



Atlanta

Tucker, GA

CATALYZING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tucker, Georgia

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About

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Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

Cover photo: Community pride in Tucker, Georgia, is evidenced in stickers seen on vehicles around town. (ULI)

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With over 1,400 members across the state of Georgia, ULI Atlanta is one of the largest and most active ULI District Councils worldwide. We bring together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs. We share knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, electronic media, events, and programs.

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Urban Land Institute harnesses its members' technical expertise to help communities solve complex land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the region. Drawing from its seasoned professional membership base, ULI Atlanta offers objective and responsible guidance on various land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to brief the panel about the topic and challenge at hand. TAP members spend two days developing an understanding of the problem and discussing the range of viable solutions. The process culminates in a presentation of the panel's findings and recommendations to the sponsoring organization.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors/panelists and do not necessarily reflect the views of their affiliated organizations.

About

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The TAP panel and professional staff from the City of Tucker gathered to tour the study areas.



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This technical assistance panel was supported in part by the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing. The mission of the Terwilliger Center for Housing is to ensure that everyone has a home that meets their needs at a price they can afford. Established in 2007 with a gift from longtime member and former ULI chairman J. Ronald Terwilliger, the Center’s activities include technical assistance engagements, forums and convenings, research and publications, and an awards program. The goal is to catalyze the production and preservation of a full spectrum of housing options.

Executive Summary

Founded in 2016 with a deep community history that reaches back over 100 years, Tucker, Georgia, is a young city that is enjoying strong economic growth and a passionate residential base. The city is home to a large number of single-family homes and is, at the same time, facing a significant housing challenge—more housing is needed in a city with little developable land. The City of Tucker leadership, both elected and staff, understand that greater density is likely required in the community, but their efforts to attract multifamily residential development have yet to create the quantity of new units that a recent housing study predicts are needed to meet market demands.

The City of Tucker (the City) turned to the Urban Land Institute Atlanta District Council (ULI) for assistance with this housing challenge, specifically asking ULI to identify the types of housing and densities needed in Tucker as well as what regulations may be presently curbing those types of developments in Tucker. ULI convened a technical assistance panel of real estate professionals to study the issue and deliver a set of recommendations the City can consider as it works to increase housing opportunities in Tucker.

Housing Types

With a need for over 2,600 new houses to meet current demand and a limited capacity for additional single-family homes in Tucker,

the panel turned to gentle density and attainable housing that could blend well with the city's current housing stock.

Focus on attainable, neighborhood-scale housing. City leaders are interested in stimulating the housing development attainable for households earning 80 to 120 percent of the area median income, which includes paramedics, teachers, and postal workers. Often called "missing middle housing" (MMH), these housing types include townhomes, cottage court style homes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes.

Update ADU zoning code. The City is encouraged to update its zoning code to grandfather in existing attached and detached ADUs and allowing new ADUs to be built within single family areas.

Encourage mixed-use districts. Northlake Mall, Northlake Festival Shopping Center, and the Interstate 285 corridor are good locations for mixed-use buildings that feature dense residential offerings.

Use gentle density. The context of the built environment should influence the density and scale of new buildings to create different housing opportunities across the city while preserving the scale and character of the existing neighborhoods

Modernize zoning to support diverse housing types. Tucker should revise its zoning ordinance to explicitly define and permit a range of missing middle housing types.

Create a streamlined pathway for small infill developers. Tucker should consider a new "Small Infill Developer Pathway" that offers expedited permitting, simplified review, and reduced fees for small housing projects.

Ensure zoning districts align to support housing goals. The City should ensure its zoning regulations align with housing affordability and MMH goals.

Collaborate regionally on infrastructure solutions. Tucker leadership is encouraged to work closely with DeKalb County (the County) to establish clear, published sewer basin maps and prioritization policies for infill development.

Build public awareness and support for missing middle housing. Through public presentations and resident design workshops Tucker can build understanding and support for MMH.

Initiate catalyst projects and demonstration sites. The City is encouraged to identify parcels near its downtown core or key corridors for potential demonstration projects.

Track progress and adjust policy as needed. Tucker could establish a public-facing housing dashboard that tracks development approvals, unit types, affordability levels, and completion timelines.

Density Needs

Residential density in the city of Tucker today is relatively low. The panel proposed adjustments to the residential zoning

ordinances that will help meet the city's housing demand.

The panel recommends that the City increase its zoned densities as follows:

- Low density: 10-20 units per acre
- Medium Density: 40-50 units per acre
- High Density: 80-85 units per acre

The panel also recommends that the City focus these increases in three primary locations.

- High density in Northlake Mall and Interstate 285 corridor
- Medium density in downtown
- Low density in downtown and the Lawrenceville Highway corridor

Regulatory Barriers

There are several regulatory barriers limiting denser housing development in Tucker. The panel encourages the City to take the following actions.

Clarify regulations. The City needs to clarify its design guidelines to provide maximum certainty for developers and move away from its reliance on special land use permits.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) should outline policies. The open-ended nature of the current downtown guidance does not provide the clarity that developers seek.

Match zoning to market realities.

Development of attainable housing will require a minimum density of 35 units per acre or more in order to be financially viable.

Update ADU guidance. Minimum set-back requirements, in-law suites, and site restrictions associated with lot coverage and septic fields are limiting ADU construction.

Innovative Ideas

The City can learn from and selectively adopt ordinances and updates to zoning that will support the type of development the City would like to see going forward.

Tour cities of interest during the City

Council retreat. The following cities would provide City leadership with good examples, particularly as it relates to downtown development: Duluth, Lilburn, Norcross, Dunwoody, Alpharetta, Decatur, Clarkston and Sandy Springs.

Identify particular areas of focus. Focus initial updates on the following areas:

- Zoning code audit that leads to recommendations for appropriate zoning code modifications
- Parking innovations and shared use strategies
- Inter-parcel access
- Interplay between density and housing variety.

Support staff in addressing non-conforming properties. Consider establishing an annual vision or area of focus for the range of non-conforming properties and communicate that strategy within the community.

Leverage financial disincentives for problem properties. Leverage the City's new blight tax

to address under-performing properties.

Master plan the Northlake Mall site. Working in full transparency of current ownership, the City should take steps to master plan the entire mall parcel to provide a vision for the current owners and spark developer interest in the site.

Put tools in place to enable development at the mall site. Create a tax allocation district (TAD) to support the infrastructure improvements that will assist with new development.

View DeKalb County as a potential partner.

The panel identified the potential benefits available to the city through a new tax allocation district (TAD), which would need DeKalb County partnership as the City's millage rate is low. A new sewer/DeKalb County watershed relationship could also be helpful.

Annex land to create cohesion. The "donut hole" of commercially-zoned land currently not within Tucker city limits should be annexed into Tucker to ease future development of the mall site.

Participate in the [DeKalb Regional Land Bank Authority](#). Tucker leadership is encouraged to get involved with the regional land bank and see how and where it might leverage land banking opportunities, particularly on residential properties, in the city.

Encourage participation in a DeKalb regional land trust. A land trust can be used to protect natural resources, promote community

benefits through redevelopment, or support long-term housing affordability. A regional land trust could help Tucker with its housing affordability pursuits.

Redevelopment Resources

The following resources may prove beneficial for the City in its redevelopment pursuits:

- Tax allocation district (TAD) proceeds can be used to offset infrastructure or site prep costs.
- Density bonuses and flexible zoning can allow more height, density, or reduced parking in a development in exchange for land dedication or providing affordable housing.
- Participation in land value uplift can offer landowners a share in future development profits rather than a full sale upfront.
- Public-private redevelopment agreements can provide predictable outcomes and shared risk.
- Land banking or purchase options can be used to secure key parcels without forcing an immediate sale.
- Recognition and legacy preservation incentives can benefit owners who sell or contribute to the City's redevelopment vision.
- Property tax relief or freeze can help landowners soften the financial impact of a sale or redevelopment.

Next Steps and Phasing

The panel considered the timing of its recommendations and created a framework for taking action.

Immediate Actions (Years 1-2)

- Update zoning
- Conduct lot testing
- Form a Housing Taskforce
- Pursue city tours
- Explore land bank opportunities

Near-term Actions (Years 2-3)

- Update ADU policies
- Start tax allocation district process
- Illustrate density for the community
- Define housing objectives
- Leverage the Tucker Northlake Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)
- Activate the DDA
- Remove the special land use permit process and replace with clear regulations

Mid-term Actions (Years 3-5)

- Create form-based codes
- Master plan Northlake Mall
- Encourage small-scale development
- Leverage abatement process
- Use bonds for title
- Adopt TAD
- Engage with the DeKalb land trust
- Continue code enforcement

Long-term Actions (Years 5+)

- Put TAD to work
- Spur Northlake mixed-use projects
- Support downtown buildout
- Improve existing multifamily
- Fund community improvements



Tucker, Georgia, has a unique opportunity to shape its housing future. With ten years of successful city operations behind it and few entrenched policies to hold growth back, the City is in the enviable position of updating its policies and guidance with a relatively fresh foundation. While the community that forms Tucker has a deep history, City leadership can learn from the successes and failures of peer cities to chart a path forward that builds on its history while leveraging best practices in denser housing delivery and community development.



