

# Master Planned Development Report

30 May 2025

## General Time

Athens, Georgia





## Introduction

The vision of General Time Athens is to create a vibrant mixed-use destination that transforms this long abandoned industrial site into a unique and eclectic live - work - play community. The transformation began seven years ago with the costly site remediation (Phase 1) and redevelopment of 68,000 SF of warehouse space for Terrapin Beer Company (Phase 2) and 45,000 SF of office space for Wayfair's customer care center (Phase 3). With 113,000 SF leased, the latest phase (Phase 4) is the 210-unit multifamily Flats at General Time, which was completed in 2024. Additional smaller and eclectic uses such as the temporary Cine Drive-In and the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA) agility track have also shown how the local community is contributing to the redevelopment of the site. Over \$55,000,000 has been invested in this once abandoned parcel.

The vision is incrementally becoming reality. This incremental approach has also provided a feedback loop informing the applicant as to what a successful redevelopment of this adaptive use site will look like to meet the dynamic local market needs.

The applicant aims to complete the full redevelopment of the property by advancing to the next phase. After extensive testing, consultant evaluations, cost assessments, and market feedback, it has become clear that adaptively reusing the existing structure is not feasible. While the building lacked the character of vintage industrial spaces, the original intent was always to preserve as much as possible but hired consultants and contractors have advised that the existing steel structure of columns and girders are compromised because of decades of exposure to water and the elements. The building as it stands remains unusable. In addition, the current Planned Development site program has struggled to find interest from tenants and prospective clients for the past several years. The owners/developers have received significant market interest in the proposed revision. The recommended course of action is to demolish the existing structure and rebuild.

This change in outlook also brings the possibility of several key advantages:

- **Improved Commercial / Flex Space Design:** A new structure allows for a layout tailored to future tenants' needs, particularly by separating employee and guest parking from the loading and service corridor. The existing building's configuration complicates daily logistics, making most areas unusable. A new structure also can attract more future tenants and cost effective unit build-outs.
- **Enhanced Streetscape:** The proposed buildings along Newton Bridge Road will shield parking from view, whereas the current structure necessitates a large, exposed parking lot between the road and the building.
- **Housing Variety & Supply:** The successful multi-family units already provide approximately 200 studio, one-bed and two-bed apartments. The proposed plan would introduce 56 attached townhomes located at a transit/pedestrian friendly in town location.

- **Employment Opportunities:** The market for flex commercial/office is in high-demand in Athens and the proposed plan provides the platform for a vibrant ecosystem of local business and jobs. Flex spaces typically range from 3,000 – 8,000 SF and can include professional offices, service businesses, small-scale warehousing and industry, fabrication, retail showrooms, makers and more.
- **Appropriately Scaled Retail + Community Space:** The originally approved General Time PD envisioned 40,000–50,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. However, after five years of sales and marketing efforts, the feedback is clear: the retail footprint needs to be scaled back. The cost of redeveloping the existing building has proven to be a barrier pricing out potential tenants. Building too much retail only for it to sit vacant would undermine the goal of fostering a lively, engaging space.

The revised proposal includes approximately 18,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, thoughtfully arranged around an interactive courtyard and performance stage. This retail area is strategically located near the Newton Bridge and Dairy Pak intersection to maximize visibility and strengthen the connection to the surrounding district. An expansive community green anchors the development, offering flexible edges that can accommodate food trucks, pop-up retail, and small incubator spaces—similar to those found at the Mill on Tracy Street.

For context, the proposed courtyard is comparable in scale to Wire Park, which features approximately 22,000–26,000 square feet of pure retail and restaurant space.

General Time is a transformative destination project, and its ultimate success hinges on the growth and impact of the Newton Bridge Road Tax Allocation District (TAD). As a catalyst for revitalization, General Time has already spurred significant development since the adoption of the Newton Bridge TAD, delivering over 320,000 square feet of commercial and residential space and increasing assessed tax value by more than \$25 million. By approving the next phase of General Time, this momentum can continue to further enhance the district's opportunities and economic vitality and complete its potential.

## **Site History & Recent Developments**

Located at 100 Newton Bridge Road, minutes from downtown and just outside the loop, the 35-acre site is on the northeast quadrant of the Chase, Barber, Newton Bridge and Dairy Pak intersection.

