



SANDY SPRINGS REVITALIZATION, INC. A Program For Hands On Community-Building

Sandy Springs Revitalization, Inc. is turning the community's vision of what Sandy Springs *can* be -- into a *reality*. With its partners in neighborhoods, the business community, civic organizations and government, Sandy Springs Revitalization is working to preserve and enhance a high quality of life, and plan for one of the best urban environments in the country.

Sandy Springs Revitalization, Inc. (SSRI) is a private non-profit tax-deductible community planning and development organization funded by service contracts with Fulton County (GA), membership dues, private contributions and grants. SSRI was chartered in 1994 with a mission to maintain and enhance Sandy Springs as one of metro Atlanta's premier residential and business communities by implementing the *Sandy Springs Revitalization Plan*. The plan, funded by Fulton County and adopted in 1993 by the county Board of Commissioners as its development policy for the area, aims to:

- Alleviate traffic congestion by enhancing walkability and other circulation options
- Improve the image, function and economic health of the Roswell Road business district
- Preserve the neighborhoods that surround it



Main Street Sandy Springs, Georgia

Sandy Springs is a 36 square mile unincorporated community in Fulton County, Georgia bounded by the City of Atlanta, DeKalb and Cobb counties, the City of Roswell and unincorporated North Fulton. Since 1994, SSRI has contracted with Fulton County to market the revitalization program, gather community input and engage in planning activities suggested by the plan. The development of the Sandy Springs Overlay Zoning Ordinance, the Sandy Springs Framework Plan, the Abernathy Parkway Plan, the Livable Sandy Springs Plan and design plans for six neighborhoods are all examples of this work.

One of SSRI's more innovative approaches to plan implementation has been to serve as design-build contractor for Fulton County on certain public area improvements in commercial and residential districts. In 1997 SSRI managed design and construction of the Roswell Road Streetscape Demonstration Project, and has provided similar services for construction projects in neighborhoods as well. SSRI is currently managing design and construction for over two miles of transit oriented streetscape improvements along Roswell Road and Johnson Ferry Road.

SSRI implements the *Sandy Springs Revitalization Plan* by influencing processes and proactively seeking projects that will advance the goals of the Plan. "Sometimes we actually build projects ourselves, as a demonstration of what good urban design ought to be," says SSRI's General Manager, John Cheek, who has managed the revitalization program since its inception. "More often we partner with government agencies, businesses, community organizations and neighborhoods to make good projects happen. Activities are hands-on -- aimed at reinforcing Sandy Springs as an integrated live-work-shop-play community, and enhancing Sandy Springs competitive position in the Atlanta metro market as a



premiere residential and commercial location. We leverage every available public and private resource -- people, expertise, communications channels, joint events, grants and donations.”

Representation among the 17-member volunteer board is divided between business and residential directors. Sandy Springs Revitalization has grown from a staff of one in 1994 to a professional staff of six working on numerous projects and managing an annual operating budget of \$400,000 and a capital projects budget of \$7.7 million dollars.

Sandy Springs Revitalization, Inc. took top honors for "Outstanding Plan Implementation" at the American Planning Association's southeast region conference held in Atlanta in September of 1999. The following is an overview of SSRI plans, projects and initiatives that speak to this award-winning revitalization program.

URBAN DESIGN

Sandy Springs Overlay Zoning Ordinance: Every foot of new streetscape that a private developer installs is a foot of streetscape that won't have to come from taxpayer dollars. The Sandy Springs Overlay Ordinance, in effect since 1998, establishes more refined requirements for new and substantial redevelopment of properties in the Sandy Springs focus area. Over 3,000 feet of streetscape has been installed or is in the permitting pipeline as a part of private development projects under the Sandy Springs Overlay Zoning ordinance. SSRI's Urban Design Committee is working with the county and the community on an update to the ordinance anticipated for passage later this year.



Overlay updates underway

Sandy Springs Design Review Board: Fulton County's Sandy Springs Design Review Board (DRB) works with private developers to insure that signage, urban design, and architectural elements of their projects meet the Overlay district standards. Another important role of the Sandy Springs DRB is to suggest voluntary design alternatives and modifications that can both enhance their projects, improve their marketability and further contribute to the implementation of the *Sandy Springs Revitalization Plan*.

