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JSA McGill LCI Plan

Prepared by: **Urban Collage, Inc.** in association with

Cooper Carry, URS Corp., HPE, ZVA, ZHA, Verge Studios, Biscuit Studios & PEQ

3.1 Strategic Recommendations

As described earlier, the JSA-McGill LCI Study forms a critical piece of an overall planning/development strategy being developed for all of Downtown Atlanta as part of the "Imagine Downtown" process. This process seeks to build upon past plans for Downtown and its districts and build on the inherent physical and economic strengths of major development "Focus Areas." The JSA-McGill LCI study area is thought of as the "most ready for primetime" Focus Area. With the immediate improvements to the Georgia Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola block and the transportation improvements associated with those new destinations, the JSA-McGill LCI study area represents a very short-term priority for investment and a true opportunity for public/private partnership.

In the next few years, efforts will be strategically directed towards the construction of the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola and the infrastructure needed to support employees, visitors, and residents of the area. The number of the visitors that will populate the Centennial Olympic Park area surrounding these destinations provides a huge opportunity for the creation of supportive retail development. Consciously, the JSA-McGill LCI study includes a mix of several thousand new residential units, several million square feet of new office development, and a major new retail corridor along Simpson Street. This mixed-use development is designed to take advantage of the physical development opportunities within the study area to create an active 24-hour urban environment with activity at all times of the day.

The JSA-McGill LCI study also contains one of the rarest of opportunities to create a new urban neighborhood at Centennial Hill, stretching across Peachtree Street to the parking lots of the Civic Center, possibly supported by a first-class Downtown school to serve residential development. This new neighborhood surrounding Simpson Street can provide the opportunity for new housing for over 4,000 new residents in the area.

The public improvements plan provides the opportunity to balance improvements for vehicular access, by both automobiles, access to and from shuttles/buses with pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan contains:

- 1) Improvements to the Downtown Connector (I-75/85);
- 2) The enhancement of east-west circulation through reconstruction of the JSA corridor;
- 3) Consideration for new on-street parking;
- 4) The creation of a pedestrian corridor system along JSA, Baker, West Peachtree, and Simpson including key intersections and sidewalks;
- 5) Improvements for regional bus access to the Civic Center area;
- 6) Study of the possibility of re-instituting two-way streets on Baker and Harris;
- 7) Enhancements to utilization of the Civic Center and Peachtree Center MARTA Stations;
- 8) Development of the City's first "urban bike/ped path" along Luckie and Baker;
- 9) Pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding signage improvements as part of the area-wide effort for Downtown and Midtown.

How will this be accomplished? The LCI Study and Imagine Downtown have brought together all of the key participants in a successful implementation plan: residents, property owners, the City, the Atlanta Development Authority and major institutions. The existing Westside Tax Allocation District (TAD) and new Eastside TAD provide an opportunity for public sector leverage of planned improvements and private investment.

Much of the property in the JSA-McGill corridor is in the hands of developers with active plans for new development consistent with the objectives of the LCI plan. These are not property owners

holding property for speculation, which bodes well for short-term development projects. The first step, a consensual physical vision, is now in place through the LCI Study. However, it will take public investment in infrastructure, particularly public improvements to area streets and financial assistance in the construction of structured parking, to make these projects feasible. Over time, public investment should by design decline as the private sector accelerates its activities. This trend has occurred recently just north of the study area in Midtown and the time is right strategically to instigate comprehensive revitalization in the JSA-McGill corridor.

The key players in implementation are:

- 1) Central Atlanta Progress - the sponsoring organization will continue its focus on Downtown-wide improvements and its role in facilitating study and implementation of planned recommendations;
- 2) Downtown Transportation Management Association (TMA) – this organization will continue to focus on transportation issues in Downtown
- 3) Atlanta Downtown Improvement District- this self-taxing district that encompasses most of the study area provides a mechanism for continuing ongoing beautification and safety programs and the local funding match that can leverage other local, state and federal infrastructure programs;
- 4) The City of Atlanta- the city's role will be passage and enforcement of new regulatory improvements and support for new public infrastructure investment;
- 5) Atlanta Development Authority- as part of its focus on Downtown development, ADA can play a critical role in the financing of new development through City financial programs and the implementation of the TAD's;
- 6) Regional Agencies- the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and the Georgia Department of Transportation all have roles in the funding and implementation of key public improvements recommended;
- 7) Institutions- faith-based institutions, public institutions and other non-profits add to the vitality and activity of the district through their activities, programs and outreach;
- 8) Property Owners- the area property owners will bear the greatest responsibility for the implementation of major new development on vacant/underutilized property;
- 9) Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association- the emerging and strong Downtown residential association can continue its role in increasing housing opportunities and supportive services as well as communications among Downtown's growing residential population.

