand upon that.

Michelle Alexander stated that the intent is to make sure that the standards now include requirements for example for even pocket parks as they redevelop especially in the node area where there are some green areas. When they are allowed to redevelop they do incorporate as trade offs incorporate some additional park space where there are a few acres here and there. The other side on the connectivity is to allow new mechanisms. That was the big point. Folks said they want to connect more, they can't get anywhere from their subdivision. But they recognize that there is a tension that folks who live in the subdivisions may not want access to their subdivisions by other or outside bicycle or pedestrian traffic. One creative solution in here was to recommend a program where those subdivisions that really want to work together and get allies for that can make a petition to open up themselves to create that new connectivity. Alexander would recommend that they have criteria within a certain distance to the park space which seems so important, like a quarter of a mile radius. Finally, they do have the master plan where those kind of issues, what does their park need, what is their deficit to provide park space? And that would be in the recreation and parks plan that is currently only in draft form. So that should speak into this. Again if there are driving items coming out of that, Alexander would

recommend that this document get amended to incorporate those needs that are identified.

Bryan Chamberlain stated as a follow up there was some mild reference but not nearly at the quantity of time spoken to, to having things like grocery and other shopping opportunities within walking or bicycle or some non-vehicular mode of transportation as a part of additional housing development whether that is mixed use or individual. Is he mis-reading that there is not a lot of focus on that but that that is probably a pretty big deal if people want to live and walk and shop in the same area? If one lives out on Cox Road and he wants to go shopping, he is probably not going to walk at age 80 or even at age 59 to a grocery store because it is a long way. If that is a problem and they are trying to solve that problem it seems to Chamberlain that they need to focus on building more small shopping. Is that part of what they are reading in here?

Michelle Alexander stated that there was the recommendation to consider criteria where to allow those smaller shopping amenities. They recognize the tension between existing subdivisions that want to protect the quiet and not draw or attract additional traffic. So the plan does recommend for its suburban character areas where that needs to be carefully considered, that the new zoning ordinance really identifies the criteria that the city, the residents find acceptable under what circumstances. For example they recommend it at certain cross roads, that that would make sense. And also they recommend it in a townhouse residential mix to allow up to 3000 square feet or some limited amount. That it is a small service sized amenity. They could call it neighborhood commercial size. They would recommend that they co-consider that as part of the criteria. To allow that by right as opposed to calling it a mixed use, which can sound to different ears, it could sound like a bigger intensity than what they really want. But if it is 3000 or maybe it is 2000, the size of a café, to write criteria to allow that under circumstances in residential.

Susan Baur stated that on page 28 there is the rendering of the Southeast Quadrant Village Activity Center and the language associated with this area, this larger character area. She understands these buildings are here because there is already an OCMS on this zoning that is in place there.

Michelle Alexander asked if Baur was referring to the green markings. All green markings related to green space are conceptual only and they can re-specify that. But they did indicate on page 25 they tell the reader that locations of green areas are conceptual only, meant as a guide to express the intent that one has pocket parks or central gathering spaces. So they indicate green space with very generic forms, shapes, little square and circles to indicate the intent, figure out how to incorporate green space or pocket parks into the overall mixed use area. That is what they are asking an applicant to do.

Susan Baur stated that she guessed that she thought those were the....Alexander stated actual building footprint. It is not a building footprint. But they need to add a note there to clarify that to the reader.

Mark Renier stated that he had a couple of comments. He saw the past comp plan and it was about eight inches thick and he was not greatly involved in this process at all. But from 50,000 feet he was kind of watching. Together the vision and the character areas and the five-year short term work program that helps to start to create and implement those character areas and the participation was unbelievable. To get to 98 pages what has been done here is remarkable in Renier's opinion. He thanked everybody that was involved in it. He has a couple of quick questions or comments, really.

Renier stated that on page 5 just about using words and he is not an attorney but he knows that in marketing whether it is apartment buildings or homes or shopping centers the use of words like "walkable", walk out basement. When someone is handicapped and can't walk there have been big law suits. Must see on the marketing sign when someone is blind. Renier is not a legal expert but he saw those and he saw the word "educated" and "active" and he knows those are things that he believes in, walkable, active, but just a note on the using of those words. He believes them he just doesn't know if they create any legal issues.