Demonstration Streetscapes: The design and installation of "demonstration" streetscapes has generated great public interest and serves as a model for private projects. In 1997 Sandy Springs Revitalization, Inc. completed its first block of commercial streetscape located on the west side of Roswell Road as a demonstration of what the Main Street District streetscape should look like. In addition to distinctive green street lamps, it features nine-foot sidewalks with a two-foot brick separator strip, a canopy of street trees and landscaping with row hedges to screen parking that fronts the street. Pedestrian amenities include benches, trash receptacles, and planters. Under the Overlay Ordinance, new buildings are closer to the street, with parking to the side or rear.



Streetscape before and after



Livable Sandy Springs Plan: Sandy Springs Revitalization was one of 12 first round recipients of a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant presented by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and the only non-profit to receive one. The LCI program has been recognized nationally as an innovative program intended to coordinate land use decisions by local government, to enhance quality of life in activity centers and reduce vehicle miles traveled in the sprawling metro Atlanta region. After an extensive public involvement process, the Livable Sandy Springs Plan is nearly complete and, when implemented, will reclaim the heart of Sandy Springs for its people – rather than its cars. Key elements: An interconnected street system that integrates circulation options with land use; urban design guidelines with incentives for new development to have more structured parking, open space and housing in the business district; a new town center where currently there is none, to help define Sandy Springs as a place; a demonstration concept for a mixed use commercial development that could be used to retrofit a deteriorating shopping mall; and public parks spaces linked by bicycle and pedestrian connections.



Workshop participants build a model of a new civic district and complete the street grid at LCI visioning charrettes

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sandy Springs Business Association: In 1999, SSRI sponsored the creation of the Sandy Springs Business Association to promote Sandy Springs as a destination for local and regional shoppers, and to provide a voice to government officials on the needs of the business community. The business association holds monthly meetings, publishes an annual directory, and provides exposure on the world wide web for its members through a searchable database. Top priorities for the business association are the implementation of a street maintenance program, Sandy Springs Market Study, business district promotions, and new business recruitment and retention activities.



Working with retailers

Business District Maintenance Program: The Sandy Springs Business Association has been working to implement a maintenance program for the business district along Roswell Road between Glenridge and Abernathy. The Big Sweep in May of 2000 drew public and media attention to the conditions in the area. Working with Keep Sandy Springs-North Fulton Beautiful and Fulton County, SSBA developed the Evergreen Business Awards program to encourage and reward private beautification and cleanup efforts. In 2001 SSBA was successful efforts to secure county funding to hire a full-time crew of professionals to keep up the landscape maintenance and litter control in the business district.



Big Sweep 2000 Lickoff

Events & Promotions: The Sandy Springs Business Association stages regular events and promotions, often in partnership with other 12/16/02





civic organizations. Of note are: Shop Sandy Springs for the Holidays staged with the holiday Light the Lights event; Discover the Treasures of Sandy Springs; The Big Sweep; and the Style is Nothing New Fashion Show and Clothing Drive benefit.

Sandy Springs Market Study: During 2000, the firm of Morris & Fellows studied Sandy Springs market potential for the LCI Plan, and the news is all good for Sandy Springs. The study found that the Sandy Springs business district currently services one of the most affluent and desirable Trade Areas in the entire country – comparable to New York’s 5th Avenue, San Francisco’s Union Square or Chicago’s Miracle Mile. “It’s no secret that Sandy Springs does not look or feel or function like these legendary urban retail walking districts,” say Cheri Morris, but the study bears out “that the potential is there, if we will only build it.” Sandy Springs Revitalization and the Sandy Springs Business Association plan to launch a major campaign to get the news out to developers and property owners about the market potential and LCI vision for the business district.

Shop Sandy Springs holiday promotion



Shopper data was gathered using electronic survey units

TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

Transportation Planning: To assure that the Sandy Springs community has a voice in the development of major regional projects that can alleviate congestion, Sandy Springs Revitalization participates actively on such local and regional transportation planning activities as: Atlanta Regional Commission RTP and TIP; Fulton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan; MARTA transit; Johnson Ferry/Abernathy Parkway Plan; Perimeter Circulator Study; Marietta to Lawrenceville/I-285 Corridor Transit Study; GA 400 Corridor Study; Allen Road Extension; Sandy Springs Mastarm and Signalization upgrade.



