

669 Oak Terrace  
Norcross, GA 30071  
December 21, 2004

Mr. Ronald Newton, Chairman  
Planning and Zoning Board  
Mr. Johnny Lawler, Director  
Planning and Development  
City of Norcross  
65 Lawrenceville Street,  
Norcross, GA 30071

<REQUEST CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER  
BE ENTERED IN ITS ENTIRETY INTO  
THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THIS  
BOARD MEETING>

*Re: Proposed Town Plaza Project*

Dear Mr. Newton, Mr. Lawler, and Members of the Board:

We would like to share our concerns and questions about the proposed development on Cemetery Street and urge you to ensure that quality development takes place in Norcross.

I. Quality development recognizes preservation in the historic district.  
*What does the developer, Mr. Forro, intend to do to help facilitate a possible relocation of the three homes the city stands to lose from demolition, and what is the city's position?*

The Naylor Home (c.1890s) which was on the Tour of Homes in 1982, the Adams Home (c. 1890s), and the cottage on College Street in the "tee-folk" style (c.1870). This house witnessed the founding of the city! In 24 years since the historic district was listed in *The National Registry of Historic Places*, 10 houses have been lost. This year alone we stand to lose up to 5 more, plus the fate of 4 on Wingo Street is yet uncertain. The LCI Study, p. 22: "This discussion is particularly important in the development of the town plaza, which requires the demolition of several historic homes. The master plan identifies a receiving area, east of City Hall, should the homes be relocated." Fortunately, the city owns the 4 deep lots on Wingo Street. Perhaps a historic residential rehab project could be created with a service alley such as in Col. Jones Park, insuring future expansion options for light retail down Wingo Street.

II. Quality development does not overload city services to the rest of the citizens.

*With the recent approvals of The Hedgewood Homes (163+ homes), The Howell project by Mr. Forro (24 homes), and the Green project, how does the city plan to assess and address the added strain on traffic during construction to an already over-loaded system, the additional strain on a stressed city budget for tie-ins, and added pressures on an out-dated utilities infra-structure?*

*Have impact studies been done in these critical areas and specifically, where is the city plan for utilities upgrades and construction of a much -needed new electrical substation as called for by elected officials last year?*

**III. Quality development ensures a fair process for citizen input and appropriate, non-biased hearing procedures by appointed and elected officials.**

*(1) Was the Sunshine Law violated when the developer, Mr. Forro, met with the city council in unadvertised executive session on one or more occasions, ensuring he had his ducks lined up before the public was even aware of this project, (2) Have all members of this board received ARC training to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities in making sound, unbiased decisions? and (3) Should two, possibly three members of this board recuse themselves because of close personal friendships with Mr. Forro, family members who have been in his employ in recent months, or who may receive commissions from future sales?*

We want our board members to be the very best they can be, and we want them to be certified when making such serious, irreversible decisions which impact all our lives and the community's future quality.

**IV. Quality development ensures detailed design with adequate input process.**  
*With this hearing taking place in the midst of the holidays, and the developer's sketches not having adequate detail, where is an opportunity for more public input? Some designs as presented clearly could use more work; for example, the loft concept is often used for inner-city revitalization, not for replacing a historic district. More attention and definition needs to be given the "Mixed-Use" concept.*

Finally, we ask that you table this request until such time as these questions can be adequately addressed and opportunities provided, perhaps through a series of town meetings, for all interested citizens to have "buy-in" to this extremely important step in Norcross' downtown development. We respect these families' desire to sell their homes and move on, and the developer's desire for a quality project that bears his name, as well as concerns about the effect of this project on other property owners within the historic district. We must do more to balance historic preservation with the growth process.

For 134 years, Norcross has provided the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of people. We ask that you and the other boards do all within your power to facilitate a fair, orderly, sensitive governmental process, ensuring Norcross can last another century, and we can all be glad we had a part in saving its authentic landscape and architectural history which is the very basis of our economic revitalization.

Sincerely,

John and Anne Webb

*Cc/ via e-mail:* Mayor and City Council;  
Downtown Development Authority