Introduction and Background

Like many cities across the United States, the City of Tucker, Georgia has recognized that it has a housing deficit. With over 2,696 additional housing units needed to meet its existing demand, according to a [2023 housing study](#), Tucker is exploring how it can best catalyze additional residential development, preserve housing attainability for current and future residents, and help ensure that the city remains a place where residents can, as Mayor Auman stated, "live, work, play, and pray for the entirety of their lives."

The City of Tucker (the City) is home to roughly 38,000 residents across approximately 22 square miles. Residential options vary widely, ranging from single-family homes on large wooded lots to smaller single-family homes to townhomes and apartments. Homeownership is strong in the city with 62 percent of homes owner-occupied. Of the 38 percent of homes occupied by renters, many of those households (60 percent) are cost-burdened. Housing attainability for residents across demographics is important to civic leaders, and the ability to offer a diverse range of housing options is increasingly important as more young families move to Tucker and older homeowners consider their options to age in place, or at least age within Tucker.

Understanding the need for additional housing and the likelihood that housing would need to take denser forms, City leadership turned to the Urban Land Institute Atlanta District Council (ULI) for guidance.

ULI, using its trusted technical assistance panel (TAP) program, convened a panel of real estate professionals with the expertise needed to address the City's concerns. The panel's expertise included both for-profit and nonprofit real estate development, architecture and urban design, construction, economic development, housing policy, and data analysis.

During the two-day TAP process, the City provided the panel with in-depth briefing materials, led the panel on a tour of the city's existing housing stock and potential development and redevelopment sites, and assembled a host of community stakeholders for small-group interviews with the panelists. The information gathered during this process, combined with the professional expertise of the panelists, shaped the panel's recommendations to the City and can guide the City's future efforts to best meet its growing housing demands.

TAP Questions

- What are the appropriate housing types that we need to meet supply for our identified demand?
- What regulatory barriers and external forces inhibit more housing developments from being constructed in the City of Tucker? What can we do to accelerate the types of development identified in the Comprehensive Plan?
- What density do we need, and where, to ensure they will be the most impactful while preserving cost of living and allowing for naturally occurring affordability?
- What are innovative/successful codes (density, parking, modular) that are already in our city that we can expand? What are other cities' approaches that we can tailor most effectively to Tucker?



The Mayor of Tucker and professional staff briefed the panel on the City's current housing environment.

Housing in Tucker

Established long before its incorporation in 2016, Tucker grew organically over the years through the addition of single-family housing developments. The 1960's era development of Smoke Rise added another 800 acres of single-family homes on large (one-acre or more) lots. Today, Tucker has capacity to add only 160 additional single-family homes to the mix, leaving the rest of the housing deficit to be addressed through denser means.

Multifamily housing can be found in a number of pockets across Tucker, yet few multifamily options exist in the city's downtown. A number of the city's multifamily developments are older and face significant deferred maintenance. A 900-unit development on the east end of the city is particularly problematic, with residents requesting basic habitability attention from the property owner to perform the repairs or upgrades to systems. This situation and others like it leave those seeking condominium or apartment-style living with few desirable options in Tucker.



Housing across the city takes a variety of forms, with single family homes on generous lots making up the greatest number of housing units. Townhomes, condominiums, and apartment buildings are also found in Tucker, yet many of these multifamily offerings are in need of significant updates and repair.

What the Panel Heard

Interviews with stakeholders—including municipal staff and officials, business leaders, community members, and more—uncovered the following themes:

- DeKalb Water and Sewer cannot meet demand and there is a need to align basins and new development.
- DeKalb handles portions of the re-plating and the associated GIS process is months behind.
- The city needs lower barriers to entry for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- Add multifamily to the downtown.
- Residents have concerns about rising property values and potential displacement.
- Building housing for households earning less than 60-80 percent area median income is not a focus in the community.
- Tucker does not have resources, beyond calling the police, to address issues with the unhoused population.
- Development is arriving in drips and drops and not following a planned pattern.
- Senior housing is needed to allow seniors a good option for downsizing, which will put more single-family homes into circulation.
- A land trust may offer a long-term solution for supporting housing affordability.
- Naturally occurring affordable housing should be improved but may become unaffordable once it is improved.
- There are no political barriers to development at the former Northlake Mall.
- The City has development tools and levers but seems hesitant to use them.
- The City has an under-utilized Downtown Development Authority (DDA); DDA's housing goal is 500 new units downtown.
- Residents seem to be pro townhomes but that lower density under performs financially.
- People want 1,500 square foot homes at a \$200,000 price; it would be affordable for a buyer but not financially feasible to build.
- Using a pilot project would be a great way to demonstrate new housing types and potential.

Commercial Environment

There are several bright spots of opportunity in the city. Commercial activity in Tucker's downtown has picked up in recent years and a welcoming Main Street district has taken shape. The city is also home to a number of legacy businesses and steadfast business owners who continue to call Tucker home, reinvesting in their buildings and operations and helping to support the economic vitality of the city. Industrial businesses in Tucker are likewise continuing to find success, and the City noted a strong desire to maintain these industrial districts.

Commercial challenges in Tucker include a struggling mall in the city's northwestern corner, a couple of older strip malls, and a few vacant office buildings, but these, too, are not without potential if approached carefully and creatively.

DeKalb County

At the incorporation of Tucker, civic leaders turned to DeKalb County (the County) for a number of foundational elements that would help guide City operations and functions. Some of these elements include land use and zoning ordinances that may not be the best fit for Tucker today and may instead be limiting its growth to a certain extent. The City's reliance on the County for a portion of the platting services is creating delays.

Utilities (sewer connections in particular) are also potentially limiting development in



(top left) The city's downtown is marked by single-story, locally-owned commercial businesses. (middle left) Strip commercial centers and (bottom left) local favorites line the city's busier corridors. (right) The health of the office market is mixed, with some office building owners maintaining tenants while others consider converting to residential uses.



Tucker. Sewer capacity, which is managed by the County, is limited and new connections require additional fees to enable the system to function properly in this high-capacity state. Few projects, except those near the top

end of the market, can factor these types of additional fees into their proformas and still have a financially viable development.

STRENGTHS

- Proximity to Atlanta and roadway accessibility
- Community pride
- Size of the city (large geography)
- Good, diverse job and employment base
- Young city with opportunities to shape future
- Northlake Mall – revenue
- Town green development and trails – good connectivity
- Rich planning work completed
- Diverse population (race, ethnicity, age)
- Senior community (growing in numbers; potential volunteers)
- Existing housing stock (good shape, relatively affordable compared to neighboring cities)
- Stated support for density
- Churches in the community
- Good senior developments already proven successful

WEAKNESSES

- New city, infrastructure is not always in place
- DeKalb County controls water, sewer, and sanitation
- Zoning ordinances need updating to fit Tucker
- Analysis paralysis (not clear where to start)
- Existing housing stock is aging, not prepared for turnover
- Lack of consensus on terms such as "density" and "affordability"
- Lack of residential rooftops to support downtown retail
- Large (900 units) property with problematic landlord
- State roads and railroads bisect city and create walkability barriers
- By-right density restrictions create financially infeasible projects
- SLUP process creates uncertainty
- Lack of City funding and other development tools
- Size of the city makes finding consensus challenging
- Legacy landowners holding parcels
- Schools could be stronger

OPPORTUNITIES

- Partnership opportunities with the County
- Leverage "new city with rich history" in identity
- Adjust and model codes after Norcross and Alpharetta
- Educate seniors on tax abatement at the County level
- New development can support infrastructure and other tools
- Provide a master plan for Northlake Mall land
- Create more services, support, and activities for 900-unit property
- DeKalb has an initiative for leveraging land owned by faith-based organizations
- Lot test current code; opportunity to create a specific housing strategy
- Adjust Cottage Court ordinance and allow new housing typologies
- Tax allocation district (TAD) with the County could assist with land assemblage
- Engage downtown landowners in continuing streetscape improvements
- City can act as convener for regional development

THREATS

- County sanitation limitation
- County takes majority of property tax (City's share is two mills)
- Density is not aligned with infrastructure
- Neighboring cities are creating competition
- Concerns around school system performance causing families to move
- Interstate 285 express lane project could affect economics in the interim by limiting access to Tucker
- Changes to MARTA service per the NextGen plan (e.g., Juliette Road service will be affected where many need public transit)
- Market conditions are likely stalling multifamily
- Land assemblage obstacles make development of scale challenging



Housing Types

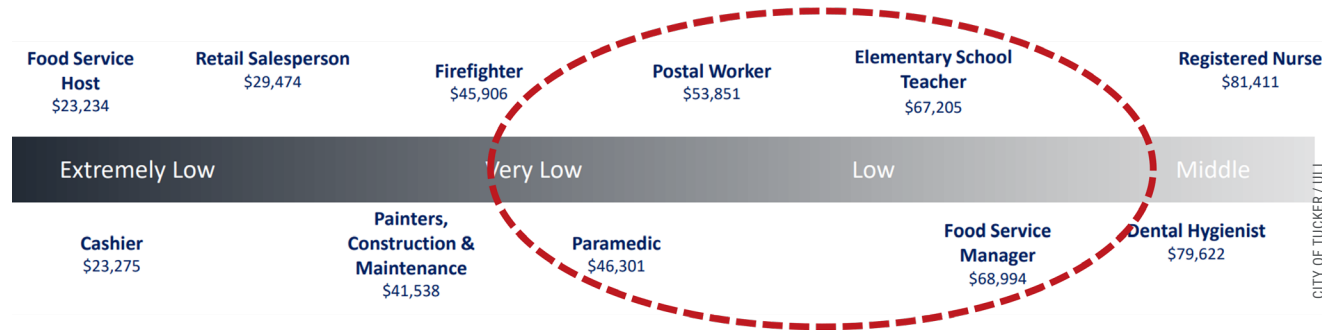
With its current wide range of housing types and predominance of single-family dwellings, the City asked the panel to make recommendations on the types of housing it should seek to catalyze going forward with an eye toward attainability. With a need for over 2,600 new houses to meet current demand and a limited capacity for additional single-family homes in Tucker, the panel turned to a gentle form of density that could transition well with the neighborhood scale of Tucker's current housing stock.