All of the entities working together towards the vision established can quickly help create one of Atlanta's most desirable new urban district- a place to live, work, shop, recreate and be entertained.

3.2 Regulatory Enhancements

Unlike many LCI study areas, the JSA-McGill study area has a conducive regulatory framework already in place in the form of Special Public Interest (SPI) zoning districts #1 and #13. These existing regulations allow and encourage mixed use, pedestrian orientation and good urban design principles of building buildings at the street, articulating blank facades and hiding service uses. As part of a comprehensive update to these SPI districts, Central Atlanta Progress and the City of Atlanta have created the Downtown Livability Code (DLC), as described earlier. The DLC was begun a year and a half ago and is set to go to City Council for adoption at the beginning of 2004. The DLC offers more definitive standards for streets and streetscapes, allowable uses, and support of transit/alternative transportation. It represents one of the most progressive "smart growth" codes in the Atlanta region and can be a model for other higher-density, mixed use districts.

3.3 Five-Year Action Plan

The JSA-McGill LCI Plan contains a heavy focus on immediate five-year actions to take advantage of the momentum that is being created with the investment of the Georgia Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola on the western end of the corridor and rejuvenation of the Civic Center block on the eastern end. Many of the public improvements planned in the first five years support transportation mobility improvements, particularly east-west movement in support of the major regional destinations under construction. They also lay the foundation for private investment that is planned in the corridor. Five-year projects include the following:

- New streetscapes on West Peachtree Street and Simpson Streets;
- New gateway parks and plazas along JSA-McGill corridor;
- Downtown Connector (I-75/85) and William Street interchange improvements;
- Traffic calming and on-street parking in Centennial Hill;
- Multiuse trails connecting Downtown to regional destinations;
- Downtown Livability Code regulatory enhancement, and;
- The Eastside Tax Allocation District (TAD) projects

Table 3.1: Five- Year Action Plan

JSA MCGILL FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Transportation Projects

#	Description	Type of Improvement	Engineering Year	Engineering Costs	Construction Year	Construction Costs	Total Project Costs	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Local Match Source & Amount
1	Luckie Street Improvements New traffic-separated multiuse trail with landscaped shoulders down center of right-of-way (priced); alternately on-street parking on one or both sides of street with multiuse trail on west side as part of sidewalk reconstruction	Vehicular / Pedestrian (3,386 lf)	2004	\$230,248	2005-2006	\$2,302,480	\$2,532,728	City / Private (PATH)	City / PATH	City / PATH TBD
2	Simpson - West Peachtree Streetscapes New streetscapes to connect MARTA rail stations with Georgia Aquarium / World of Coca-Cola / Children's Museum and Centennial Hill residential neighborhood; extends on West Peachtree from Civic Center station to Hardy Ivy Park and on Simpson from West Pea	Pedestrian (6,000 lf)	2004	\$270,000	2005-2006	\$2,700,000	\$2,970,000	City / Private (CAP)	ARC / City / Private (CAP)	City / Private (CAP) TBD
3	COP Drive - Williams Street Improvements On-street parking on one or both sides of Williams Street from Baker to Alexander, with accompanying streetscape improvements; Off-peak on-street parking on west side of COP Drive from Baker to Andrew Young International	Vehicular / Pedestrian (1,770 / 930 lf)	2005	\$88,748	2005-2006	\$887,475	\$976,223	City	City	City TBD
4	Reconfiguration of Interstate Ramping Realigning I-75/85 southbound exit ramp to penetrate Spring Street Connector tunnel; new SOV northbound / southbound entry ramp from Spring north of Alexander; conversion of existing northbound / southbound entry ramp to HOV only; new median / embankment	Vehicular / Landscape (1,500 lf)	2006 - 2007	\$559,000	2008 - 2009	\$5,590,000	\$6,149,000	GDOT	GDOT	GDOT TBD
5	Baker - Harris Two-Way Convert Baker Street and Harris Street to 2-way operation from COP Drive to Piedmont Avenue	Vehicular / Intersection (6,036 lf)	2006	\$140,000	2006-2007	\$1,400,000	\$1,540,000	City	City	City TBD
6	Municipal Parking Structures New municipal parking authority; public and/or public/private structured parking projects at various locations in Centennial Hill and throughout JSA-McGill corridor	Vehicular (3,000 sp)	2007 (Authority)	\$4,500,000	2008 and on	\$45,000,000	\$49,500,000	City / Private	City / Private	City / Private TBD
7	Baker Street PATH Project Streetscapes on Baker Street from COP Drive to Piedmont Avenue (one side only); new multiuse path / streetscape along the south side of Baker Street from Luckie Street to Freedom Parkway	Pedestrian (3,018 / 6,800 lf)	2007	\$640,410	2007-2009	\$6,404,100	\$7,044,510	City / Private (PATH)	ARC / City / PATH	City / PATH TBD
8	Piedmont Improvements Streetscapes on both sides of Piedmont from Baker to Pine (to continue to North Avenue); on-street parking on east side of Piedmont from McGill to Pine (possibly to continue to North Avenue)	Vehicular / Pedestrian (3,864 lf)	2008	\$173,880	2008-2009	\$1,738,800	\$1,912,680	City	ARC / City	City TBD
Totals				\$6,602,286		\$66,022,855	\$72,625,141			TBD

