



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Steps Towards Welcomed Growth

Helping the City of Dunwoody thrive, grow and continually improve the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors is the core driver for the city's Economic Development Department.

The trick is finding the right businesses ready to lease/purchase the perfect property available to meet the needs of employees or customers. As with many real estate and investment opportunities, timing is critical and location is vital. "At the end of the day, these are private business decisions that are driven by profit. They don't happen if they aren't beneficial to all parties," said Michael Starling, Economic Development Director for Dunwoody.

The department works with regional, state, county and local brokers and influencers to attract the companies, retailers, restaurants and developers which are the best fit for the city. "When interested developers or businesses approach the city with ideas and proposals for a property, the city has to carefully consider what's allowed in the zoning, what the Comprehensive Plan and area master plans for Dunwoody Village, Georgetown and Perimeter call for, and sometimes what's been entitled by right to be built there by previous government entities," said Starling. "We can't just outright refuse one developer's proposal for a retail store because we're hoping for another use at that location."

The city must also adhere to the Zoning Ordinance which is part of the city's code and regulates the use, scale, and intensity of development allowed in various districts and acts as an implementation tool of the Comprehensive Plan. The city's Community Development Department consists of certified city planners who review each application, variance and zoning request to ensure what's being proposed is within the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Typically, developer plans are then reviewed by boards and committees based on recommendations and requirements and then are put to a vote before the City Council.

"What might be beneficial for the Perimeter area might not be appropriate for Dunwoody Village, and vice-versa," said Starling. "The key is for city staff to work with the developers to help create something which would most benefit the community and the area through appropriate guidance and direction to adhere to our citizen's vision for the area. My role is to actively pursue those projects that meet the goals of our master plans and that benefit the city financially."

The entire process has many checks and balances and several opportunities for community involvement and public input. By participating in developer-initiated public meetings and city board and committee hearings, citizens help provide

important feedback and input which can influence the success and overall look and feel of the project.

For residents seeking to get involved and help guide what's developed in Dunwoody, please visit the city's website and explore the Economic Development and Community Development department pages.

"Or consider attending a public meeting," added Starling. "Economic Development is becoming much more place based with access to amenities like trails, parks and restaurants gaining more importance. Getting active is the best way to help ensure the types of future businesses and developments are what the community has in mind."

Economic Development In Action



CORNER BAKERY CAFE

The Economic Development team at Dunwoody has been working with the master developers of the Sterling Pointe mixed-use development which includes Corner Bakery Café and a Hampton Inn & Suites for over three years. The development consisted of replacing a surface parking lot with a new parking deck, 128 room hotel and 25,000 square feet of retail. This team approach started at the beginning of the design process through permitting and final ribbon cutting.

NOVO CUCINA

Award winning chef Riccardo Ullio was seeking a new edge-city location for his latest restaurant, Novo Cucina, and found a perfect spot located in the heart of Dunwoody Village. After sitting down with the city's Economic Development team, Ullio's fourth venture came together. Following a complete redesign of the existing building (originally a Pizza Hut) which included the installation of special wood-fired ovens and a new roof and patio enclosure, Ullio opened his Italian-inspired restaurant which has become a city-wide favorite.



SPROUTS FARMERS MARKET

Sprouts Farmers Market was pursuing a presence in the southeast and quickly realized Dunwoody residents demographically lined up with its key customer target market. In its search, the company found the former Harris Teeter and Ace Homeplace on Mt. Vernon Road and Jett Ferry Road as an ideal location for a new healthy and fresh supermarket. After connecting with the city on all necessary plans and zoning, Sprouts Farmers Market opened its doors in Dunwoody in July 2014.