On page 16 under re-orient site layout, bring buildings to the street. Renier thinks that character is the Hwy 9 area. He would assume bringing the buildings to the street, it references streetscape. In his industry that is what they call it. Streetscape is good in some areas, some areas it doesn't work. Like roundabouts. He was just on Grimes Bridge Road and Warsaw. That is a good roundabout. Roundabouts have their place. But in some areas roundabouts don't work. Streetscape in some areas just doesn't work.

On page 19 on No. 2, the developer and the city should develop a Performa. Renier does not think he wants the city involved in developing any Performa's with developers. He thinks they should review Performa's but not help to create them. That is Renier's only comment. Otherwise, what a great job.

Susan Baur went back to page 28, in that southeast quadrant. The blue area denotes office-commercial mix. That is based on the current plan that is in place. Michelle Alexander stated that was correct. Baur asked if this language was written in such a way that if a developer came in with a master plan/mixed use project that there would be negotiations or there would be an opening for any office on that side to be shifted over to the other side closer to GA 400. Baur knows that the office is there because of the current plan in place. But, she is just trying to make sure that this language is saying...if a developer comes in with a dynamic project and they want more density, are they saying that they are going to possibly ask them to shift that office-commercial away from that residential and over into this area? The pink, mixed-use area?

Michelle Alexander clarified that Baur was asking that if someone proposed something in what is the southeast village area. If they propose office in the village area are they going to ask them to shift? Or is she saying that if they came in on the blue area...Alexander stated that she is not following which direction Baur is saying it would go. If they came in and proposed mixed-use in the blue area or is she saying office in the pink area?

Alice Wakefield asked Susan Baur if she is saying that if they came in for say the entire site and they wanted to do a mixed use development but they were appropriate according to the plan showing office and commercial in the blue area. The city would work with them to get them to shift that density, shift that development intensity over to the red area so they get it further away from the existing residential. Susan Baur clarified that Wakefield is comfortable that this language covers that. Wakefield stated that she was.

Mark Renier commented on the character area maps. It has always been interesting; he could never be an electrician because he is color blind. So, reading this has been interesting since he can't see the colors. But the character area zones that are identified on the maps, he really couldn't see them so this is a simple thing. He suggested maybe just making them bolder or increasing the intensity of the color. He stated that this was just a simple statement.

Susan Baur stated that she had one last comment on the document that she when she looked through it. On page 48, the paragraph that refers to the chart on the following pages, that DCA has established a number of quality community objectives and then the objectives are listed. And then it is marked the character areas where these objective areas are going to be pursued? She thought it was a little light. When she looked at the chart she saw areas where she thought the objective was going to be met based on the language or going to be pursued based on the language in other parts of the document.

Michelle Alexander stated that that if there are some areas where they should check the box because Baur feels the language policy does work to achieve those objectives. Go ahead and let them know so they can include them. Baur stated that for example, "infill development communities". She marked Holcomb Bridge Road/ SR 140 Corridor an industrial flex. Then based on....like on page 36 where they talk about the Holcomb Bridge Road Corridor it says develop designs to allow for appropriately high-quality infill mixed use development. On page 38 in Industrial Flex they used the language quality mixed use projects. Susan Baur stated that she does not know if they can consider that infill. But it is the same with sense of place if one says mixed use and industrial flex would they mark sense of place there? And sense of place in a lot of these character areas. Baur stated that she marked Hwy 9/Alpharetta Hwy corridor Commercial, Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 140 corridor Parkway Village overlay and industrial flex as sense of place. She guessed that in transportation alternatives there is



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only the Holcomb Bridge Road node that is marked. If they are talking about interparcel access...she does not know if that falls under the character...if they are talking about pedestrian friendly, things like that. She does not know if that falls under that quality community objective, open space preservation. She just thought there were more character areas that should have been marked; to denote there that there was commitment to those to the community space. Suburban residential, Holcomb Bridge Road/SR 140 corridor, Parkway Village. Baur just thinks there might....the historic area downtown. If the would just look at that Baur thinks this plan is more ambitious than this chart indicates. She didn't catch them all in great detail but perhaps they will see some. Alexander stated that staff has also highlighted some of those. She thanked Baur. Susan Baur mentioned environmental protection, too. She thinks they should all be marked for environmental protection.

Susan Baur asked if there were any further questions for Michelle Alexander at this time or staff. Hearing now she stated that she will open the meeting for public comment. She asked if there was anyone who would like to speak in favor of the comprehensive plan or any particular comments from the public either in favor of or in opposition to segments of it.

