

# A Stake in the Ground for Webb Park Development

A New Urban vision is closer to reality after last week's rezoning measure.

By Laura Sullivan, Norcross Patch Staff Writer  
Posted Mon, Feb 14, 2011 at 8:44 pm ET



For Skip Nau, president of New Urban Realty, last week's city council meeting was a giant step forward. His plans to develop detached, closely nestled single-family homes--modeled after classic urban row houses--at the corner of Lillian Webb Park are that much closer to reality, after a rezoning measure passed 5-0. Nau says the next step is to get in front of the Architectural Review Board, which he said he feels very confident about since he has a good idea of what they are looking for.

The meeting was marked by controversy, as many citizens spoke out about the demolition of three nearby properties. "It really is good news that we got this zoning," Nau said recently. "I don't want to lose sight of that." The plans would be carried out in phases, with the option to include the city property that two homes now stand on as part of a later phase.

The development, called Parkside in Historic Norcross, would be largely residential with the option to have workspace on site, which Nau calls "live-work" housing. This is different from the buzz term "mixed-use," which was originally part of the plan for the Lillian Webb, designed by Stephen Fuller. The initial plan had spots open for commercial space, with two buildings including both retail and loft space under the same roof. Nau says that he expects the properties to start in the low 400,000's--and that he anticipates them being well received because they will be "below the price point but in a better location" than the nearby Seven development.

Nau stresses the *living* part of urban living when he speaks about the potential site, which is a short walk to restaurants and shopping and would have Lillian Webb in its backyard. "The quality of life downtown is just superior. We want to build something that will compliment what's happening," said Nau. "We want to create a community where people can feel comfortable living and working--and just hanging out." Nau says that the space is prime for homes because it's the best way to contribute to the overall vision of the city and Gwinnett Village CID for Buford Highway and beyond: more density with commercial centered in the historic downtown and along Buford Highway.

The plans do include space for two retail buildings at the entrance to Lillian Webb, which is run by the Downtown Development Authority.