Land Use / Housing Projects / Initiatives
Public / Open Space Projects

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
A	Marietta / JSA Plaza New public park / plaza and fountain at vacant triangular parcel between Luckie and Marietta along JSA	TBD	2005-2007	State / City / Private	State / City / Private
B	Spring - COP Plaza New plaza at intersection of Spring Street / COP Drive eliminating northbound deceleration lane; includes bridge enhancements and embankment landscaping	TBD	2005-2008	State / City / Private	State / City / Private
C	JSA Linear Plaza New greenway / plaza in expanded right-of-way on north side of JSA between Luckie and COP Drive	TBD	2005-2006	State / City / Private	State / City / Private
D	Civic Center Plaza Reconstructed / expanded entry court / drop-off as part of Civic Center repositioning, future site intensification	TBD	2007-2009	City / Private	City / Private
E	Expanded Mayor's Park New open space 'cap' over I-75/85 on both sides of Peachtree Street bounded by Currier, Courtland, McGill and Alexander	TBD	2008-2010	State / City / Private	State / City / Private
F	GWCC Phase V Mall New linear greenspace along JSA realignment from Northside Drive to railroad viaduct; part of Phase V expansion of GWCC with sculptural pylons similar to International Plaza	TBD	2009 - ?	State / City / Private	State / City / Private

Other Local Initiatives

	Description/Action	Cost	Year	Responsible Party	Funding Source
	Eastside TAD Create tax-allocation district incorporating portions of JSA McGill corridor to leverage public improvements such as streetscapes and municipal parking structures and encourage redevelopment	Complete	2003	City / County	City / County
	Downtown Livability CodeZoning Review and update Special Public Interest (SPI) district 1	Ongoing	2003-2004	City / Private	City / Private

3.4 25-Year Projections

The following table displays 25-year population and employment projections for the LCI study area as requested by the Atlanta Regional Commission. These tables estimate the projected population and employment growth within the study area based on the development program proposed for this corridor in addition to the market absorption analyzed by the market consultants ZHA, Inc. and ZVA, Inc. The tables assume the successful implementation of the LCI land use and transportation initiatives described in the previous sections.

Estimated New Development (Based on LCI Plan):

Residential	4,683 units
Retail	250,625 SF
Office	2,223,725 SF
Live/Work	131 units
Hotel	700 rooms
Convention Space (GWCC Expansion)	1,383,000
Business Center	750,000 SF

Table 3.2: 25- Year Projections:

ASSUMING INVESTMENT WITH LCI GRANTS AND OTHER CITY INFRASTRUCTURE¹						
	2003²	Projected				
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Population³	2,404	3,800	6,700	9,400	10,300	-
Housing Units	1,202	1,900	3,700	5,500	6,016	-
Employment⁴	15,564	17,648	19,732	21,816	23,900	25,983

¹ Assumes equal distribution of new office/retail development

Housing calculations are based on the ZVA Market analysis absorption rates explained in table 3 Appendix section 4.0

Assumes 100% occupancy for projected development

² The calculations for population and employment are based on survey counts of residential units and office space within the study area conducted by Urban Collage, Inc. and ZHA, Inc.

Average household size estimated as 2.0 persons/HH

³ Average household size is projected to decrease from 2.0 in 2003 to 1.71 in 2020.

⁴ Employment calculations assume 250 SF/person for Office, 350 SF/person for Retail and 1000 SF/person for hotel and 250 SF/ hotel room.

3.5 LCI Goals

The following section describes how the JSA-McGill Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan addresses each of the 10 study LCI program requirements developed by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

1. Efficiency/feasibility of land uses and mix appropriate future growth including new and/or revised land use regulations needed to complete the development program.

The JSA-McGill LCI Plan promotes a mix of retail, residential, office, institutional facilities and open space throughout the corridor. The development of private land and open space are keys to the future growth of the area. The major institutions that are woven throughout the JSA-McGill Study area are a strength that will enhance the program of a mix of housing and retail (guided by the economic market study). The strategic placement of retail and residential is punctuated by open space that promotes connectivity within the Study Area as well as to adjacent neighborhoods. A new land use classification of live/work space for double frontage buildings will ultimately contribute to the future growth in the area by utilizing mixed-use as a solution for a difficult site.