**Paula Winiski  
Roswell**

Good evening. Thank you for letting the community address the Commission on this topic. Paul Winiski stated that she is not for it or against it she just wanted to bring up some points. Baur brought up some of hers and she appreciates that. In particular the area of the new high-density mixed use zoning category that appeared in almost all of the character areas. She appreciates Baur bringing that up. The suggestion that that turn to higher density didn't quite fix the problem for Winiski because she feels that with that terminology of high density or higher density the emphasis is on density. Winiski thinks that they want to encourage mixed use in more areas of the city than they currently do but she is thinking that calling for higher density just focuses on the density of it rather than the appropriateness of mixed use for a particular character area. She thinks that if more mixed use is desired, it should be tailored to the particular character area to achieve a goal, not just to have more density but to be achieving some type of a quantifiable goal in that area. Other communities have created mixed use categories that are community mixed use, corridor mixed use, downtown mixed use, neighborhood mixed use. They have taken their mixed use to the next level where they start to characterize the attributes of mixed use. Winiski does not think that they can always consider mixed use as strictly the traditional three uses of commercial retail or residential and office. They don't always have to be that mix. She thinks they should also be looking at what that mix is because one size mixed use does not fit all.

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Winiski stated that she knows that Roswell's current mixed use ordinance has its drawbacks. It was created for a very specific area. And that is why they are not able to just go into that container of mixed use and apply it to other areas. She would think that they would need to first determine where they need mixed use. What will it accomplish? What special needs must be considered? And can the infrastructure handle that increase in intensity that they are calling for when they say higher density?

Winiski suggested that they might consider changing that terminology from high density or higher density to a new flexible mixed use category. That would encourage them to look at the various ways they can write ordinances about mixed use. She can't remember the exact words that Michelle Alexander used but the same concept that they are trying to tailor make and look at the special needs of an area before they write an ordinance or change anything in terms of what they are proposing that they encourage.

Winiski thinks the objective would be to apply flexibility and variety from mixed use opportunities rather than high density per se. The plan could stipulate somewhere that great care goes into crafting these ordinances so that they preserve the character of the area while meeting clearly stated goals and objectives for implementing a mixed use in a particular area. She respectfully submitted another terminology for that to make it a little more instructive as actually what the city wants to see in its mixed use.

The second area of concern is in that southeast quadrant. Winiski stated that she wants to support Susan Baur's point in that map where one sees the blue office with the green squares. She was wondering if it wouldn't be possible just to make that all pink to show that they would like to see it developed in one well-planned project. That might be something to consider.

Winiski's other concern with the southeast quadrant is in regard to height limits. Unlike the northwest quadrant where the description clearly states that there are height limits, the southeast quadrant is left with only one reference to height limits. There is a lot of discussion in the accompanying materials that talk about a village feel and pedestrian scale but there is very little guidance on height. The plan states that taller buildings in the interior of the development and that is all they have is taller, they don't know how tall. These must appear four stories or less from Holcomb Bridge Road. That is the only guidance they have. Because the topography is so extreme in this area a building could be in excess of the tallest buildings allowed in the northwest quadrant and easily look less than four stories from Holcomb Bridge Road. A building viewed from this single vantage point being the sole criteria could be well over eight stories and these buildings could be easily viewed from other points along Riverside Road, Old Alabama, GA 400, adjoining subdivisions. So they would be looking at something much taller than four stories because they have no height limit while Holcomb Bridge Road would enjoy the no more than four stories view.



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The achievement of more green space through additional height should be carefully applied with stringent requirements and with clearly stated limits on maximum heights. This is not a re-development area. This is mostly green space. It lies in a popular recreation destination in the river corridor.

The comprehensive plan is a statement, a vision for the area and the residents from that area have made it very clear that their vision is not one of tall buildings. Winiski thinks more stringent requirements are needed regarding height limits here. Height is the only measurement of density used in this plan on both quadrants. It is just height. So if one does not have a height requirement, he has no guidance on density.

Building in the southeast quadrant should not appear taller than four stories from any vantage point outside the development on public right-of-way. Winiski suggested that perhaps that other vantage points be included besides just Holcomb Bridge Road. Possibly from any public right-of-way outside the actual development.

Winiski thinks they just need to take a look at that because right now they have no real guidance on density there other than height. The fact that it is big makes it problematic.

Paula Winiski thanked the Commission for their consideration of these suggestions.

Susan Baur asked if there were any questions for Winiski at this time. There were none. Baur asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak about the comprehensive plan.