Attainable Housing Types

With little need to catalyze additional market-rate housing in Tucker, City leaders are interested in finding ways to encourage development of housing that could be attainable for households earning 60 to 80 percent of the area median income. For Tucker, these income levels include those working in some of the city's most essential fields. Paramedics, teachers, and postal workers are important members of the community, yet housing that is affordable with their wages can be hard to find.

Encourage a range of housing types on infill lots. To meet Tucker's need for attainable housing, which would be affordable for the 60-80 AMI demographic, the following housing types could easily fold into Tucker's housing stock:

- Townhomes and cottage court style homes make efficient use of building lots.



- Duplexes, triplexes, and quadplex buildings are also efficient approaches to increased density on a residential lot.
- Live-work units, featuring commercial uses on the lower floors topped by residential above, add density in areas where commercial uses are allowed.
- ADUs are another beneficial tool for gradually increasing density, particularly in neighborhoods with large homes or large lots that can easily accommodate an apartment carved out within the structure or another small building added to the lot.
- Multifamily, multistory buildings would also work well in areas where land is

limited, activity is welcome, and road access provides capacity for a greater number of residents moving about.

Grandfather and update the ADU code. The City has already adopted a zoning ordinance that allows accessory dwelling units in specific residential zoning districts. As written, however, the current code is not as effective as it could or should be for Tucker today. The current code, which allows for one additional unit per lot, would not allow for an additional structure if an in-law suite or basement apartment already exists within the home. There may also be lot coverage requirements and septic tank capacity issues that would effectively bar some homeowners



A variety of low-density housing types can blend in with the city's existing single-family neighborhoods, gently building to more dense residential options nearer the downtown district and near commercial corridors.

from building any additional footprint on their lot. The City is encouraged to grandfather existing ADUs into the code and allow homeowners to add new products to their parcel. Finally, the City may want to consider incentivizing the production of more ADUs by removing the homeownership requirement, which can be difficult to enforce, and/or creating pre-approved ADU catalogs, which reduces the initial complexities of permitting these housing products.

Encourage mixed-use districts. While there are a few instances where residential uses can be found within Tucker's commercial areas, encouraging a more intentional and active mix of uses in the city can open the door to more residential opportunities. The city's downtown and corridors would benefit from additional residential development, providing residents with walkable amenities and providing businesses with additional consumers. Following that same logic, the Northlake Mall and Northlake Festival

Shopping Center are also good locations for infusing new residential units into the city.

Gentle Density

Gentle density is a zoning mechanism that positions low-density housing close to single-family homes and gradually builds into a medium and higher density in areas closer to the city center or other high-traffic areas of activity and commerce, such as Tucker's downtown or the I-285 corridor. A gentle density approach encourages a range of housing scales and multi-unit housing types falling between single-family homes on the lowest density end to apartment buildings on the high-density end.

In a gentle density approach, the context of the current built environment influences the density and scale of new buildings and helps create different housing opportunities across the city while maintaining and even preserving the scale and character of the

existing neighborhoods. Adding additional housing to Tucker in this manner will help meet the deep demand for housing of all types, scale, and price points, and it can also support a flourishing downtown retail district by bringing more consumers to the area. Infusing the city with a wider and deeper range of housing types can also support the community by providing residents with more options for staying in Tucker or even their same neighborhood when they are ready for a different home or are ready to down-size their square footage.

Neighborhood Scale Housing

While not currently allowed in all zoning districts, the addition of cottages, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes on infill parcels can provide an opportunity to add new housing into existing neighborhoods. These homes, also referred to as "missing middle housing," can blend well with a denser single-family environment and can help the City



Housing tops commercial uses in downtown Alpharetta, Georgia.



The Cottages on Vaughn are small, single-family homes built around common and shared public space.



Townhomes can be built in a manner that closely mimics single-family homes and thus blend in with the surrounding neighborhoods.

meet growing demand for attainable housing, diversify its housing stock, and support walkable, vibrant neighborhoods. Missing middle housing can include a mix of both for-sale and rental options and would be of interest to potential residents who fall into the following broad categories:

- Young professionals (singles or couples) seeking homeownership without the typical maintenance and upkeep associated with a large home. These households may earn incomes at or below the area median income.
- Middle-age and older residents who may be looking for options to downsize their living environment from an expansive single-family home while remaining in Tucker.
- Retirees and age 65+ residents seeking low-maintenance, one-level homes would also find these housing options of interest. According to the City's [2023 housing study](#), the age 65+ demographic is anticipated to represent the fastest growing segment in Tucker for the next 5-10 years.

Multifamily Housing

Multifamily housing for Tucker is different than multifamily housing in downtown Atlanta. Low- to mid-rise buildings, generally between three and five stories tall, would fit well into Tucker's built environment, particularly around the city's downtown and busier corridors. These housing units could include conventional market-rate units and age-restricted units. There is potential for

natural affordability given the economies that can be found in building slightly denser developments. Residents who might find this type of multifamily living environment attractive might include the following:

- Young professionals (singles or couples) who are seeking a maintenance-free lifestyle and close proximity to the vibrant downtown district.
- Families moving to Tucker but waiting to buy a home until market conditions improve.
- Middle-age and older residents seeking opportunities to downsize in Tucker, moving from an expansive single-family home into something smaller and easier to maintain.
- Retirees seeking a low-maintenance, elevator-serviced building. (Again, this is anticipated to be the fastest growing demographic in Tucker in the coming years.)

Example: The Brunswick Apartments in Norcross created an additional 193 units of housing for the city at approximately 60 dwelling units per acre. The Brunswick sits adjacent to a city park and is walkable to Norcross's historic downtown district.

Mixed-Use District

Additional mixed-use districts can help Tucker meet the demand for lively, walkable residential areas close to dining, retail, entertainment, and recreational opportunities, among others. Within city limits, both the



Mid-rise residential buildings line a public park in Norcross, Georgia.



High Street in Dunwoody, Georgia, blends residential, office, and retail uses around common open space and entertainment opportunities.

Northlake Mall property and areas around the city's downtown hold promise for developing parcels into a mix of low- to mid-rise apartments, retail, green space, and more. Residents who might be attracted to living in a mixed-use district might include:

- Young professionals (singles or couples) seeking a maintenance-free lifestyle and adjacency to entertainment districts and recreational opportunities.

- Middle-age and older residents looking to downsize their homes while remaining in Tucker. This demographic generally prioritizes ready access to recreational opportunities, dining, and shopping.

Example: Windsor Communities' High Street Atlanta development in Dunwoody is bringing new residential, office, retail, dining, and entertainment options to Dunwoody.

Expanding Housing Options

Tucker's current zoning, infrastructure, and administrative frameworks pose significant barriers to the types of missing middle housing (MMH) and gentle density posed by the panel. The following expanded recommendations outline opportunities for reform and innovation, paired with examples from peer jurisdictions that have successfully addressed similar challenges.

Modernize zoning to support diverse housing types. Tucker should revise its zoning ordinance to explicitly define and permit a range of missing middle housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, bungalow courts, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and cottage clusters. The current regulatory framework often conflates small multifamily and single-family zoning, creating ambiguity that deters developers. By rewriting key sections of the zoning code, the City can create a foundation for MMH that fosters clarity, flexibility, and equity.

Example: Minneapolis, Minnesota, eliminated single-family zoning citywide in 2019, legalizing

triplexes in all neighborhoods. This zoning reform has become a national model for promoting gentle density and housing equity.

Example: Fayetteville, Arkansas, developed a "Healthy Corridors" overlay that allows for cottage courts and other MMH types near neighborhood commercial areas to enhance walkability and affordability.

Create a streamlined pathway for small infill developers. Small, irregular parcels could be ideal for local builders and small-scale developers—if the regulatory environment were simplified. Tucker could create a "Small Infill Developer Pathway" that offers expedited permitting, pre-approved house designs, simplified review, and reduced fees for small housing projects under a certain unit or lot size threshold. This would support local capacity and increase housing supply without requiring large-scale rezoning. The City should study if there are potential updates to their zoning ordinance that can make it easier for the development of small, irregular parcels.