Regional partners apply scissors to ribbon at MARTA rail opening

Sandy Springs Commercial Streetscape TE & STP: In partnership with MARTA and Fulton County, Sandy Springs Revitalization secured \$4.2 million dollars in federal funding to construct one and a half miles of commercial and neighborhood streetscape along Roswell Road from Hammond Drive to Johnson Ferry, and along Johnson Ferry Road from Roswell Road to Abernathy Road. With the local match, the total investment totals over \$5.3 million.



Consultants gather citizen input on streetscape design

The streetscape will transform the Main Street area and link the neighborhoods to the business district. The transit oriented design calls for better-located MARTA bus stops, custom designed shelters at all stops, better routes, and a neighborhood transit center that would provide heated/air-conditioned waiting space for MARTA patrons and other amenities intended to make waiting for the bus a more comfortable and convenient experience. Design is complete and right of way acquisition is underway. Construction is anticipated for early 2002. A second TE project budgeted for \$600,000 is in the works for 2003 along Roswell Road south of Hammond to I-285.



NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

Framework Plan: The Sandy Springs Framework Plan completed in 1997, defines circulation, neighborhood streetscape standards, civic and green space opportunities. It goes further, breaking those opportunities into individual projects, and develops a long term capital program for executing the projects that will carry out the plan.

Neighborhood Projects: Sandy Springs Revitalization has been working to retrofit older Sandy Springs neighborhoods with sidewalks, bike paths, and traffic calming devices that will improve their walkability, safety and livability. Five neighborhood design projects are currently in varying stages of design or construction including Whispering Pines, Mount Vernon Woods, River Valley/Amberidge and Glenridge Forest.



Neighborhoods plan for "livable streets"

Johnson Ferry/Abernathy Parkway Plan: The proposed widening of the busy Johnson Ferry/Abernathy corridor between Cobb residential communities and the Perimeter employment center has long been a concern for Sandy Springs neighborhoods in the path of progress. A unique solution, as envisioned by the community, calls for the acquisition of the residential properties on both sides of Abernathy Road to create a linear greenway park with walking trails and bicycle paths along either side of the roadway, and neighborhood-scale traffic control elements currently lacking in the area. Sandy Springs Revitalization prepared a schematic design and lobbied relentlessly for funding to build the plan as envisioned. The project is on the fast track and preliminary design is now scheduled for early 2002.



Abernathy Parkway concept design

PARKS & GREENSPACE



Morgan Falls Great Park in the making

In 2001, SSRI partnered with other Sandy Springs civic groups to lobby Fulton County officials to fund a countywide Parks Plan (\$350,000) a countywide tree preservation program (1% of CIP), and for funds to purchase additional park space in the civic district around the Williams-Payne Historic Property (\$800,000). A major announcement regarding the creation of the Sandy Springs Conservancy and acquisition of significant greenspace around Morgan Falls will be forthcoming in the fall of 2001.



COMMUNICATIONS

Recognizing that an active education/communications program is the key engaging public interest and involvement, SSRI utilizes a wide variety of print, electronic media and public forums to deliver its message. Web site hosting and e-mail service is donated by a local service provider. Marketing and communications professionals from the community volunteer their time to serve on the SSRI MarCom Committee.

- *The Milestone* newsletter goes to over 7,000 businesses, residents, government officials and agencies in metro Atlanta;
- Sandysprings.org community web site and E-mail network;
- Media releases;
- Programs and speaking engagements;
- Advertising and PR;



CONTACT US

For more information about Sandy Springs Revitalization, go to www.sandysprings.org, then select Sandy Springs Revitalization or the Sandy Springs Business Association, or contact:

John Cheek
General Manager
Sandy Springs Revitalization
100 Allen Road
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
404-252-9352 #16
ssri@sandysprings.org

Donna Gathers
Executive Director
Sandy Springs Business Assoc.
100 Allen Road
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
404-255-5351
ssba@sandysprings.org

Barbara Prebble
Communications Mgr.
Sandy Springs Revitalization
100 Allen road
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
404-252-9352 #11
ssri@sandysprings.org