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## **NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on October 24, 2008**

### **Ideas flow for Oakwood's 2030 plan at public hearing**



Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown gives a presentation on the Oakwood 2030 plan to redevelop downtown Oakwood during a public hearing Thursday evening.

OAKWOOD — About 20 Oakwood residents came out to Thursday's town hall meeting at Oakwood City Hall to get more details about the city's proposed Oakwood 2030 plan.

"We wanted to give you an overview of what we have planned, but this is not the end of the process," said Stan Brown, Oakwood's city manager. "We seem to be lacking a sense of downtown in Oakwood, and that is something we hope to define with this plan."

The goal of the Oakwood 2030 plan is to redefine more than 250 acres surrounding

the existing Oakwood downtown area and turn it into the town center.

As it currently is proposed, the plan calls for a new commuter rail station, a redesigned city hall and an amphitheater. The plan also calls for the construction of more multi-use and commercial buildings.

City officials predict that the project will cost between \$200 million and \$300 million in private and public funds between now and 2030.

Although the residents in attendance at the meeting seemed to be in favor of the Oakwood 2030 plan, a few attendees offered suggestions for further improving the plan.

One resident suggested that the city consider building a small theme park as a way to attract more tourists to the area and to increase the city's tax base.

Another resident urged city officials to consider creating more athletic fields for the city's children and other interested parties.

"The city council has been preparing since 2000 for intense growth moving north up I-985 from Atlanta," Brown said.

"We're calling this the Oakwood 2030 plan because it will happen over the next couple of decades. A lot is going to happen to Oakwood in the upcoming years, and we want to prepare for it.

"We want to leave a legacy behind so that our children and grandchildren can stay in this community," he said.

For the most part, the Oakwood 2030 plan primarily affects older, undeveloped parts of town around Oakwood Elementary School and residential areas near Main Street and Old Oakwood Road.

Thursday's meeting will not be the only opportunity for the public to weigh in on the Oakwood 2030 plan.

Another town hall meeting will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Oakwood's City Hall, 4035 Walnut Circle.