Developed by the General Time Corporation, it opened a 250,000 square foot production facility in Athens, Georgia to manufacture the synchronous clock in 1954. The plant, named WestClox, remained in operation for almost 50 years, expanding to 350,000 square feet of floor space in 1990 before closing its door in October 2000.

Westclox Rocks LLC took ownership in 2018 and immediately started redeveloping 113,000 square feet of office and warehouse. Site and building improvements total over ~15 million dollars for Wayfair to occupy 45,000 square feet and employ up to 500 people and Terrapin occupies 68,000 square feet.

The latest development was the multifamily known as the Flats at General Time. The 4-story buildings have over 200 one and two-bedroom units.

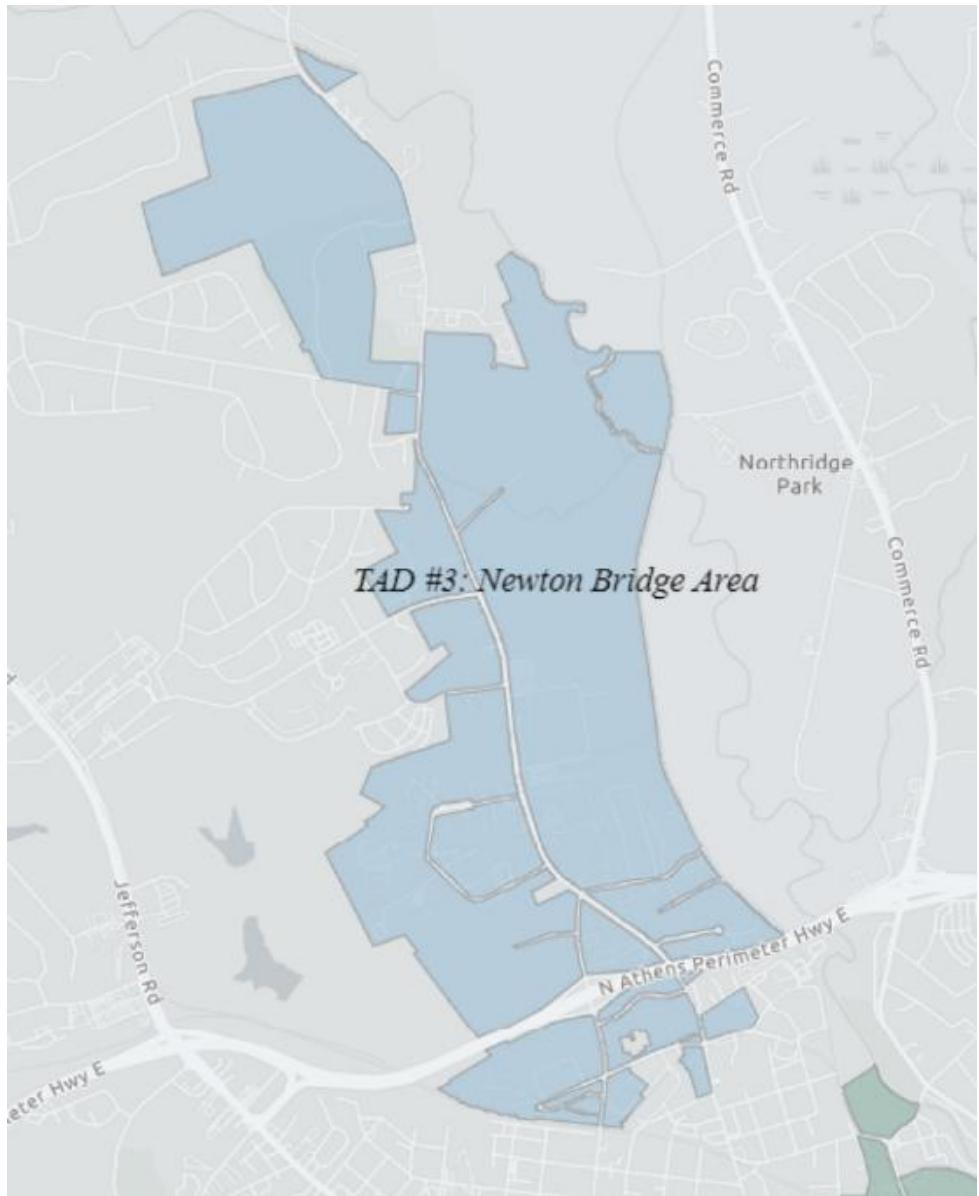
### **Zoning & Future Development Map**

The property is currently zoned to Employment-Office (E-O PD). The request is to modify the approved planned development for parcels 112 003 and 112 003C to allow for the demolition of the existing building and execute on the original vision of a diverse mixed-use development while maintaining a compatible zoning designation within the Athens-Clarke County Future Land Use Map.

The Future Land Use Map of Athens-Clarke County identifies the future land use designation for the property as Employment.

### **Tax Allocation District**

The General Time site is within one of six Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) that was adopted by the A-CC Mayor & Commission at the end of 2020. General Time is one parcel among several dozen parcels which is incentivized for redevelopment and indeed \$55,000,000 has already been invested in its revitalization, contributing more than \$250,000 to the TAD fund. The successful passage of this PD amendment will allow an additional estimated \$65,000,000 for this parcel alone.



### **Proposed Use**

General Time currently has a mix of multifamily residential, office, and light industrial and warehousing. The next phase proposes commercial / flex-office and attached residential.

### **Commercial Flex Space**

Over 191,000 square feet of flex space is proposed based on market demand to meet the needs of growing businesses in this area. Potential tenants will range from local restaurants and retail to professional office to warehouse and storage space. The size of the individual spaces will vary depending on demand starting at 2,500 square feet up to 32,000 square feet. Smaller footprint tenants are proposed at flex space buildings A and B, while flex space building C is designed for larger light industrial and warehousing

