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Public meetings will debate road redevelopment

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Development — going from open land to some kind of structure — is a pretty straightforward debate.

Redevelopment has a broader definitions.

Two Gwinnett Community Improvement Districts are sketching out their visions for two of the county's most well-used corridors at separate meetings Tuesday from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

But attendees will get a sense of what's happening in both — whichever Powerpoint presentation they watch — says Joe Allen, executive director of the Gwinnett Place CID in Duluth.

He and John McHenry, who leads the Gwinnett Village CID in Norcross, are working together, Allen said, since so many of their issues are the same.

"It made sense to work together on a common document," Allen said. "We both need redevelopment. . . and have a common vision" about how to get it.

Key to the plans for both areas are a set of density incentives, McHenry said.

"It's a whole series of carrots," he said. "If you do this for the community, then you get more density."

The things the community has told the CIDs it wants more of, McHenry said, include greenspace, walkways, structured parking, transportation solutions and public art.

The more a developer agrees to include, the greater the density he'd be allowed in redevelopment.

At this point, both directors said, the plans for an overlay district or ordinance are still evolving. That's why they both want community feedback on the current plan.

Next month, the CIDs present their plans to their boards, and after that, will work with the county and city planning departments on some type of ordinance.

"I've heard from many [investors] that they're still interested in this area," McHenry said.

The vision is of a new urban core for Gwinnett County, he said, where residents could walk from their homes to dining and shopping.

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