An update of the current zoning is currently underway. The Study Area lies partially within the SP-1 area which promotes a more pedestrian friendly, mixed-use environment in Downtown with special incentives to encourage housing. The proposed ordinance also includes supplemental development standards, which will guide the character of the built environment and public realm.

2. Transportation demand reduction measures

Concentration of uses within the LCI area and provisions for new connections to MARTA and parking facilities should reduce transportation demand. The realignment of the I-75/85 exit ramp will help to alleviate congestion on JSA. Strategically placed medians and single turn lanes will assist in traffic calming. The conversion of current one-way portions of JSA and West Peachtree Street into a two-way road and the wider reliance on the local street network will also facilitate in the reduction of traffic. By promoting a pedestrian-friendly environment to the currently underutilized MARTA stations, possibility of a circulator/shuttle to link destinations, eliminate multiple parking sites, the need for vehicular transportation within the JSA area will be reduced.

3. Internal mobility requirements- traffic calming, pedestrian circulation, transit circulation, bicycle circulation including safety and security of pedestrians

The implementation of new sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks will enhance pedestrian circulation and safety. In addition to new street furnishings, new bike lanes and on-street parking will encourage various forms of transportation, as well as be a measure for traffic calming. Medians will also be used as a traffic calming tool. The sequence of open spaces along JSA-McGill will provide a basis for pedestrian concentrations and movements along the corridor. The proposed first, unique urban bike-ped path connecting to existing trails will provide better accessibility.

4. Mixed-income housing, jobs/housing match and social issues.

The Plan calls for a mix of high and medium density housing along the corridor to build upon the increasing residential development in Downtown Atlanta. This includes the new mixed-use district along Simpson Street, infill housing along Marietta Street, and multifamily housing on the Civic Center surface parking area.

The proposed zoning code update also provides additional incentives for providing mixed-income or workforce housing in new developments. These proposed housing developments will help reduce the existing jobs to housing ratio and provide an active 24-hour environment in Downtown.

5. Continuity of local streets in study area and development of a network of minor roads

The reconfiguration of the minor street network will enhance the pedestrian realm as well as provide connectivity throughout the corridor. The redesign of Baker and Harris from a one-way to a two-way vehicular corridor will provide additional route flexibility between the Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola and I-75/85, as well as provide additional routes for local traffic.

6. Need/identification of future transit circulation systems and line haul routes

Future transit demand in the area will likely be increased by future development within the corridor. Currently, the two MARTA station within the JSA corridor are underutilized and should gain ridership as the area develops. In addition, the routing of bus lines to service new development around the Aquarium and World of Coca-Cola has been studied to manage traffic flow and identify new traffic routes. The proposed shuttle/circulator will additionally enhance transit connectivity.

7. Connectivity of transportation system to other centers (MARTA rail and bus, auto, shuttle, bike and pedestrian)

The variety of transportation options contained within the JSA-McGill corridor will increase connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and other areas due to its location near I-75/85. The connection of linear parks allows pedestrian mobility to the various transit nodes. Further, roadway improvements in and around the area will provide for through traffic for commuters, residents, and visitors.

8. Center development organization and management, promotion and economic restructuring

Improvements and implementation of the LCI plan will be managed and developed by Central Atlanta Progress with assistance from ARC and other entities such as the City of Atlanta. CAP has partnered with numerous public and private entities and has gained experience, through collaborations and long-time relationships, to coordinate the steps necessary to turn vision into reality and plans into action.

9. Stakeholder participation/support

A significant portion of the work done on the JSA-McGill LCI study involved public participation, and this took many different forms. As part of the *Imagine Downtown* process, JSA-McGill was publicized as one of five focus areas requiring planning attention. Dates and times of all public events were posted on the Central Atlanta Progress website (<http://www.atlantadowntown.com>) as well as the website dedicated to *Imagine Downtown* (<http://www.imaginedowntown.com>). E-mail comments were welcomed and encouraged. Several questions in the online 'Imagine Survey' were directed toward development in the JSA McGill corridor. The centerpieces of the public involvement process were three public workshops; the second being a three-day long 'Charette Week' designed to build awareness and excitement through an intense set of collaborative exercises. The initial exercises included an 'issues' and 'community mapping' exercise, and an opportunity and challenges exercise for the corridor. The three-day long charette exercises included group consensus on design, land use, circulation, open space and identity with the final public workshop asking the participants to prioritize their preferred projects.

10. Public and private investment policy

Central Atlanta Progress is fortunate to have strong connections with developers in the Downtown area. As such, CAP will work with entities such a proposed municipal parking authority and the private sector to form partnerships that will begin to provide the foundations for new neighborhoods and a revitalized corridor.