



## Norcross Community

By Skip Nau

Arriving by train at the Norcross depot, visitors often stayed at the Brunswick hotel located across from Thrasher Park, a pleasant green space cooled by a grove of tall oaks and magnolias. As the town quickly grew, its charming central business district was soon surrounded by traditional Southern homes. Yet through the years, the City has sought to preserve its character and charm. It has been said that those who live in Norcross have the best of both worlds - a quiet, picturesque community with an historic downtown district all within a short 20 minute drive from Atlanta.

Norcross has the distinction of being the first City in Gwinnett County to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district comprises 112 acres and is located along South Peachtree Street, North Peachtree Street, and Lawrenceville Street including the downtown area. Turn-of-the-century street lighting now welcomes visitors and residents alike to beautiful shade-tree lined brick sidewalks throughout the downtown area. All sections of the city are connected to the downtown core by a network of sidewalks. At any time of the day, you will find walkers and joggers, parents strolling with their small children, and even older citizens utilizing this community asset. The sidewalk network leads to or through its parks: Thrasher, Rossie Brundage, Lillian Webb, and Betty Mauldin. These amenities lend a restful, unique flavor to the city by providing a relaxed atmosphere for family and community outings. Norcross' energy is based on a rare blueprint that creates an exceptional sense of community. It's a place that knows no strangers, celebrates every part of its whole, and welcomes the future as wholeheartedly as it honors its past. There is much to be done in order to preserve the best of what Norcross has to offer, as well as to define and develop its vital economic and cultural opportunities. Its future is driven by its vision.

In 2009, the City completed a major redevelopment project with the construction of a new 4 acre community park in the heart of its historic district, complete with walking trails, fountains, a water fall, and activity areas. Surrounding the park, plans call for the addition of an intown residential community fashioned along the lines of the classic row houses of the 1930's and 40's. The Parkside project will help establish a community base within the heart of the downtown district within easy walking distance to the new park and the restaurants and shops along mainstreet. Each unit in the Parkside project will provide either street or park frontage and will feature large porches and gathering areas to encourage, and help promote, visitation and social interaction in the classic southern tradition.

In 2008, the City also adopted what is affectionately called the "Imagination Proclamation". It is a written testament to the shared values of the members of the community and a pledge to embrace the town's pioneering spirit of creativity and innovation. It will also become the framework for a comprehensive marketing and public relations campaign, which was launched in May of 2008, to brand the City as a leader in new urban redevelopment. Norcross is indeed a place to embrace, a place to call home, a place with a vibrant community spirit.....Norcross, A place to imagine.