Example: Durham, North Carolina, offers small developer toolkits and flexible zoning pathways that have encouraged the development of ADUs and duplexes in established neighborhoods.

Example: South Bend, Indiana, created a catalog of pre-approved infill housing designs that streamline permitting for builders on small lots.

Ensure zoning districts support housing goals. Tucker's zoning districts create challenges, making it difficult for developers

and staff to interpret development standards, particularly for housing types that do not fit neatly into conventional categories. The City should conduct a review of its zoning districts and simplify or consolidate where possible to ensure they align with housing affordability and MMH goals.

Example: Evanston, Illinois, overhauled its overlay districts to create consistency and clarity, aligning zoning standards with affordability strategies and housing production goals.

Example: Somerville, Massachusetts, simplified its zoning codes and overlays to encourage housing variety near transit and commercial hubs.

Collaborate regionally on infrastructure solutions. DeKalb County controls sewer and water infrastructure in Tucker. Capacity constraints, lack of clarity on service availability, and required mitigation measures (like on-site holding tanks) deter development, especially on small or infill parcels. Tucker is encouraged to work closely with the County to establish clear, published sewer basin maps and prioritization policies for infill development. The City could also pursue shared stormwater facilities integrated into parks, greenways, or publicly owned land.

Example: Arlington, Virginia, supports infill through integrated stormwater solutions in public parks, reducing the burden on individual developers.

Example: South Bend, Indiana, developed a [sewer and line connection reimbursement](#)

[plan](#) to incentivize the production of MMH up to five units in specific areas of the city to defer some of the added development costs. This could be an interim solution for Tucker as they progress to an overall solution.

Example: Boulder, Colorado, created a fee-based fund to finance shared stormwater improvements in specific redevelopment areas.

Build public awareness and support for missing middle housing. NIMBY ("Not In My Back Yard") opposition and misunderstanding often stall or block MMH development. Through public presentations, neighborhood walking tours of successful MMH examples, interactive websites with visual guides, and resident design workshops, Tucker can build understanding and support for these housing types.

Example: Boise, Idaho, launched a community-wide campaign, including interactive maps and neighborhood

charrettes, to introduce residents to MMH and engage them in future land use planning.

Example: Austin, Texas, developed "Housing Hub" digital tools and video explainers to support zoning reform conversations and promote diverse housing options.

Initiate catalyst projects and demonstration sites. Demonstration projects can serve as proof of concept, building public and political support while giving local developers experience with MMH delivery. Tucker is encouraged to identify City-owned, publicly controlled, or underutilized parcels near its downtown core or key corridors for potential duplexes, triplexes, cottage clusters, or mixed-income courtyard buildings.

Example: San Mateo, California, piloted the Housing Demonstration Program to encourage innovative infill housing types in walkable neighborhoods.

Example: Clarkston, Georgia, partnered with nonprofit developers and planners to

implement MMH in diverse neighborhoods using flexible zoning tools.

Track progress and adjust policy as needed. To ensure accountability and adaptability, Tucker could establish a public-facing housing dashboard that tracks development approvals, unit types, affordability levels, and completion timelines. This transparency builds trust, helps residents see progress, and gives policymakers a tool for refining policies over time. The City could also produce an annual housing report card and use this data to inform funding, zoning, and infrastructure priorities.

Example: Seattle, Washington, uses detailed dashboards to track ADU permits and MMH completions, which are used to inform further code revisions.

Example: Raleigh, North Carolina, publishes annual housing progress reports tied to its comprehensive plan and equity metrics.



ADUs can tuck behind existing single-family homes and provide attainable housing for young professionals or older residents seeking a simpler option.



Duplex units can easily blend into a single-family streetscape.



Tri-plexes and quadplexes can benefit from construction cost efficiencies and maintain a certain level of attainability for young families.



Density Needs

Residential density in the city of Tucker today is relatively low and has good potential to expand. The additional housing needed to meet demand will require that denser housing options are pursued. In order to identify where and how those denser options should be deployed, the panel reviewed the city's existing residential zoning densities, considered potential locations for new, denser developments in the city, and proposed adjustments to the residential zoning ordinances to best meet the city's housing demand.

Existing Density

Residential density in Tucker falls into three general housing types: single-family, detached; townhome, single-family attached, and small multifamily; and large multifamily. Today, the city is largely covered by single-family detached housing units at a density of 1.4 units per acre. Small attached housing is found in several pockets across the city and averages ten units per acre. In the city's "large multifamily" zoning areas, density averages 24 units per acre and has recently increased to 35 units per acre or more in two downtown areas. The areas zoned for large multifamily are generally found in the I-285 corridor and in the city's center.

Although these densities may have served the city well in its early days following incorporation, developable land in the city is becoming more limited and higher densities are required to make developments

financially feasible, particularly for developments designed to be attainable for the essential workers the City hopes to attract and retain.

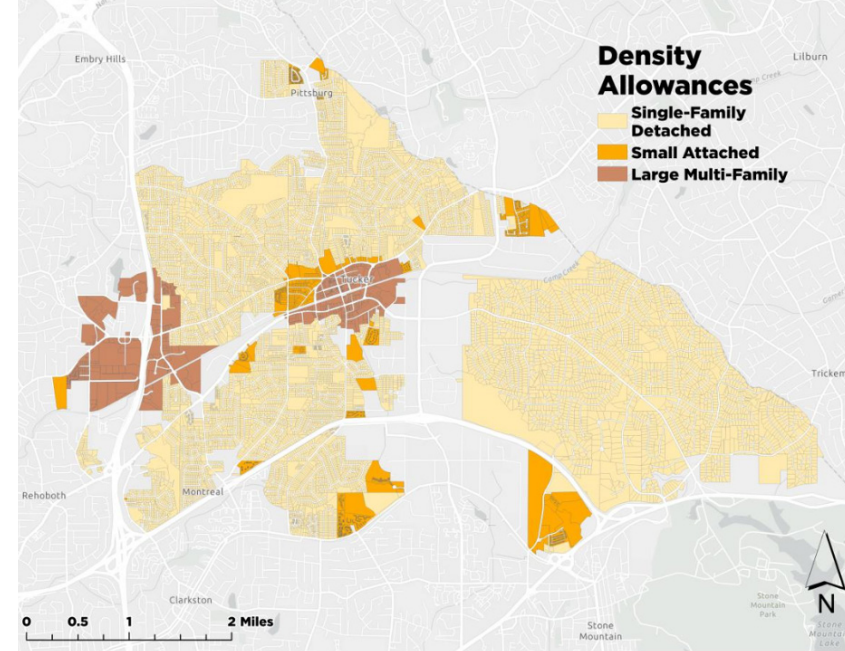
Recommended Density and Locations

The panel recommends that the City increase its zoned densities as follows:

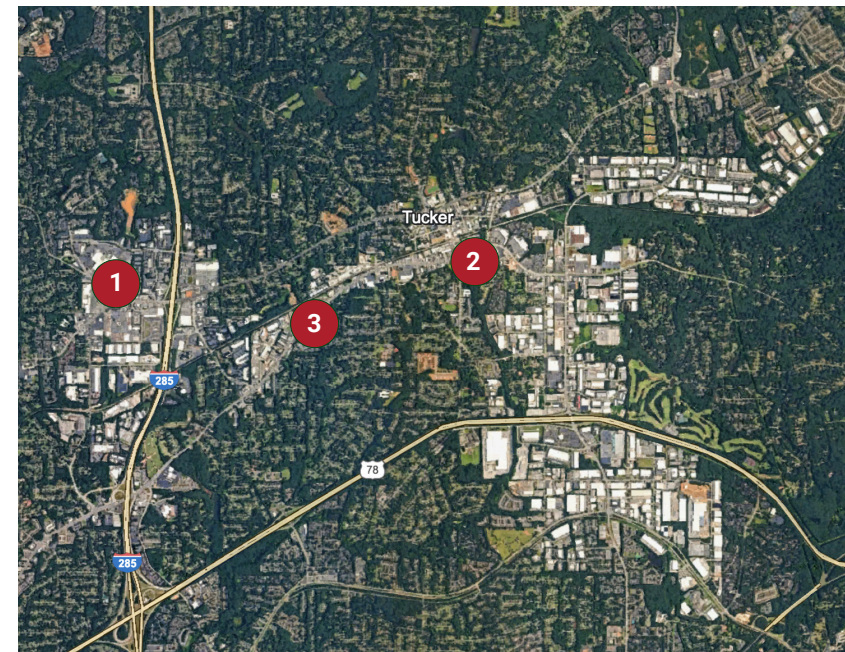
- Low Density: 10-20 units/acre
- Medium Density: 40-50 units/acre
- High Density: 80-85 units/acre

While these densities are much higher than the city's current code averages, the panel also recommends that the City focus these increases in three primary locations, each of which is generally built to handle and even benefit from significantly more residential and mixed-use development opportunities.