businesses. To meet the needs of the potential tenants, a central loading and unloading service corridor is proposed. Within the service corridor, tenants would have roll up doors, their own solid waste and recycling, and employee parking. Guest parking for the flex space would mainly be between the flex space building A+B and the townhomes and the flex space building C and Georgia Power parcel. The flex space around the courtyard and adjacent to the community green and multiuse path trailhead is specifically tailored for retail + restaurant. In addition, along the edges of the community green are locations for food trucks, pop-up retail or small 200-400 sf incubator buildings.

### **Residential**

Consistent with the success of the Flats at General Time, there has been great interest in additional residential in this district. To offer a different housing type, a townhome product is proposed. All townhomes would be alley-loaded with a one or two car garage provided. Townhomes are aligned along Newton Bridge Road, but setback a minimum of 50 feet to allow for a green linear park to serve as an inviting front yard. The market is favoring homeownership for these townhomes, and the developer anticipates selling the individual units as condominiums.

There are two proposed townhome styles for variety. The 22 townhomes on the north side of the Paradise Boulevard driveway, and fronting the large green, would be modern. The 34 townhomes to the south side of the Paradise Boulevard driveway would mimic the existing Westclox building with simple brick detailing, repetitious design and flat roofs.

Historically, residential and commercial flex uses are deemed incompatible. However, as the trend for walkable mixed-use development increases, more mixed-use and adaptive reuse projects are proving that different uses can effectively coexist and enhance one another. To ensure that future incompatible uses are not introduced to the site, General Time will restrict the following E-O uses within this development: *heavy manufacturing, auto/RV sales, mortuaries, cemeteries, drug rehabilitation centers*. In addition, the following Industrial uses are requested to be allowed but limited to the flex space buildings only. *Light Manufacturing, Food Processing, Manufacturing Non-Odiferous Foods, Distribution Centers, Kennels, Wholesale Storage, and Distribution Center*.

### **Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation**

General Time is helping to re-envision the TAD district as a walkable and bicycle friendly development. A 10-foot wide shared-use path has already been constructed along Newton Bridge Road frontage as an extension of the approved A-CC Chase and Barber Street improvements. Delineated by Athens in Motion as a Tier 1 improvement project and recommended for implementation with TSPLOST funds, the Barber Street improvement is slated to be a shared-use path that stretches over a mile long from Chase Street to Boulevard.