**Eric Flehold**  
**Sentinel on the River**

Eric Flehold stated that he appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission. He stated that he has been more of a layperson on the outskirts of this process and he has seen a large change that addressed many of the concerns that he had. He is from Sentinel on the River but has lived in the river corridor for over two decades. He wanted to thank all of the people who have been involved in moving the direction of the proposed plan in a direction that he thinks is favorable. Some of the concerns that Paula Winiski raised where his in particular.

It was mentioned that this was a 30,000-foot view. Flehold is curious as to when and how this becomes boiled down to something that they can quantify because he has concerns about especially the Holcomb Bridge corridor and the southeast area adjoining GA 400 would be developed. Perhaps if the Commission has the

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opportunity now, they maybe could enlighten some of the residents. It seems to Flehold that the next step in this process is the vote, which would then send it to the committees and he is not quite sure how this would be amended other than the living document as it is explained. As a resident Flehold would like to see as much specificity as possible beforehand.

But other than that Flehold stated that he thinks the Planning Commission is doing a good job and appreciates all of their help.

Susan Baur thanked Flehold. She asked if there was anyone else from the public who would like to speak on the proposed comprehensive plan document. Seeing no one she closed the public portion of the meeting. Baur stated that the Commission may have some more questions for staff. Then they will have a discussion and make a motion. She asked if there were any more questions for staff or for Michelle Alexander.

Cheryl Greenway stated that she will not do this justice but in trying to answer the gentleman's question her conceptual understanding is this is an overall conceptual design. It is not locking any one thing into place that that is exactly how it would be done and the line would be exactly this way. It is a conceptual design that then when the developers would come to the city to want to do any of these developments whether the southeast corner, the northwest corner, Alpharetta Hwy., whatever it is just a guideline. It is not locking in place that that is how they have to do it. It is looking at a future proposal of where they really see the city going.

Brad Townsend stated that the objective, as established by state guidelines, was to create character areas. Because they really took the Holcomb Bridge Road/GA 400 four quadrants and really put a microscope for them, they really got more detail than they normally would have for a character area. But the objective was they got such a strong desire from the community input and the stakeholders to try to say; how does one foster some change in these areas? With the clear understanding that one had to have sufficient infrastructure on anything to take place in these quadrants. To directly answer the specificity of what is going to happen in particular locations shouldn't really be in this document. It should be generalized as to this is the character and how they see this area in 2030. But it does also provide the frame work in which they do adopt new zoning regulations. That they do take their existing zoning regulation and re-analyze them and revisit them and say how do they need to be re-tooled to allow the objectives and the opportunities that they are looking for from this document. The specificity will take place over the next year, two, three, four years and then they will be five years from now looking back at this document and saying what needs to really change again. In 10 years doing some review of it also.

Cheryl Greenway stated that this would help if someone came in let's say five years from now and had a beautiful mixed use design for that whole southeast

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quadrant. The city would not say, "Oh, we wanted office buildings here." They would look at the conception of that plan and how it interfaces with the community and go "yes, that is what we want or no, that is not what we want."

Brad Townsend stated that was correct. Cheryl Greenway stated that she hope that helps to answer the question.

Mark Renier stated that of course the public would come to those hearings and also voice their opinions, which Planning Commission and city council would be listening to at that time so the input would still be there from the public.

Susan Baur stated that it is still important to recognize that in those particular character areas they are being specific about heights. That is important because this is conceptual but that is specific. Developers are going to look at that and they are going to take it seriously. So the Commission needs to be comfortable with the language in this document as they recommend it to mayor and city council. She understands that it is a conceptual document but that is some specific stuff. Does the Commission want to talk anymore about the language on the heights in this character area?

Sidney Dodd suggested that they may want to remove any reference to height because he knows that there are height limitations in the individual zoning districts that exist today. But since this is conceptual and they don't know what they will be facing in future developments he is not sure why it is appropriate at this time.