- 1 Northlake Mall/Interstate 285 corridor.** With little existing residential in this area and good interstate access, large multifamily and mixed use developments would work well in this district.
- 2 Downtown.** The businesses located downtown today would benefit from an infusion of additional households. With the DDA setting a goal of 500 additional housing units downtown, increasing density in this district makes good sense.



The 2023 Housing Study identified pockets where increased density is allowed and, according to the panel, should be encouraged and promoted.



The panel identified three key areas of focus, not necessarily aligned with current zoning boundaries, for increased housing densities and suggested prioritizing these areas as numbered above.

3 Lawrenceville Highway corridor. This corridor, already home to a number of retail businesses, other commercial enterprises, and multifamily (townhome and condominium) communities, would also work well for higher-density residential buildings.

To help the City better identify and communicate the types of densities at hand, the panel provided the following examples to illustrate where and how these density increases could begin to take shape in Tucker.

Low Density

- 10-20 units per acre
- Downtown and Lawrenceville Highway corridor
- Examples include the Cottages on Vaughn, Oak Cottage Court, townhomes, and ADUs

Medium Density

- 20-35 units per acre
- Downtown
- Examples include a recent townhome development in downtown Norcross

High Density

- 80-85 units per acre
- Northlake Mall area and I-285 corridor
- Examples include the Lulah Hills development, Lilburn, Modera Decatur, and downtown Chamblee



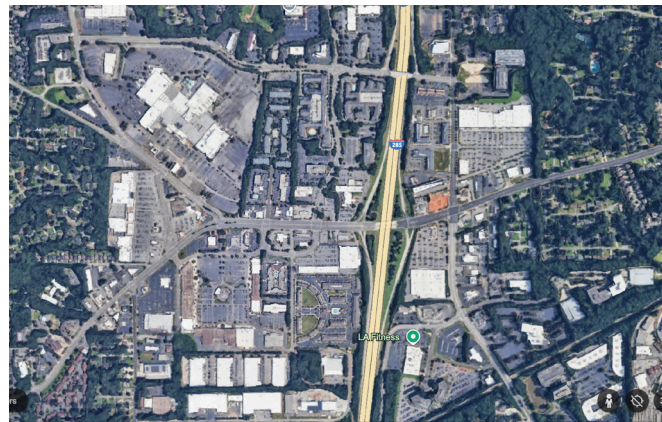
GOOGLE EARTH / ULI PANEL

The Lawrenceville Highway corridor and the city's downtown would benefit from increased housing density of ten to 20 units per acre.



GOOGLE EARTH / ULI PANEL

The city's downtown district would benefit from density increases of up to 35 units per acre.



GOOGLE EARTH / ULI PANEL

The Northlake Mall area is well-suited for higher density residential offerings.





Regulatory Barriers

Although there are a number of regulatory barriers that are currently limiting denser housing development in Tucker, these barriers are not insurmountable and the City appears to have the political will to support more housing pursuits.

As a young city, Tucker can benefit from modeling successes found in peer cities and learning from—and avoiding—the challenges experienced by others.

Clarify regulations. The City will need to clarify its design guidelines to provide maximum certainty for developers interested in building in Tucker. Although the current special land use permit (SLUP) process was intended to allow flexibility for developers, it is instead likely deterring development interest. Developers look to cities for clear regulations that promote the city's vision in

specific locations, and a streamlined process from the start, which provides the type of certainty they need to establish timelines and build their development pro formas.

DDA should outline policies. The Downtown Development Authority needs to adopt a set of policies that outline parameters for acceptable projects. The open-ended nature of the current downtown environment, much like the SLUP process, does not provide the type of guidance and clarity that developers seek.

View the County as a potential partner. Within the right framework and leveraging public sector capacity, DeKalb County can transform into a powerful partner in development rather than a potential bureaucratic roadblock. Should Tucker pursue a tax allocation district (TAD) to help

fund infrastructure needs as detailed on page 20, it will likely need to partner with the County as the City's millage rate is too low to net substantive funding on its own.

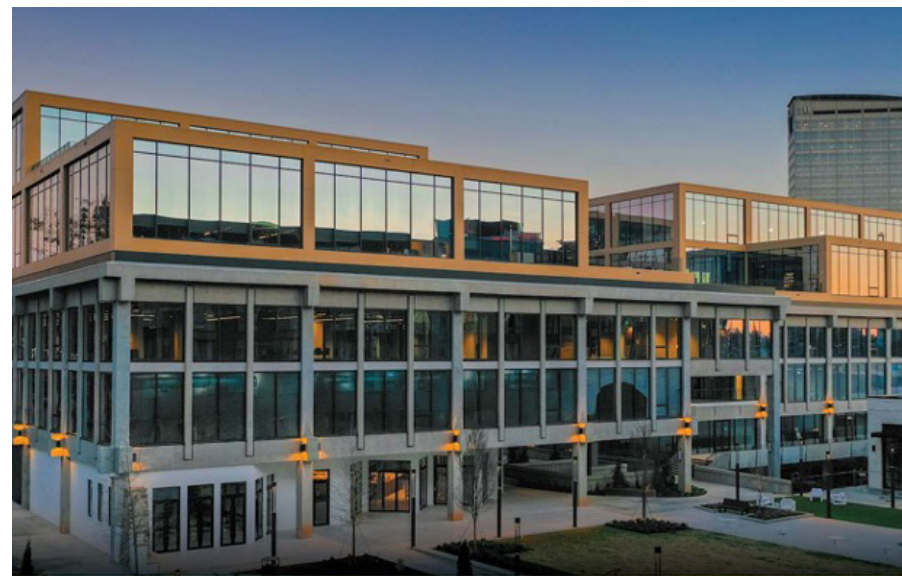
Match zoning to market realities. The City's current allowable densities do not match today's market realities. Densities of 35 units per acre and fewer will not financially support an attainable housing development. When adding in potential land cost and sewer constraints and associated connection/mitigation costs, the projects become even more challenging, if not impossible, without significant public subsidy.

Update zoning ordinance. The current zoning code includes a number of items that are constraining ADU construction and limiting additional missing middle housing in Tucker. Specifically, the panel noted issues with

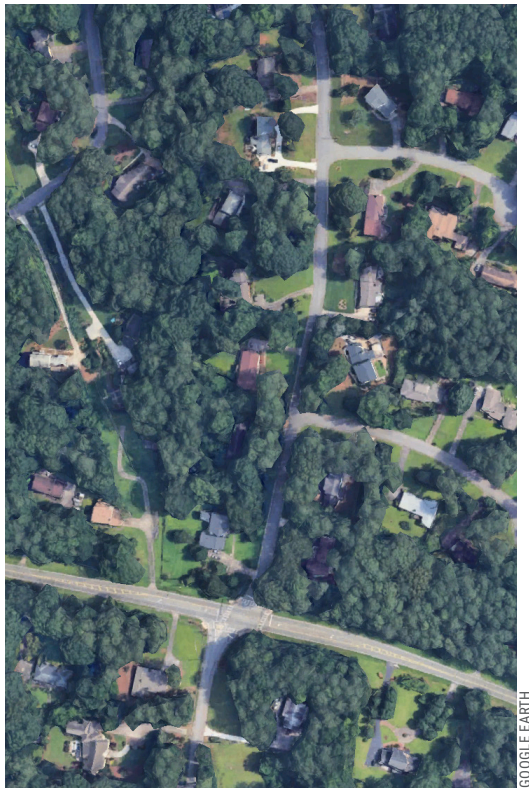


There are developments within DeKalb County that have executed on a viable, dense, mixed-use project while still protecting the character across the community.

WINDSOR COMMUNITIES



minimum set-back requirements, in-law suites (and the inability to build a separate ADU if an in-law suite already exists within the current home), and site restrictions associated with lot coverage and septic fields. Lot testing of the specific zoning restrictions with conditions on the ground would allow the City to gauge if the ordinance as designed allows for developable MMH projects.



Many of Tucker's single-family lots have space to accommodate the addition of an ADU separate from the primary home.

Tax Allocation District (TAD)

From [Georgia's Redevelopment Powers Law: A Policy Guide to the Evaluation and Use of Tax Allocation Districts](#):

When a jurisdiction experiences redevelopment or new economic development, typically the value of taxable properties in that jurisdiction increases, and thus, the tax revenues collected from these properties increase. Tax allocation districts work by capturing the incremental tax revenues gained from this increase in property values in a pre-designated geographic area and using these funds to retire debt or to fund improvements on a pay-as-you-go basis.

The most significant financing innovation associated with TADs is the use of TAD-backed debt (often referred to as "tax increment financing"). Specifically, jurisdictions can issue debt to fund capital improvements and/or to support other public or private sector investments in an area, and use the anticipated increase in property values from this investment to finance the debt. Recently, Georgia expanded this law to allow localities to commit incremental gains in sales taxes and other taxes such as the hotel-motel taxes to support TAD activities. In most cases, the incremental revenues involved include those of all the tax jurisdictions that overlap with the TAD – cities, counties, schools, and special districts. Under Georgia State Law, these jurisdictions must agree to commit their incremental revenues to the TAD.

