



**For Immediate Release**

### **Town Center CID Unveils Initial Mall Vision Framework**

*Early scenarios create significant opportunities for developers to re-envision Town Center at Cobb mall as an economic and cultural hub for the surrounding community and county*

**August 23, 2022** (Kennesaw, GA) The Town Center Community Improvement District (CID), today released an initial framework for re-envisioning Town Center at Cobb mall as an economic and cultural engine to strengthen Town Center Community and Cobb County.

The CID convened leading national placemaking and design experts to outline the first step in the creative design process. The framework seeks to spur developers' ideas, development, and investment, creating the next iteration of place for Town Center at Cobb, which serves as the commercial heart of Town Center Community.

For decades the mall has served as a destination and a gathering place for neighbors in Cobb County, metro-area, and as far away as North Georgia. The district's combination of robust commercial assets – with proximity to trails, transit, parks, and greenspace – has established a sense of place for thousands of residents, students, business owners, and companies.

CID, business, and community leaders believe a window exists to harness Town Center Community's sense of place to coordinate vision, action and investment to maximize the mall's value.

"This is a transformative time for Town Center at Cobb. While this preliminary framework is strictly a vision for the evolution of the center, it reflects the significant role the regional mall will continue to play in the area for decades to come," said Marie Moore, General Manager of Town Center at Cobb mall.

Although planning began in January 2022, CID leaders say the framework represents years of study going back to the CID's 2008 master plan, collaborating with the mall and surrounding property owners to envision the area's necessary evolution.

"Town Center at Cobb mall is at the core of our mission to better the broader community, from our founding 25 years ago. This resilient, visionary framework is grounded in reality and focused on possibility. It's a transformative opportunity to add value to an already active area, increase county tax revenue, and positively impact surrounding businesses in the district through smart growth and investment," said Tracy Styf, Executive Director of Town Center CID.

The framework posits several potential scenarios to inspire developers' creativity for phased enhancements. Developers may choose to reinvigorate retail elements of the mall or reimagine areas for independent commercial and residential development. There is also ample opportunity for additional park and event space as well as walking and biking paths to take full advantage of surrounding natural resources like Noonday Creek.

Scenarios align closely with the CID's master plan and incorporate strong infrastructure support, through CID-led assets such as Noonday Creek Trail, the NC-O4 multi-modal transportation

connection, and improvements along George Busbee Parkway. The CID plans future roadways and open space strategies to further unify the property and deepen pride of place.

The CID convened Perkins&Will and Kimley-Horn & Associates to collaborate on its broad vision, conducting a market and civil analysis, as well as gathering input from local property owners. The team tested its framework with urban planning expert Ellen Dunham-Jones, who leads the urban design program at Georgia Tech's School of Architecture College of Design. She has studied the evolution of more than 500 enclosed malls in various stages of transformation.

"Mall properties have been undergoing significant shifts for some time now as online shopping, the pandemic and new generational preferences have altered how people shop and where communities gather. In the face of this uncertainty as well as the area's strengths, I think the CID's initial framework strikes a well-placed strategic balance between improving the fundamentals of connectivity in the public realm while allowing for incremental market adjustments by private property owners," said Dunham-Jones.

Styf says the project has the potential to benefit Cobb County, establishing a gateway to North Georgia and Tennessee and as a connector to trails throughout the region. A re-envisioned Town Center at Cobb could also enhance community quality of life and generate innovation as a dynamic node on a major landmark business corridor of I-75, a college town for Kennesaw State University, and a thriving civic destination for the county.

"This is a special moment in time for the CID, for Town Center at Cobb mall, and for the greater Town Center Community. It's rare to see stakeholders take real time to contemplate and proactively plan for their future. I'm confident this thoughtfulness will propel Town Center at Cobb toward bright innovative possibilities" said Cassie Branum, Principal and Urban Designer at Perkins&Will.

"The redevelopment of Town Center at Cobb has the potential to be a powerful transformational project not only for Town Center, but for all of Cobb County. I look forward to working in partnership with the CID, on this project," said JoAnn Birrell, District Three Commissioner.

#### **About the Town Center CID**

Founded in 1997, the Town Center CID is dedicated to the betterment of the Town Center Community area through transportation infrastructure, safety improvements, beautification and other projects that enhance property value by increasing interest and investment in the community. The Town Center CID utilizes funds from voluntary commercial real estate taxes to implement its projects. For more information, please visit <http://www.towncentercid.com/>.

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