Lastly, Dodd commented that he thinks that if this is a 2030-type plan and it is a living document, obviously it would be revisited and from a supply and demand capital marketplace-type of view it is going to be quite some time before one starts seeing new development anywhere in the southeastern United States. He could get far more specific, he won't but he thinks the Commission should be prepared to monitor the market place and understand how it is evolving and where supply and demand is. But if there are residents of Roswell that are concerned about a high-rise development coming to their neighborhood or adjacent, it will be a long time before anything like that will be considered from the feasibility, from the capital, from the debt and equity standpoint of view. So, this is their opportunity to conceptually push forth how they see it or how they would like to see it in the future. And that is the way Dodd sees it. He just wanted to address that homeowner. The Commissioners all live in the Roswell area as well and the changes that have occurred in the 18 years that Dodd has lived in Roswell, with the exception of retail and commercial development along the major corridors, SR 92 specifically. There really hasn't been a whole lot. And maybe that is their mindset because they like it the way it is, but the reality is the population of the city is changing and the needs of those who are moving into the city, they will probably change at some point as well. But conceptually, Dodd thinks that this document is a very good document. He had a chance to start

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looking through it in great detail. He is not very fearful of massive development coming to our shores because realistically that probably won't take place.

Cheryl Greenway stated that at their last meeting she expressed a concern that they are talking from Holcomb Bridge Road all the way down to the river. So, when one says a four-story eyesight, or appears higher than four stories that is a fairly long distance. She could not even venture to guess how tall a building could be at the very furthest end to only appear four stories at Holcomb Bridge Road. Greenway thinks that is the concern that the Commission talked about last time and she thinks that is the same concern that has been expressed here. Four stories makes sense to her the closer one is to Holcomb Bridge Road but the further he is moving back he could have a 20-story building that might look like it is only four stories from Holcomb Bridge Road or with some of the trees one may not be able to see to determine any of that. She thinks there is a valid concern raised here as to how far that four stories carries in that area.

Michelle Alexander asked Greenway if a recommendation would be to indicate something along Old Alabama, the view shed along Old Alabama to go down. She did want to point out too that the intent was to further refine that on page 30. How to manage or control heights to indicate along the Holcomb Bridge Road and along the Old Alabama corridors that those are where one would have two or three stories. So, it would continue that down and in the frontage part is where one would have that. And then only to allow any higher intensity near GA 400, to have the taller buildings located there towards GA 400. She knows that the committee worked really hard to add some of the definers recognizing that the request would also be as one sees on page 28, the intent to recognize that if someone did come in under the existing zoning that they would be held to this or requested...the city of Roswell would at least have this policy in place of sure, by right the zoning allows one to do something but the city has this policy document that they are asking him to meet to manage those heights. It is a struggle because the committee struggled with while they heard the community doesn't really want or desire that high of heights. At the largest meeting there was quite a range from the different tables of what height would seem acceptable. And further they added in here to require a variety of heights. One iteration, one draft indicated perhaps only allow one signature building to be a little higher, six or eight stories. So, managing those details were tricky. She thinks that for the direction of to balance, yes, the Commission does want to set themselves up here properly so that when they are directing the zoning code to get into specificity they are having some limits. She does think they want to define some of those limits and they are just struggling with the best way to do that. The zoning code would also indicate under what circumstances, specifically any of these heights would be acceptable and how they need to integrate into the site.

Alice Wakefield stated that in the department's meeting with some of the council members they had indicated that they would be comfortable with more of a range from four to eight stories.



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Cheryl Greenway stated that she was wondering if they could put a cap on it. She knows it is not locking anything in place, but that they would anticipate that no building would be no greater...Michelle Alexander added under no circumstance or some stronger language that the Commission thinks is appropriate.

Sidney Dodd stated that in addition to a range, how does one anticipate or account for the elevation and the line of sight from areas that might be lower or higher in elevation than others. If a site is let's say eight feet below the grade of Holcomb Bridge Road at Holcomb Bridge Road and Warsaw, and they are talking about the number of stories. Unless one really gets specific with various sites based on their line of sight from that elevation, one could have a four-story building that he can't even see the building from Holcomb Bridge Road and then they could have a four-story building that looks like an eight-story building.

Dodd stated that the range is a good idea simply because the topography elevation is going to change and change one's line of sight at that point. And unless one goes through and references several elevation points it might give the wrong idea. Or it might give the wrong conception of what height they want.

Michelle clarified that if one does not see it then it is allowed? Is that the conclusion, even though it is further down?

Susan Baur asked about having a height limit but then including the language that was recommended in the public comment portion about no greater than the....like if one wants to say a cap of eight stories, but it can appear no greater than four stories from any vantage point on any right-of-way outside of the development. She thinks that....

Michelle Alexander asked Baur if she wants to exclude GA 400 from there because people did seem pretty comfortable in hearing....Baur stated that she thinks that they could exclude GA 400. Alexander clarified that if one is at the southern end of Old Alabama looking up...