Benefits of TADs

The expectation when using TADs is that the revenues they produce will finance projects that stimulate growth and thus contribute to growth in jobs, wealth, housing opportunities and other economic development goals, while also enhancing the fiscal position of participating jurisdictions. Planners can point to a number of TAD-financed projects around the country that produced significant returns on investment. However, the benefits of TADs come not only from its potential to stimulate growth but from its flexibility as a financing and redevelopment tool. These benefits include:

- The ability to finance economic development activities based on anticipated increases in revenues, rather than drawing on the current tax base;
- The ability to issue TAD debt, which does not count against state-imposed local debt ceilings and does not have to be backed by the full faith and credit of the issuing jurisdiction;
- Access to a policy tool that allows overlapping jurisdictions to pool resources (from incremental increases in property tax revenues) to support economic development activities; and
- Access to redevelopment powers, such as eminent domain.

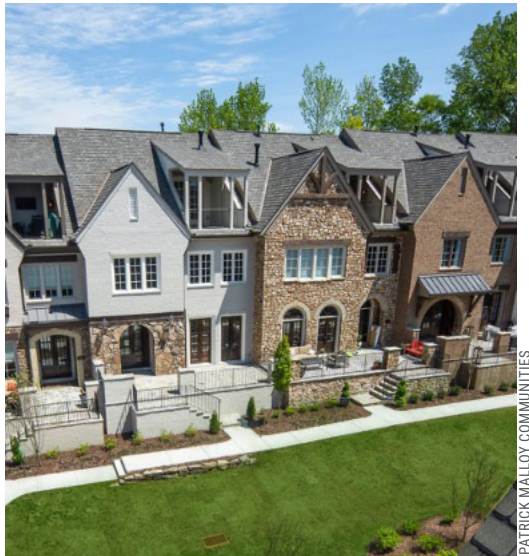


Innovative Ideas

There are a number of cities across the region that are tackling development and housing issues similar to those facing Tucker. Similar to Tucker's leverage of DeKalb County resources and ordinances in early days, the City can likewise learn from and selectively adopt ordinances and updates to zoning that will support the type of development the City would like to see going forward.

Peer Cities Tour

Tucker leadership and staff are encouraged to use field trips to other cities to identify projects they might like to emulate in Tucker. By creating a benchmark of successful projects from these peer city trips, the City can begin to identify the code adjustments necessary to enable and catalyze similar developments.



PATRICK MALLOY COMMUNITIES

These multifamily buildings in Alpharetta are a good design complement to nearby single-family homes.

Tour cities of interest. The following cities would provide City leadership with good examples, particularly as it relates to downtown development: Duluth, Lilburn, Norcross, Dunwoody, Alpharetta, and Sandy Springs.

Use the City Council retreat. Upcoming municipal elections and the City Council retreat that typically follows would be an excellent opportunity to bring together the City's planning staff, City Council, DDA, and any associated consultants for a field trip of this nature.

Identify particular areas of focus. As it can be easy to become overwhelmed by the range of possibilities, the panel recommends the following initial areas of focus:

- Zoning code audit that leads to recommendations for appropriate zoning code modifications
- Parking innovations and shared use strategies
- Inter-parcel access
- Interplay between density and housing variety that can help financially support desired community and development amenities.

Non-Conforming Properties

As properties age across the city, Tucker leadership will be required to address a wide range of non-conforming properties.

Support staff in addressing areas of focus. With three employees on staff dedicated to code enforcement, the City is on a good

Star-C

Founded in 2014, Star-C is a nonprofit organization with a mission to reduce transiency in apartment communities near high-need schools. Star-C partners with "conscientious landlords who are committed to providing well-maintained, affordable housing for working families, many of whom live near the poverty line."

Star-C aims to foster stable, thriving communities and offers health and wellness services, food insecurity initiatives, and eviction relief to families. Additionally, Star-C seeks to support the academic success of children in under-performing schools.

Properties like the East Ponce Village Apartment Homes might benefit from a partnership with Star-C, which could assist the landlord with property upgrades and much-needed community and resident support.

For more information: <https://star-c.org>



STAR-C



STAR-C

Before and after images of Springview, a 244-unit Star-C property.

path toward addressing non-conforming properties. Other cities have found success in supporting these effort by setting forth a strategic vision or area of focus each year for the range of non-conforming properties. These might include East Ponce Village, motels, and others. The focus areas should be clearly communicated within the community. [Star-C](#) could also be a helpful resource for the community.

Leverage financial disincentives for problem properties. By using the City's new community redevelopment tax incentive program or "blight tax" (adopted in November 2024), the City has the tools to create a financial disincentive for underperforming properties, creating fiscal pressure on building and landowners to address critical improvements. This type of mechanism allows the City to increase property taxes on neglected, unoccupied properties by up to 50 times the city's current millage rate. Any blighted property that has been subjected to

these taxes and is subsequently remediated and returned to productive use can then become eligible for a discounted tax rate once the work is complete. As of this study, the City has levied this increased tax on one property.

Vision for Northlake Mall

The challenges the City faces with the redevelopment of Northlake Mall are not unique. Other malls, once thriving and now failing, are slowly being transformed into vibrant mixed-use districts, providing dense housing opportunities, office space, and refreshed and reimagined retail offerings.

At the former North DeKalb Mall, a 73-acre mixed-use development is taking shape. Lulah Hills, as envisioned by the developer, will soon provide the community with an active mix of uses that includes office, residential and new retail space positioned around a central open and green space that can be used for gatherings and events.

Master plan the mall site. Given the uncertainty around the present mall owner's future plans, the panel encourages the City to take proactive steps to master plan the entire site. A master plan and can help the landowner envision something new on the site, it provides transparency and clarity to potential developers who may be interested in investing or participating in the redevelopment of the site, and it could also provide a new incentive model for developers at the site.

Put tools in place to enable development. The City should proactively plan the site and confirm zoning mechanisms needed to develop it into a mixed-use district. Additionally, creating a TAD for the site will provide the funding needed to support the type of infrastructure improvements required to support mixed-use development.

Annex land to create cohesion. The "donut hole" of commercially-zoned land currently not within Tucker city limits in the northwestern



The East Ponce Village Homes consist of 900 units and are in need of significant updates.



The former North DeKalb Mall was raised to make way for Lulah Hills, a new 73-acre, mixed-use development in DeKalb County.



quadrant of the city should be annexed into Tucker to ease future development of the mall site. Similarly, the City is encouraged to annex other adjacent commercial parcels to create a complete and cohesive development opportunity.

Partner for impact and capacity. This work does not need to be solely tackled by the City of Tucker. Powerful local and regional partners can help expand staff capacity and increase the positive impact of a potential mall redevelopment for the broader community. Given the site's location along the I-285 corridor, strategic transportation partners like MARTA and the Georgia Department of Transportation can help leverage transit and roadway improvements. Community improvement districts in the area can also assist with the work, providing real estate development tools and perhaps sharing some of its district funding to support improvements at the site.

Work with the current owner. The City has met with the current property owner several times regarding a master redevelopment plan for the Mall. Approaching the owner with some of these plans in mind and a strategic path toward joint redevelopment may help with finally and meaningfully engaging the owner in the process and seeing work at the site begin in earnest.

Partner with DeKalb County

In addition to the previously-identified opportunities to partner with DeKalb County,

the panel identified two additional tools the County has that might assist the City in its housing and redevelopment efforts.

Participate in the DeKalb Regional Land Bank Authority. Land banks are typically established in order to acquire, hold, manage, and distribute vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties. These land banks operate with a community betterment mindset and their activities are designed to return properties to productive use and revitalize neighborhoods. Each city within the County is allowed one representative on the DeKalb Land Bank board, and Tucker is encouraged to get involved and see how and where it might leverage land banking opportunities, particularly on residential properties.

Encourage participation in DeKalb regional land trust. Separate from a land bank, a regional land trust can provide opportunities to acquire and manage land for conservation, development, or investment. In many cases, a land trust is used to protect natural resources. Other times, land trust entities can use their tools to promote community benefits through redevelopments that have broader positive community impact. In yet other instances, land trusts have been used to hold land over the long term while allowing affordable housing development on the parcels. This arrangement can help ensure the long-term affordability of the housing and even allow for individual homeowner wealth building when the home (structure only) is sold.

Community Land Trusts

Community land trusts (CLTs) are a form of shared- equity ownership using public and private funds to acquire land on behalf of a specific community. The CLT owns the land in perpetuity.

Community residents can purchase their homes, but not the land on which the houses sit. Instead, residents enter into low-cost, long-term ground leases with the CLT, typically for a 99-year period. Monthly charges for the ground lease can be as low as \$25 and are usually less than \$100 per month.

Although CLT homeowners can never sell the land their home is on, they usually gain some degree of appreciation on the home in addition to the equity they achieve by paying down the principal in their mortgage. Otherwise, CLT homeowners have the same rights as other homeowners. During the term of the ground lease, they enjoy full and exclusive use of the property, as well as common privacy rights associated with homeownership.

The CLT often has a right of first refusal for every sale, and there is a cap on resale price so that the housing remains affordable for the next owner.

CLT leases typically include an occupancy requirement that the property must serve as the owner's primary residence. Critically, most CLTs allow owners to pass ownership of the home to their children, which promotes generational wealth-building and neighborhood stability.



