



Memorandum

Project: **Brookhaven-Peachtree LCI**
Date: August 3, 2006
RE: Proposed Brookhaven Place Development
From: Eric Bosman, AICP, Senior Associate



In January 2006 the Brookhaven-Peachtree Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plan was published outlining a community based vision for the future of the Brookhaven area. The LCI plan was funded by DeKalb County and the Atlanta Regional Commission and developed under the direction of the DeKalb County Office of Economic Development. The LCI plan's recommendations are intended to promote the development of a more dynamic, mixed-use community of appropriate scale and magnitude surrounding the Brookhaven-Oglethorpe University MARTA transit station and along Peachtree Road between the Fulton County line and Ashford-Dunwoody Road.

Following the completion of the LCI plan, work began on the development of a Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District as recommended in the LCI Plan to implement the plan's design and development guidelines. As of August 1, 2006, the Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District is in draft form and will be reviewed by DeKalb County staff, the Community Council, Planning Commission, and DeKalb County Board of Commissioners prior to its anticipated adoption later this year.

In May and June 2006, we attended two neighborhood meetings where the proposed Brookhaven Place development was presented by the development team. At those meetings we provided a brief summary of the LCI recommendations regarding the redevelopment of the Peachtree Garden Apartments site. The following comments compare the proposed development plan to the goals of the Brookhaven-Peachtree LCI Plan and to the Draft Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District based upon plans furnished by the Sembler Company dated July 14, 2006 and July 17, 2006. It is our understanding that these are the most recent plans submitted to DeKalb County for review and approval.

Portions of the proposed Brookhaven Place development appear to meet the purpose and intent of the LCI Plan, particularly the notion of a "Main Street" lined with mixed-use buildings (residential over retail). The proposed development plan has also improved significantly over the last two months due to the development team's willingness to discuss the proposed project with numerous community groups. However, the larger, single tenant retail facilities were not envisioned as part of the redevelopment of this site in the LCI Plan and additional improvements should be made regarding proposed building heights and public spaces.

Brookhaven-Peachtree LCI Plan Comments

The following paragraphs outline the LCI Plan recommendations for the redevelopment of the site in question and relevant comments based upon the review of the proposed Brookhaven Place plans:

1. A mix of residential development including single family homes (detached and attached), townhouses, apartments/condominiums and some mixed-use development.

While larger and more intense than envisioned in the LCI Plan, the southern half of the proposed Brookhaven Place development (the "Main Street" District) does include a mix of residential and mixed-use development. The proposed townhouse development on the western end of the site provides an additional residential option meeting the intent of the LCI recommendations. However, larger single tenant, retail/commercial facilities and the additional parking and transportation management measures that are required by such facilities were not envisioned as part of the redevelopment of this site. Larger, single tenant retail/commercial buildings may also be out of scale and character compared to the "village-aesthetic" envisioned in the LCI Plan.

2. Generally, density on the site should be highest near Peachtree Road (including mixed-use buildings along or facing Peachtree Road) and lower density/intensity uses (single family homes) near the west and south ends of the property adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

The proposed plan for Brookhaven Place is generally more intense on the Peachtree Road edge of the development. The proposed 20-story residential building is located along Peachtree Road, but is well above the 7-story height maximum recommended in the LCI Plan. Additionally, the two mixed-use buildings along the southern edge of the "Main Street" are taller than the 3-story maximum suggested in the LCI Plan near existing single family homes.

3. Adequate landscape buffers between redevelopment and existing single family homes to the south and west of the Peachtree Garden Apartments site.

Adequate landscape buffers appear to be provided along the south and west ends of the site.

4. A significant open space (1.5 acres minimum)

Several public open spaces are provided in the plans for Brookhaven Place (a special events lawn, a terrace and the stream buffer with walking trail). While the total open space appears to meet the 1.5 acre minimum, the intent of the LCI was to provide a large, contiguous open space as a public amenity and focal point. The walking trail through the stream and landscape buffers is a welcome addition, however, it would be desirable for the special events lawn proposed in the development plan to be enlarged.

5. Adequate roadway connections from Cross Keys Drive to Hermance Drive to provide for emergency access and transportation safety.