Harvey Smith asked what happened to the view being from 30,000 feet. How do they describe the document?

Susan Baur stated that the Commission has made the decision to come down to this level in this particular quadrant. So they want to be responsible about the language that is in this document.

Michelle Alexander stated that was a fair point and perhaps then the intent, what they write in here is that the zoning ordinance, maybe that is the priority when they update the zoning ordinance is to address the best ways to achieve allowing a certain amount of height no greater than eight feet but the best way to integrate



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it into the site considering topography and the desire to maintain the look and feel. And retain this other language about maximum height of two to three stories located along Holcomb Bridge Road and Old Alabama along the corridors.

Harvey Smith stated that he would agree with that because the topography is going to play a role on a case by case study. He thinks that when a plan is submitted it is just going to have to be addressed at that point in time.

Michelle Alexander added through the zoning code, the ordinance, the actual regulations for that. So it sounds, if she may make one attempt then at a recommendation to amend the language such that there would be cap, an absolute cap at eight stories. However, that is not intended to allow the entire site to be eight stories. Rather, to achieve the intent such that for example along Holcomb Bridge Road it integrates through the line of sight to maintain an appearance of less than four stories. Then one could modify and get the specificity that he needs in the zoning ordinance about the other exact rigid requirements. What is the infrastructure they are going to require before they would ever allow that? How far should traffic improvements have been made before they would allow that? Get that in the zoning.

That is one potential.

Cheryl Greenway thanked Alexander for that suggestion. She thinks that helps.

Susan Baur asked if they could still; with that language have an eight-story building that looks like an eight-story building from Old Alabama Road.

Alice Wakefield stated that she thinks that is going to be somewhat difficult because it drops. So it is not going to just be an eight-story building. If they say no higher than eight, then the developer will have to design and do what he has to do to make that. Because one has the lower half of Old Alabama and then it goes straight up. So if they say no higher than eight, that is going to take care of, she would think, their concerns with large high-rises.

Susan Baur stated that she had one other question based on the public comment. When they look at that southeast quadrant, why don't they make it all one color? Why do they have it blue?

Alice Wakefield stated that the staff thought the blue was more of a protection from the neighborhood where one would have strictly, two, three-story office buildings and commercial and the higher stuff. But if it is the desire of this body, and that is what they are hearing from the residents, is to make it all pink or fuchsia. That is entirely up to the Commission. Then they can work with Albrecht and work with whatever development comes in.



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Cheryl Greenway stated that she thinks it is good to leave both there to some extent showing that they are open to look at both possibilities. Again, she thinks they have to go back up in the airplane looking down and not be totally closed to anything in that area. Nothing is going to be approved unless the community is in favor of it, unless it is pleasing and it meets all of the requirements. So, she does not think they can keep narrowing it down too much at this point.

Michelle Alexander stated that they do have a definition on page 34 about mixed use that is pretty broad. "Of some combination of retail/office/residential or other potential use." She asked if that helps or should it be refined to better meet the city's intent. That is another option.

Bryan Chamberlain inquired about the issue on stated height limit. Is that something that there has been public discussion on or some consensus drawn through this process that eight is the maximum? Or did they just come up with eight here? Is there a 12 that is okay or a 32? What he thought the intent on this corridor was one has somewhat of a chute, a funnel, a trough of Old Alabama that the closer he gets to GA 400 the less visibility he has from residential, the more screening one has for a taller building from that vantage point, the river vantage point. From Holcomb Bridge Road, if one is far enough south of Holcomb Bridge Road on Old Alabama or thereabouts in that trough, the building height would appear to be lower. But to say, Chamberlain is struggling with the age old fight between they don't want tall buildings, they do want to have development, higher density development. To say that they have to have no visual greater than four stories or eight stories or whatever the particular number is from any vantage point off the property of that particular development might be a little bit too tight. They may need to take into consideration the fact that that is a trough of sorts and they are utilizing the natural screening of the topography of that trough to give the protections that those who are south and east of it would want through the trees and the topography showing it....But if one is over at GA 400 and he is looking up the trough, he is going to see an eight-story building and it is going to look like 16 stories because it is way up there and one is way down here. That seems to Chamberlain to have been the compromise of how this came about. If that is not an acceptable compromise and they place a number on how many stories, it doesn't matter what number it is, there is always going to be somebody that doesn't want a tall building. So somewhere it is going to be good for everybody but it can't be just one way he is thinking. Chamberlain asked if there was actual discussion as to what the maximum height....

