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January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Cobb County Board of Commissioners  
100 Cherokee Street  
Marietta, GA 30061

Re: Draft Code Amendments

Members of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners

The Council for Quality Growth is a not-for-profit trade association comprised of a diverse membership of developers, contractors, engineers, architects, planners, law firms and bankers with a vested interest in quality growth and development in the Region. As you consider the proposed zoning and land development code amendments, the Council would like to offer comments and suggestions on how the amendment language can be improved in terms of clarity and enforceability to support and promote continued high quality development in Cobb County.

The Council commends Cobb County Community Development staff for preparing the proposed code amendments and would like to recommend approval specifically to the proposed Destination Marketing District (Sec.114-123 – 114.139) which we believe will serve to improve upon and support the travel and tourism efforts in the County, as well as the amendment to “variance” definition (sec.134-1) in the Zoning code to allow for Board of Commissioners approval of variances, which will enable contemporaneous variances and expedite the zoning process.

The Council would also like to bring the following concerns to your attention as you consider the amendment package and respectfully request that these potential hindrances to quality development practices are addressed prior to adoption:

- **Zoning Code Amendment Sec. 134-134.** *“Non-residentially zoned properties, when adjacent to or nearby residentially zoned property, shall be required to incorporate noise and visual abatement measures such as, but not limited to, landscaping, fencing, Georgia D.O.T. style sound walls...”*

The Council is concerned that this language is too broad and will have unintended consequences on a significant amount of future development in the County. The Council understands that landscaped buffers are a desired and effective measure to mitigate any noise associated with commercial development adjacent to single family homes. The proposed amendment, however, would affect all development including mixed-use and multi-family projects and as written, could negatively impact the aesthetic quality and sense of place that can be achieved by allowing for the development of a mix of land uses within an area. Due to the impact this requirement would have on economic development in the County, the Council requests

that the County's Community Development staff is directed to work with stakeholders and the development community to identify appropriate language that will not hinder, but support quality development while addressing noise and visual abatement concerns.

- **Zoning Code Amendments Sec. 134.202 – 134.203.3.** (elimination of CCRC District and amendments to RSL districts)

As a contributing member of the County's Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) Committee that played a meaningful role in developing the current CCRC Code, the Council is especially concerned by the elimination of this district. The Council is concerned that the proposed amendments to the RSL districts do not sufficiently provide for the development of high quality assisted living and senior housing developments that are possible with the current CCRC zoning. The proposed changes limit density and restrict development to specific areas in the County, which could in turn affect affordability and access to healthcare and amenities for residents. Some of these changes include reducing height restrictions from 4 and 5 stories to just two stories (outside of Regional Activity Centers defined by the Future Land Use Map), significantly reducing the maximum allowable units, and doubling parking requirements. These restrictions could make developing quality senior housing in Cobb County overly cost prohibitive, creating a barrier to the County's residents' ability to 'age in place.' A senior housing development constructed to the current CCRC code requirements can provide more amenities, higher quality units and lower entry costs for residents than a development restricted by the proposed maximum number of units and height limitations. The Council recommends revising the RSL districts to provide greater flexibility with regard to overall density. These revisions should include removing the maximum allowable unit requirement or increasing it to 500 units in all areas. This density flexibility is necessary for senior housing developments to be economically feasible due to the cost of health care services. The RSL Supportive and nonsupportive districts should also be revised to allow a building height of at least 4 stories in all areas of the county, with appropriate buffers from single family homes. This height allows for seniors to be located in closer proximity to the services and amenities they are relocating to take advantage of. Finally, the CCRC allowed for developments with combined supportive and nonsupportive housing on the same site. The RSL districts should allow for these types of developments where the supportive and nonsupportive uses and density limitations are combined.

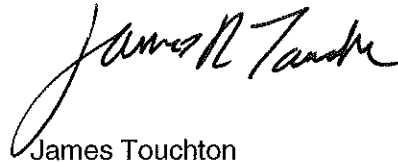
The Council appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the above proposals and looks forward to continue to working with you and Community Development staff to ensure that Cobb County continues to be a leading example for balanced and quality growth in our region. Please do not hesitate

to call on us whenever we may be of service to you in this and any other matter.  
Thank you for your dedicated service.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael E. Paris in black ink.

Michael Paris  
President & CEO  
Council for Quality Growth

Handwritten signature of James N. Touchton in black ink.

James Touchton  
Director, Policy & Government Affairs  
Council for Quality Growth