A new network of streets is proposed to connect Peachtree Road to Hermance Drive. DeKalb County should verify that the proposed street network provides adequate emergency access and transportation safety.

6. Pedestrian/bicycle upgrades along Hermance Drive.

The appropriate pedestrian/bicycle upgrades along Hermance Drive and Peachtree Road appear to be included in the plans for Brookhaven Place.

Proposed Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District Comments

In addition to the LCI recommendations, the draft overlay district was completed on August 1, 2006. While the overlay district has not been adopted, the draft ordinance provides a useful comparison to more detailed requirements that are evolving from the LCI plan to guide future development in the Brookhaven area. **Note: the overlay district is not final and a series of upcoming reviews and meetings may result in alterations to the overlay district and to the applicability of the following comments.**

1. The proposed overlay district mandates a transitional height plane for new developments that are adjacent to existing residential areas. No portion of any structure within the overlay district shall protrude through a transitional height plane beginning forty-five (45) feet above the required thirty (30) foot buffer line and extending inward over the Brookhaven-Peachtree Overlay District at an angle of forty-five (45) degrees. The proposed Brookhaven Place buildings on the southwest corner of the site may be affected by the proposed height plane.
2. The overlay district limits building materials to brick, stone, stucco, wood and fiber cement siding. Vinyl siding, exposed concrete block or concrete masonry units, exposed plywood, metal siding, plastic or PVC, and synthetic stucco or EIFS are prohibited. The materials of the proposed Brookhaven Place structures are unclear from the plans submitted.
3. The draft overlay district provides guidance regarding the proper landscape zones (4 feet on Hermance and 5 feet on Peachtree Road) and pedestrian sidewalk widths (8 feet on Hermance and 10 feet on Peachtree Road). The widths of landscape zones and pedestrian sidewalk are not detailed and could not be discerned on the proposed Brookhaven Place plans.
4. The proposed overlay district limits parking to 2.5 spaces/1000 SF of floor area for commercial uses and 3.33 spaces/1000 SF for retail uses. These maximums are less than the 3 spaces/1000 SF for commercial and 4 spaces/1000 SF for retail uses shown in the proposed Brookhaven Place plans. The residential parking ratio utilized in the Brookhaven Place plans (1.5 spaces per residential unit) is consistent with the proposed overlay district. According to the overlay district, on-street parking may be counted toward the minimum parking requirement, but are not counted as part of the maximum parking requirement. Parking for bicycles (1 per 20 vehicular parking spaces with a maximum of 50 bicycle parking spaces) should also be considered.
5. The overlay district dictates that buildings be oriented toward public streets and no more than 20 feet from the public sidewalk. Additionally, primary building entrances shall face the public street and be clearly visible. The proposed Brookhaven Place buildings and service areas along Hermance Drive do not appear to meet these guidelines.
6. All service areas must be screened from view of public streets with buildings, landscaping and/or decorative fencing. It is unclear on the proposed Brookhaven Place plans if service areas along Hermance Drive meet this stipulation.
7. The overlay district based on the LCI Plan limits building heights along Peachtree Road (to a depth of 440 feet off of Peachtree Road) to a maximum of 6 stories or 80 feet, whichever is less. Building heights beyond 440 feet off Peachtree Road are limited to a maximum of 4 stories or 60 feet, whichever is less. Height bonuses are granted for mixed-use buildings where 75% or more of the ground floor is used for retail or service commercial purposes, for contiguous, publicly accessible open spaces comprising at least 25% of the development parcel, and providing 20% of the total number of residential units as workforce housing. *With any combination of height bonuses the maximum building height is the lesser of 8 stories or 100 feet along Peachtree Road and 6 stories or 80 feet off Peachtree Road.* The proposed 20-story residential tower exceeds these maximum heights. For the proposed 6-story buildings off of Peachtree Road the plans for Brookhaven Place should meet at least two of the three bonus requirements (mixed-use development, open space and/or workforce housing).
8. The proposed overlay district mandates that parking to all townhouses be hidden behind or within individual units. Access to parking is permitted only via an alley or private drive located behind the units. Garages may not face the public street. The townhouse development shown along Hermance Drive appears to include front facing garages accessed from the street.