In addition, General Time proposes connecting to the future A-CC Greenway trail utilizing its 50-ft wide strip of land that extends to the active rail line. Leisure Services is currently in discussion with the railroad owner concerning a ‘trail with rail’ alignment that would place the trail within the railroad right-of-way on the General Time side of the rail. From this future connection through General Time to the future Greenway trail, pedestrians in North Athens will be able to safely access the Sandy Creek Nature Center and the existing North Oconee A-CC Greenway Network.

Internal sidewalks are proposed on both sides of the drives and through parking lots to promote pedestrian connectivity. Street trees and planted verges separating vehicle and pedestrian traffic enhance the level of comfort for both modes of circulation.

### **Phasing**

General Time has already completed 4 phases

- Phase 1: Remediation (Building and Site)
- Phase 2: Terrapin
- Phase 3: Wayfair
- Phase 4: Flats at General Time (multifamily)

The southern half of the site will encompass the final development phases. There are benefits to developing in multiple phases or in a single phase. The optimal approach for constructing the remainder of the site has not yet been determined. Therefore, we request flexibility to develop the site either incrementally or in a single phase, based on results of our ongoing assessment.

### **Architecture**

The site currently contains multiple existing buildings built over a time span of approximately 40 years, as well as several proposed new buildings. Because of varying construction times and available building materials and techniques, the architecture will be composed of several styles, corresponding to 4 segments of the site. These styles are intended to be distinct yet complementary and tied together with common materials such as brick and exposed structural steel. The overall signage program and paint scheme are also considerations of the cohesive plans. On the north end of the site an existing one-story pre-engineered metal building houses the Terrapin warehouse and the Wayfair offices. The recently completed renovations at Building 100 include an expanded storefront, a new entry canopy, benches, bike racks and a new paint scheme. These improvements repositioned a previously nondescript warehouse into a more colorful and inviting, modern structure. The recently constructed multifamily development consisting of two buildings located at the northwest corner of the site is mainly composed of brick and hardy plank siding.

The elevations for the proposed flex space and residential buildings are conceptual, and therefore flexibility is needed in materials, colors and massing for these buildings. The residential townhomes are currently illustrated as two-story, but there is also interest in a three-story townhome. We request that the townhomes be allowed to be both two and/or three-story. The architectural style for the proposed buildings draws inspiration from the Westclox building and industrial district. Care has been given to design buildings that reflect the unique and eclectic personality of north Athens. Local artists could be engaged to assist with murals in key locations to further accentuate Athens' distinct and artistic identity. A legend on architectural elevations notes possible building materials including cement siding and EIFS, as well as accent materials such as brick, stone and metal panels. The materials will be chosen to complement the other structures on the site.

### **Vehicular Access & Parking**

A new access drive aligning with Paradise Boulevard is proposed to meet the vehicular circulation needs and to create smaller internal blocks. For the full General Time build-out, three driveways are proposed along Newton Bridge Road and two accessing Dairy Pak Road. The existing driveway on Newton Bridge Road to the north will continue to function as the primary truck access drive to the Terrapin warehouse. The two proposed driveways off Dairy Pak will also accommodate truck circulation and keep the truck traffic separate from the residential traffic.

The unique nature of the project requires a flexible approach toward meeting parking requirements. Since the parking requirements are derived by their associated uses, a large mixed-use/multi-tenant development like General Time would typically create a cumbersome and constantly evolving accounting of parking requirements. Each tenant change would require resubmittals to verify compliance and re-calculate the allotment of spaces for the overall site.

Rather than submit to this recurring parking review, General Time proposes to demonstrate compliance with the intent of A-CC parking requirements yet still maintain flexibility for the evolving and dynamic mixed-use nature of the site. The existing office, warehouse, and residential uses are well defined and therefore specifically meet their associated parking requirements. The proposed 191,000 square feet of the business, retail, office, are categorized as "flex space" and provide 1 parking space per 425 SF. While some uses, such as restaurants, require a greater parking requirement, other uses will require far less. The result is a flexible accounting of parking able to meet the unique nature of the project.

A separate traffic impact study has been provided and is included as part of this Master Planned Development submittal package.