Redevelopment Resources

As the City considers the redevelopment opportunities before it, the following resources may prove beneficial and are worth exploring further.

Tax allocation district (TAD) proceeds.

TAD proceeds can be used to offset infrastructure or site prep costs for landowners who agree to participate in redevelopment. Through a TAD, Tucker can offer to fund utility upgrades, stormwater fixes, or streetscape improvements on-site if the land is sold or redeveloped in line with the Downtown vision.

- **Example:** Decatur, Georgia, used TAD funds to relocate utilities and expand roads for the Northwood Ravin project, incentivizing a key parcel owner to redevelop.

Density bonuses and flexible zoning.

Density bonuses and flexible zoning mechanisms can allow more height, density, or reduced parking in a development in exchange for land dedication or for providing affordable units. Tucker can create overlays or special districts that offer zoning flexibility to landowners who participate in an assemblage, attainable housing project, or a shared parking arrangement.

- **Example:** Duluth, Georgia, and Suwanee, Georgia, allowed increased density and reduced setbacks to catalyze walkable downtown districts.

Participation in land value uplift. A land value uplift can offer landowners a share in future development profits rather than a full sale upfront. Tucker can use this tool to structure deals where landowners receive a minority equity stake or ground lease revenue in the new development.

- **Example:** The Over-the-Rhine redevelopment in Cincinnati, Ohio, included profit-sharing with long-time property owners to reduce resistance to change.

Public-private redevelopment agreements.

Jurisdictions can partner with a developer to structure a deal that provides predictable outcomes and shared risk. Tucker could use the Downtown Development Authority to facilitate agreements where landowners can sell into a master-planned project with phased development and guaranteed returns.

- **Example:** Greenville, South Carolina, used its DDA to acquire parcels for a major downtown redevelopment that included options for landowners to participate over time.

Land banking or purchase options.

Jurisdictions can use an intermediary (city, nonprofit, land bank) to secure options on key parcels without forcing an immediate sale. In Tucker, the City could allow landowners to retain ownership temporarily while the City or DDA negotiates with a master developer.

- **Example:** Kansas City, Missouri, used land banking to slowly assemble parcels and give legacy owners time to transition.

Recognition and legacy preservation

incentives. The City can appeal to emotional and legacy concerns of long-time owners by offering recognition plaques or naming opportunities for owners who sell or contribute to the City's redevelopment vision.

- **Example:** Franklin, Tennessee, provided preservation incentives and historical recognition for legacy commercial property owners who participated in the downtown plan.

Property tax relief or freeze. The City can freeze or reduce tax assessments for a fixed time if owners sell or redevelop in alignment with the City's goals. By offering a temporary tax abatement (through a DDA or TAD mechanism), the City can help landowners soften the financial impact that may be associated with the sale or redevelopment of surrounding land or buildings.

- **Example:** Atlanta BeltLine TAD included property tax freezes for residents and landowners in certain areas to reduce displacement concerns.



Next Steps and Phasing

The recommendations from the ULI panel can help the City of Tucker stimulate additional residential development, particularly denser and attainable, in the city. The following phasing can help City leaders and staff begin to address items in the near term that will assist with both immediate actions as well as the longer-term actions that will need to evolve over time or may take years to put in place.

Immediate Actions Years 1-2

- **Evaluate zoning needs.** Conduct a zoning ordinance audit to identify where updates are required.
- **Pursue lot testing.** Conduct lot testing to identify how zoning mechanisms should be adjusted to allow or encourage the type of housing the City would like to see.
- **Form a Housing Taskforce.** Create a Housing Taskforce to help provide additional focus on and support for the community's housing needs.

- **Conduct city tours.** Host a development familiarization tour for the City Council and the City's upcoming Downtown master planning consultant during the Council's retreat, touring Lilburn, Norcross, and Alpharetta to help inform the consultant's recommendations for a downtown master plan.
- **Engage with the land bank.** Encourage the City of Tucker's engagement in the DeKalb Land Bank to help address vacant residential properties.

Near-term Actions Years 3-5

- **Update ADU policies.** Update the City's ADU requirements and cottage courts specifications to broaden adoption across the city.
- **Launch a TAD.** Initiate the TAD process by identifying the exact geography (for downtown and Northlake Mall) and approach DeKalb County regarding a potential partnership arrangement.

- **Illustrate density.** Help familiarize the community with various options for housing density by providing illustrations of viable projects and even opportunities to even tour potential housing types.
- **Define objectives.** Help the community define its housing objectives and help promote a more complete understanding of the current need and potential solutions.
- **Leverage the LCI.** The Tucker Northlake Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) should be leveraged at the Northlake Mall parcel and the I-285 corridor.
- **Activate the DDA.** The DDA should be emboldened to act and equipped with the policies it needs to guide its activities.
- **Replace the SLUP.** Clear guidelines for development should replace the City's reliance on the special land use permit process.

Mid-term Actions Years 3-5

- **Implement zoning updates as recommended by the zoning audit.** The downtown district, Northlake Mall/I-285 area, and the Lawrenceville Highway corridor will likely require zoning changes to help guide the type of development outlined by the panel to produce more housing.
- **Master plan Northlake Mall.** A master plan for the Northlake Mall site should

Proposed Density Thresholds

	Low Density	Medium Density	High Density
Units/Acre	10-20 units per acre	40-50 units per acre	80-85 units per acre Northlake
Suggested Location	Lawrenceville Hwy & Downtown	Downtown	Northlake
Example Projects	Cottages on Vaughn Oak Cottage Court Townhomes ADUs	Townhomes in Downtown Norcross	Lulah Hills Lilburn Modera Decatur Downtown Chamblee

begin with community engagement at and around the site and by hiring a consultant to lead the plan formulation.

- **Support small-scale development.** The development of cottage court and other small-scale developments in Tucker should be encouraged and may take time to catch hold.
- **Leverage abatement.** To help meet the needs of households earning less than 120 percent AMI, the City will need to leverage its tax abatement tool. This process will take time to enact.
- **Pursue bonds for title.** The City is also encouraged to explore the potential of a bonds for title program to help facilitate development that is otherwise exempt from federally tax-exempt bonds.
- **Adopt a TAD.** The engagement and consensus needed to adopt a TAD for Northlake Mall and downtown will take time but should be ready for deployment in the mid-term.
- **Explore the land trust.** The City should pursue engagement with the DeKalb Land Trust and leverage its tools in Tucker.
- **Continue code enforcement.** Tucker's non-conforming properties should be addressed systematically over time, following newly-established policies that can help the City address motels, commercial, etc. Leverage the City's blight tax to address problem properties.

Long-term Actions Years 5+

- **Leverage the TAD.** With appropriate groundwork it is possible that the TAD could be functional in five years or slightly more.
- **Promote Northlake mixed-use.** Over the long term development at Northlake can begin to take shape and could launch with one project and smart growth developments over time.
- **Buildout downtown.** With the TAD in place and revised zoning to allow increased density, housing development downtown should launch.
- **Improve existing multifamily.** Through new public-private partnerships, existing multifamily developments can begin to see improvements that better serve the residents and the surrounding community.
- **Fund community improvements.** Specifically at the Northlake Mall site and I-285 corridor, community improvements, funded through TAD and CID sources, should begin to take shape and begin to provide the types of community amenities that will drive additional retail and residential activity at the site.

The City of Tucker, this new city with a deep history, has set its foundation on the bedrock of committed commercial enterprises, successful industrial businesses, and residential homeowners who are passionate about their city.

As the City enters its teen years, it has a unique opportunity to shape its future with continued community support, guidance from civic leadership committed to the community's vitality, professional staff who are equipped with the expertise needed to address the city's growth mindset, and good examples from surrounding communities of what may work well. By embracing these expanded strategies, the City can improve its administrative and regulatory capacity to deliver housing that meets the needs of current and future residents. With strategic updates and the right partnerships, Tucker can become a regional model for housing innovation, local developer empowerment, and thoughtful urban infill.



About the Panel



Jay G. Silverman

**AIA, LEED AP
Panel Chair
National Director of
Architecture
Dwell Design Studio**



Jay has over 30 years of experience creating great places to live and work as well as finding creative solutions to complex design challenges associated with mixed-use and urban-infill development. He has a legacy of service to the community, as a former President of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Past Treasurer of the Architecture Foundation of Georgia. He is a 2009 graduate of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Center for Regional Leadership, has served two terms as Chair of the ULI Technical Assistance Program Committee and is currently a member of the ULI Atlanta District Advisory Council. He is a member of the 2021 Leadership Sandy Springs class and has served on the Advisory Council for the Sandy Springs Conservancy. Jay received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Tennessee.

Samantha Christenberry

**Consultant
The Concord Group**



As a Consultant at The Concord Group, Samantha specializes in market opportunity analyses for developers and investors across a wide range of real estate product types. She conducts in-depth macroeconomic and demographic research to identify emerging market trends and guide strategic decision-making. Her expertise includes supply/demand analysis, market and financial feasibility, product segmentation, land use programming, and submarket/site identification. She has worked on over 100 client engagements, covering urban and suburban developments throughout the Southeast and East Coast.