Michelle Alexander stated that there was actual discussion and there was not a full consensus. So, the largest meeting that they held, different groups of tables came up to address the specific question of height or intensity. Different tables responded differently. The majority said that they prefer to keep it low scale. They recognize if they want redevelopment they need more intense. So some tables said they were fine with six. One table said they were fine with eight. There is existing zoning that would allow up to eight stories so there was some

recognition of making sure the code at least specifies...one might be allowed to go...please follow the requirement about stepping down and at least the appearance. So, at the three-day long charrette one of the tables dedicated to the area came up with 14 stories. That started a big discussion saying, "no way." Fourteen is definitely too high. Eight is also too high for many folks. So there was not a magic number of consensus however the discussion about how to mitigate it...the commitment that the committee felt, the CPAC said that the commitment is to the look and feel. The look and feel as well as the infrastructure. So that is real. They put in if and if they have the infrastructure. So they did make sure that traffic language was addressed. But how they commit to the look and feel. Chamberlain is correct, that is the compromise. Alexander does think that where they need to move it forward is to say that is why the zoning ordinance would include a more specific master planning type of zoning code that identified where and other what circumstances a building, maybe up to two buildings...that more intensive process of getting the rules down would occur. At this level though one does want to provide...she would recommend that the Commission provide some kind of guidance on that because this is the policy. When they put that zoning ordinance together, they have already had this fight. And they want to put in what an absolute cap is and then these qualifiers of how they want that zoning ordinance to address "let's work to keep that look and feel."

In a way it is punting to the zoning ordinance's need to address that and find that right balance. It has that intent. It allows the potential, maybe use that kind of language, the potential up to an eight-story building, maybe not, a six-story building. So that is what the Commission has to deliberate to recommend to council the best way to balance that language.

Harvey Smith stated that a zoning ordinance addresses that. He thinks they have been as specific as they can be for this body. He just does not think one can address it any better than they have. One has to defer to an ordinance. Alexander says that is punting but Smith just does not see how they could do a better job than what has been done.

Susan Baur asked if there were any more questions at this time. Is there any further discussion or does she hear a motion?

### **Motion**

Cheryl Greenway made a motion that the Planning Commission approve the comprehensive plan 2030 for recommendation to the council with changes and items discussed during their session tonight to be taken under consideration.

Harvey Smith seconded the motion.

Susan Baur stated that the only question she has before the Commission votes on the motion is do they want to be specific in the motion about building height in the southeast, which is not...

Cheryl Greenway stated that what she meant by taking into consideration their discussion tonight, she feels like they have relayed that to them. It is going to be up to the city council then to take what they already have in their packet plus the discussion tonight to decide where they want to go. She thinks from the minutes, they are going to see the Planning Commission's concern over the height issue.

Sidney Dodd stated that he agrees with Greenway. Where does one stop if they address height? Should they address density and FAR? He does not think so because this is a conceptual view of how they would like to see it go forward in a conceptual plan. He knows that height is sensitive but so is density, so are setbacks, so is storm water management. One could make an argument that all of these things have a priority and they do. But Dodd thinks the intent here is to conceptualize how they would like to see it develop going forward. That is why, to impose height limitations, he is not sure. Does height frighten everyone more than density? Or more than setbacks? He is not sure how they got focused on heights. Just a comment.

Susan Baur stated that they have a motion and a second. She called the question. The motion passed unanimously. The recommendation will go forward to mayor and city council next month.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Susan Baur asked if there were any proposed changes to the minutes from the May 17, 2011 meeting. Any changes, adjustments?

Cheryl Greenway made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 17, 2011 meeting. Sidney Dodd seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by all those present with the exception of Mark Renier who was not present at that particular meeting.

Brad Townsend stated that before the Planning Commission adjourns there are a couple of items: This is Susan Baur's last meeting. He personally wants to thank her for what she has done for the past couple of years as taking on the chairmanship. It has been wonderful to work with her and the city of Roswell has a small token of their appreciation. Townsend stated that it is also Sarah Winner's last meeting. She is not present this evening but Townsend wanted to put it on the record that he appreciates the effort and all of the work that she put in dealing with...it is not an easy task giving up one's evenings once a month. He appreciates every one of the Commissioners. He thanked Susan Baur for what she has done.

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