## **Transit**

As part of the Flats at General Time development, and in collaboration with the Athens-Clarke County Transit Department (A-CC TD) concerning this proposed mixed-use destination, a new bus shelter centrally located along General Time's Newton Bridge Road frontage was installed. The bus shelter is located adjacent to the proposed townhomes along the multi-use trail providing safe pedestrian access.

## **Utilities & Services**

The subject site is currently served by Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department (A-CC PUD) water and sewer services. Currently, an 8-inch waterline runs along the east side of Newton Bridge Road, and a separate 8-inch waterline runs along the west side. A 6-inch waterline runs along the south side of Dairy Pak Road. A 12-inch gravity sanitary sewer line runs along Newton Bridge Road and increases to a 15-inch line as it turns east on Dairy Pak Road. It continues further running south under the Loop 10 Bypass. A Water & Sanitary Sewer Evaluation was completed by A-CC PUD. As of December 20, 2024, the water system and sanitary sewer system each have the capacity to serve the proposed development based on a projected demand of 29,000 gallons per day. Conceptual water and sanitary sewer service layouts and connection points are shown on sheet PD-30. Dry utility services (electric, cable, internet, etc.) will be coordinated with the individual service providers.

## **Stormwater Management & Water Quality**

Stormwater management for the project will be provided in accordance with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual and will comply with Athens-Clarke County Stormwater Regulations. The water quality standard for the site will be met using two micropool extended detention ponds. These facilities will be installed at the eastern and southern boundaries of the property. The water quality volume and channel protection volume will drain through respective orifices in an outlet control structure that outfalls at the northeast corner of the site. Due to the brownfield status of the site, infiltration practices will not be approved by the EPD and will restrict the amount of practicable runoff reduction. Three bioretention facilities will be installed for the residential portion of the development, outside of the monitoring-well location. These facilities will provide treatment to attenuate the post-development peak discharge to pre-development discharge rates. The parameters and details of these measures will be designed and engineered during site construction plan development and will be subject to the final grading, soil conditions, and feasibility.

At the proposed stormwater outfall location from the site, there is an existing 5-ft by 3-ft oval receiving pipe that traverses the Georgia Power parking lot. This large pipe is very similar to the offsite receiving pipe on the north side of the site that receiving stormwater discharge from the existing pond. The pipes size is adequate for receiving the proposed flows from the redevelopment.

## **Environmental Impacts**

A portion of the site, Parcel 112 003, is currently listed on the Georgia Hazardous Site Inventory (HSI) because of historical industrial operations and is currently enrolled and under the oversight of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) to address remaining groundwater impacts. The overall site was enrolled in the EPD Brownfield Program and significant remediation was completed on the site to bring it into compliance for redevelopment, to include residential development for areas other than Parcel 112 003, which is certified for nonresidential use. The additional redevelopment of the site will be coordinated with EPD through the Georgia Brownfields Program to maintain the existing compliance certifications.

Currently, around 50% of the site is impervious. Stormwater management has been provided for the redevelopment of the Wayfair and Terrapin site and building and the recently completed multifamily Flats at General Time. The stormwater management practices previously mentioned associated with the proposed project would enhance stormwater management across the site. As the site is an EPD Brownfield and groundwater is being monitored until completion under the VRP and removal of Parcel 112 003 from the HSI, the new stormwater management practices will reduce infiltration, supporting final EPD VRP compliance.

## **Landscaping & Buffering**

Street trees will be planted along Newton Bridge Road, Dairy Pak Road and along the interior drives of the development per A-CC standards. In addition to the street trees, enhanced landscape planting is proposed along the Newton Bridge Road and Dairy Pak Road frontage. Landscape plantings are also proposed to enhance the building facades and within parking lots in accordance with parking lot landscaping requirements.

## **Trash Disposal & Recycling**

Trash and recyclables will be collected by A-CC or a licensed service provider. Due to the overall size of the development, garbage and recycling collection areas will be dispersed throughout the site. These areas will be screened from view in accordance with Section 9-25-8-G-5a. and will be equipped with opaque gates, and an opaque enclosure. Currently, refuse facilities are located at the rear of the existing structure and are not visible from the right-of-way.

## **Lighting**

Outdoor lighting will be provided in conformance with Sec. 9-19-4. In addition to street lighting for vehicular access along the main thoroughfares, indirect and low-level, pedestrian-scale lighting will be utilized to provide a pleasing and safe environment.