Prior to joining The Concord Group, Samantha consulted on geospatial economic development projects for the World Bank in Haiti and Azerbaijan, focusing on data-driven strategies for technology and social investment.

A native of Chicago, Samantha graduated Summa Cum Laude from Duke University, where she designed her own major entitled, "Urban Studies: The Socio-Spatial Politics of the Built Environment.

Maureen Freehill

**Director, Affordable
Housing
National Church
Residences**



Maureen Freehill serves as the Director of Affordable Housing for National Church Residences, leading strategic planning and development in the Atlanta Metro area. Maureen started her career in affordable housing as a Section 8 caseworker with RUPCO in upstate New York. From there she served as Special Needs Housing Policy Analyst for NYS DHCR, generating the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Housing (NHTD) Program. This program won the National Council of State Housing Authorities award for innovation in special needs housing. The NHTD program provides a bridge to Section 8 subsidy to enable institutionalized individuals to move into community-based housing of their choice while receiving needed Medicaid support services.

After moving to Atlanta in 2012 she began her work as a multi-family developer utilizing LIHTC and leveraging public and private partnerships to provide enriched housing opportunities. Maureen is a graduate of SUNY New Paltz, President of the Atlanta Women's Affordable Housing Network, Executive Board Director with the Georgia Supportive Housing Association, Volunteer Coordinator for Neighbor in Need East Lake/Kirkwood, a member of the class of 2022 ULI Center for Leadership, member of the ULI Health Leaders cohort, and a Girl Scout troop leader to 18 superstars.

Glenda Krouse Matute

PHD Candidate at
Georgia State

Glenda has 18 years of professional experience in community planning and urban design. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Urban Studies at Georgia State University, focusing on market-driven affordable housing strategies. Her prior work experience spans 15 years as a senior planning manager at APD Urban Planning and Management, where she applied her expertise in architecture, urban design, and community planning to develop neighborhood redevelopment plans and housing strategies for different communities. She created and executed community revitalization strategies for inner-city neighborhoods, emphasizing transformative change. Her work encompassed creating housing projects from conception through pre-development stages to construction, designing and executing anti-displacement programs, and planning and facilitating community engagement strategies. Glenda also developed urban design recommendations that aligned with the existing contexts of the communities and respected their historic nature. Before APD-U, Glenda participated in architecture and urban design work in residential, mixed-use, and resort projects in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Glenda holds a Bachelor of Architecture and a Minor in Latino Studies from the University of Notre Dame and a master's in City and Regional Planning from Clemson University. She is a member of the APA, a certified AICP planner, and a member of ULI. She is a native of Honduras.



Deborah Myerson

Senior Research and
Policy Fellow
ULI Terwilliger Center
for Housing

Deborah L. Myerson, AICP is senior research and policy fellow with the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing. Myerson is principal and founder of Myerson Consulting, LLC with expertise in housing policy and program development, land use, and urban planning. As senior fellow, Myerson guides and implements the Terwilliger Center's research agenda on a wide range of residential land use and development issues.

An urban planner with over twenty-five years of experience in the field, Myerson works widely with mission-motivated organizations, local governments, and private sector partners around the country to create more livable, accessible, and equitable communities. She has also served as executive director, South Central Indiana Housing Opportunities; and adjunct professor with Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

Myerson earned a Master of Regional Planning degree from Cornell University and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a certified as a Rental Housing Development Finance Professional by the National Development Council and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.



Jay Perlmutter

Managing Director
of Single Family
Development
ANDP

Jay Perlmutter joined ANDP in March 2016 and is responsible for the management and oversight of ANDP's single-family development efforts. He is responsible for managing several developer partnerships and government contracts to assist ANDP in achieving its mission of promoting and creating mixed income communities. He manages and oversees all day-to-day activities performed under the program from site selection to homebuyer disposition. Since joining ANDP, Jay has helped double annual production to over 100 single-family homes and grow the single-family rental portfolio to more than 265 houses.

Jay has over 20 years of experience in real estate project management with experience in single family development, real estate market analysis and program design and implementation. Prior to ANDP, Jay worked with HavenBrook Homes as Senior Operations Analyst and with the City of Atlanta as NSP Management Analyst. Jay has a Bachelor's degree from Emory University and a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Georgia Institute of Technology.



Stan Sugarman
Co-Founder
Stryant Construction



Stan is the co-founder of Stryant Investments, LLC, SL Lending LLC, and Stryant Construction, Inc. The companies were also co-founded by Atticus LeBlanc in 2009 with the purpose of finding distressed or undervalued real estate investments in the metro Atlanta area since they had individually been pursuing opportunities since 2007. Since 2009, the investment company has acquired more than 500 multifamily units, 100 single family homes and 14 commercial properties in the metro area, while Stryant Construction has completed almost \$80 million in residential and multifamily renovation projects during that period.

Stryant and its team have completed the adaptive reuse of 1 Moreland to retail in the Reynoldstown neighborhood, 1939 Hosea Williams Boulevard from auto repair to an art gallery in Kirkwood, the former George Adair School in Adair Park to a mixed income apartment building with coworking, art studios and a cafe, 691 W Whitehall from an abandoned warehouse to art studios in the West End and the conversion of the former Atlanta Motel to the Ralph David House with 58 supportive housing studios.

Prior to co-founding Stryant, Mr. Sugarman was previously director of preconstruction services of Sharpe Construction, Inc., an Atlanta based general contractor that specializes in retail construction. Sharpe Construction, Inc. has completed projects for RaceTrac Petroleum, QuikTrip Corporation,

California Pizza Kitchen, Starbucks, Rooms To Go, Taco Mac and other regional chains. In his two years at Sharpe Construction, Inc. over 200,000 square feet of new retail space was constructed or built out. In addition, he holds a Georgia commercial general contractor's license.

Previous to Sharpe Construction, Inc., Mr. Sugarman held several construction positions with two regional convenience store chains including manager of new store construction, development manager and project manager. He has built and/or developed over 75 sites. Also in a six-year span, he directed the remodel and upgrades of 100 petroleum stations.

Andrea Worthy
Director, Economic
Development
City of Smyrna



Andrea is currently the Economic Development Director for the City of Smyrna, Georgia, where she is responsible for business retention and recruiting efforts, as well managing redevelopment efforts for the suburban community of 58,000 residents. She has experience working with a variety of economic development programs including Tax Allocation Districts, development authorities and other public-private partnership tools. She is currently involved in creating a small business outreach program and is leading the City's effort to redevelop a 9-acre site directly adjacent to Smyrna's Market Village.

Andrea previously served as the Economic Development Director for the City of Sandy Springs for ten years, where she was responsible for facilitating the location and expansion of businesses in the city. In this role, she was responsible for a recruitment strategy to attract regional and national companies to the region. Also under her direction, the City established a formal Business Retention program.

In Sandy Springs, Andrea also launched an outreach strategy to meet with property owners, improved communication with the small business community, and launched an effort to update City's 10-year economic development strategy. She was a member of multi-year, cross-functional team that was responsible for development of City Springs, a catalyst project that created a new

downtown for Sandy Springs. Other projects for Sandy Springs included a city wayfinding plan, and a community input effort to conceptualize revitalization opportunities that exist in the north end of the City.

Before her public sector work, Andrea worked with Mirant, an independent power producer and energy trading firm, where she worked in various positions, including Economic Development, Regulatory Affairs, and Performance Management. Her past experience also includes real estate and site selection work with Arthur Andersen LLP.

Ms. Worthy is a member of the International Economic Development Council, the Urban Land Institute and the Georgia Economic Developers Association. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies from Georgia State University and a Master's in City Planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Andrea believes she has one of the best jobs in the world – she gets to combine her love of policy with assisting companies in making decisions about how to grow their business.

Arman Tolentino

Panel Project Manager

Associate Architect

Cooper Carry



Arman Tolentino rejoined Cooper Carry in 2024, bringing his expertise to a wide array of projects with a particular focus on large-scale, mixed-use developments in urban environments. His extensive experience encompasses multifamily, hospitality, office, retail, convention center, and performing arts projects.

With a passion for excellence and a sharp eye for detail, Arman excels in every aspect of his work, leveraging his exceptional organizational skills. He fosters collaboration and coordination, expertly guiding interdisciplinary teams—including architects, engineers, designers, consultants, and contractors—toward innovative design solutions. Arman ensures that each project meets programmatic requirements, adheres to regulatory mandates, respects local context, and addresses site constraints while staying within client-defined budgets and timelines.

Arman is deeply committed to building strong relationships and understanding client needs. His goal is to translate visions into impactful realities that benefit clients, users, and the broader community.

He holds both a Master of Architecture and a Master of City & Regional Planning from the Georgia Institute of Technology, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Arman is a registered architect, a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), and an active participant in the Urban Land Institute (ULI). He is a ULI Atlanta's Center for Leadership graduate, Chair of ULI Atlanta's Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) Committee, and serves on the ULI Atlanta Advisory Board. In his free time, Arman enjoys backyard play with his two sons and is a dedicated Miami sports fan, proudly hailing from South Florida.