## Waiver From A-CC Zoning & Development Standards

The following waivers 1-6 are the 2021 approved PD waivers. With this PD amendment request, the applicant will slightly modify the waivers. **Text in bold are proposed amendments to the approved PD waivers or clarifications.** In addition, a waiver related to residential architecture has been added.

1. Section 8-7-15: *Conserved Tree Canopy in E-O Zoning District.* A waiver is requested to reduce the conserved tree canopy cover requirement from 15% to 3.91%. Although the existing tree canopy cover is 20% of the site, many of the existing trees are volunteers that have grown up as a result of the site being unaltered for the past decade. Around half of the existing tree canopy cover is populated by an invasive Callery Pear that needs to be removed. Also, portions of the noninvasive existing tree canopy are not conservable due to their proximity to the existing building and existing parking. Under the current Industrial (I) Zoning 0% of the tree canopy is required to be conserved. General Time is also proposing a planted canopy cover of 40% which is twice the existing canopy required under the current Industrial Zoning. **The provided conserved canopy of 3.91% was provided on the previously developed portion of this planned development.**
2. Section 9-11-2(L3): *Percentage of residential square footage of the total square footage of the development use in E-O Zoning District.* A waiver is requested to allow an increase of residential use from 20 percent of the total square footage of the development to ~~35 percent~~ **55 percent**. Due to the unique nature of the site and the diverse mix of uses, an increase in residential is proposed to balance the need for a healthy mix of residential and commercial.
  - Total General Time Proposed Commercial: +/- 315,000 SF
  - Total General Time Proposed Residential: +/- 350,000 SF
3. Section 9-11-2: *Allowable Use.* A waiver is requested to allow Light Manufacturing, Food Processing, Manufacturing Non-Odiferous Foods, Distribution Centers, Kennels, Wholesale Storage, and Distribution Center within this planned development as a hold-over from the current industrial zoning. Limited to the back of the building, the request is to continue to have the right to use the existing building and site as historically used by-right. Secondly, this waiver prevents creating a non-conforming use with the current tenant, Terrapin Brewing Company, occupying 68,000 square feet of the existing building as Wholesale Storage and Distribution Center. Additionally, a waiver is requested to allow the use of a daycare on site to truly allow General Time to be a work-play-live environment. **Since the balance of the existing Westclox building will be demolished, the waiver shall be applied to the proposed flex space buildings.**
4. Section 9-11-2(L1): *Allowable Use Size Restriction.* A waiver is requested to allow up to 100,000 square feet of retail sales and service, and up to 65,000 square feet of restaurant / bar uses within

this planned development. With over 181,000 square feet of existing buildings available for redevelopment, flexibility is needed to allow the uses to evolve over time as the market demands and allow for critical mass needed for successful restaurants, breweries and niche retail spaces. For further details regarding uses and size limitations, please review the site plan and use chart at the end of the narrative.

5. Section 9-11-2: *Allowable Use*. A waiver is requested to allow Theaters (less than 1,000 seats) within the planned development. General Time has pursued the possibility of an indoor / outdoor entertainment music venue from the beginning courting some of the largest independent venue music management companies in the world. Discussions with venue music management partners have slowed down as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but General Time is still seeking ways to bring Athens to another quality venue. Secondly, General Time is offering, as its front door, a sizeable flex green space that could function as grounds for varying temporary events like weddings, concerts, recreation and festivals, etc.
6. Section 9-25-8-C-3: *Block size (3AC)* A waiver is requested to allow the residential block size to be greater than 3 acres due to the geometry of the residential tract and need to limit direct vehicular access between residential and commercial uses. **The existing multifamily residential block is 5.27 acres. The proposed townhome block is 5.12 acres.**
7. Section 9-25-8-C-8-b: *Special Standards for large scale multifamily developments (greater than 30 units)* There are 56 townhomes proposed. A waiver is requested to allow 34 townhomes (those south of the Paradise Blvd driveway) to have the same exterior design. These 34 townhomes were specifically designed to mimic the architecture of the existing Westclox building and invoke the repetitive character of industrial sites.