

‘A Place for the Public’

Brookhaven’s City Hall/City Centre project gets underway



A rendering of the future City Hall to be located in front of the Brookhaven MARTA station.



From left: Brookhaven City Manager Christian Sigman, District 4 Councilman John Funny, District 3 Councilwoman Madeleine Simmons, Mayor John Ernst, Mayor Pro Tem and District 1 Councilwoman Linley Jones, and District 2 Councilwoman Jennifer Owens break ground on the City Centre project.

The City of Brookhaven, the acclaimed metro Atlanta community with small town charm and big city access, kicked off construction of its exciting City Centre project, a multi-purpose downtown district, with a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 11.

“After a decade of building our great City, it’s time for us to focus on enjoying it, together. And the City Centre is an emblem of this transition. Much more than a City Hall, it will be a monument to our community: A place where the public will gather, celebrate, enjoy coffee and movies, and engage with its government.” says Mayor John Ernst.

Brookhaven City Centre will serve as the anchor of the 11-year-old municipality. A state-of-the-art City Hall will reside on an approximately one-acre site and be the project’s centerpiece with government offices and extensive space for public meetings, gatherings, and special events. The latter includes a catering kitchen and rooftop terrace. The City Hall project, which is expected to be completed by mid-2025, is funded via Brookhaven’s Special Services District. This means

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Letter from the Mayor

As my eight-year run as your Mayor comes to an end, I look at where Brookhaven has come since cityhood.

We're building trails, improving parks, adding green-space, implementing innovative public safety measures, fixing our roads, reinforcing our stormwater system, the list goes on.


All of this builds a foundation on which Brookhaven can thrive. We're poised to become a major link in a regional trail system. We're leaders in regional transportation initiatives. We're on the cutting edge of policing technology.

There's no place where I would rather serve, and there's no place I'd rather live and watch my children grow up in.

It's been the honor of a lifetime to lead this beloved City for nearly a decade, and I hope to catch up with all of you at one of our parks or at one of our events.

You can always catch up on our latest news by visiting the City's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages and by signing up for The Brookhaven Blast weekly email at www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Communications.

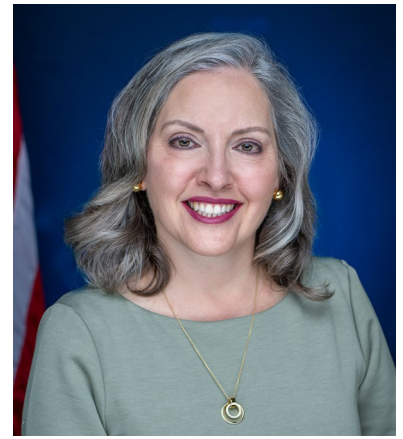
Don't hesitate to contact me at John.Ernst@BrookhavenGA.gov or at 404-637-0710 with any questions or concerns. Thank you for all you have done to make Brookhaven better. Onward!

Yours truly, 



John Ernst
Mayor

John.Ernst@BrookhavenGA.gov



Linley Jones, Mayor Pro Tem
District 1

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Jennifer Owens
District 2

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Madeleine Simmons
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John Funny
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Brookhaven City Council Meetings

The Brookhaven City Council generally meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 4:30 and 7 p.m. at 4362 Peachtree Road. Visit www.BrookhavenGA.gov/Calendar for schedule changes.

To access meetings and videos, go to the Meetings & Agendas tab near the bottom of the homepage.

Brookhaven Vision and Mission

Vision

Brookhaven will be nationally recognized as a beautiful community where multiple generations can live in safety, flourish in business and succeed in a historic, sustainable environment with exceptional education and transportation options.

Mission

In support of the Brookhaven vision, the City government shall: encourage and maintain a beautiful community, meet public safety needs, develop an environment for business success, promote sustainable projects and activities, identify and preserve historic and neighborhood resources, facilitate educational opportunities, and improve transportation conditions, connectivity, and options while listening to and communicating with the public.



DeKalb court throws out verdict against Brookhaven's Mayor, City Manager

Ten months after an Appeals Court overturned a verdict against the City of Brookhaven, a DeKalb Superior Court Judge vacated the judgment against Mayor John Ernst and City Manager Christian Sigman in an order for a new trial, following the Court of Appeal's reversal of the verdict.

The City's appeal was based upon a frivolous complaint filed by The Ardent Companies LLC (Ardent) and others in March 2018 in DeKalb Superior where Ardent, the developer, complained that the City would not abandon a road, thus making it difficult to develop a townhome community on Bramblewood Drive. In December 2022, the Georgia Court of Appeals agreed that attorneys for Ardent failed to prove essential elements of their claims against the City, and that the City of Brookhaven did not waive sovereign immunity.

In its unanimous ruling, the Court of Appeals vacated the trial court's decision which incorrectly allowed the case to proceed on specific claims, and remanded the case back to the trial court with direction. DeKalb Superior Court Judge Tangela Barrie ordered a new trial, which vacates the judgment against Mayor Ernst and City Manager Sigman.

"After hearing the arguments of counsel and reviewing the trial's transcripts, this Court agrees with and follows the rationale as articulated by Brookhaven's counsel at the May 24th hearing," Barrie wrote in her Sept. 22 order.

"It has been a long, arduous ordeal, not only for me, but for my whole family. They should never have been subjected to this pejorative verdict and judgment," said Mayor John Ernst. "I make no apologies that I refused to compromise the City or its residents



to the whims of an overzealous and unscrupulous developer. I am grateful that this is behind us now and we are finally vindicated in this matter."

"I hope this ruling dispels the widespread rumors and innuendo in the community that were caused during and after this lawsuit. As I've always said, we were never doing anything other than what we are supposed to be doing, which is protecting the interests and assets of the taxpayers," said City Manager Christian Sigman. "I'm pleased that this matter is resolved in the City's favor."

"Judge Barrie's ruling is another positive step towards the resolution of this unfounded lawsuit. A private developer cannot force a City to abandon property for the developer's financial gain. This ruling shows our justice system is working as it should," said City Attorney Jeremy Berry.



Briarwood renovations begin

The Briarwood Park renovation project is officially underway after a groundbreaking ceremony including City officials and the Briarwood Park Conservancy.

The project, which includes a loop trail in the wooded area with a bridge crossing the stream, a new larger community garden, storm-water improvements, and a sidewalk entrance closer to Drew Valley Road, is one of the last remaining projects under the 2018 Park Bond.

The recreation center will be closed during construction, but the playground and tennis courts will remain open.

The parking lot and access will be completed in time for the 2024 pool season.



Historic Lynwood Park unveils final transformation

Mayor John Ernst, Mayor Pro Tempore Linley Jones, and members of the Lynwood Trail Blazers cut the ribbon on the newly named Lynwood Park Trail Blazers Community Room.

Other dedications included the unveiling of the bronze historic recognition plaque, a historic showcase with memorabilia of the community's storied history, the dedication of the gymnasium as the Columbus Jones Gymnasium, and the dedication of the newly installed synthetic turf field in memory of longtime community member Emmanuel Wallace.

A Place for the Public:



A state-of-the-art City Hall will include government offices and extensive space for public meetings, gatherings, and special events. The latter includes a catering kitchen and rooftop terrace.

The space plan for the permanent City Hall will include legislative and administrative functions including:

- Mayor and Council Offices
- City Council Chambers
- Office of the City Clerk
- Human Resources Department
- Finance Department
- City Attorney's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Communications Department
- Facility Services Department
- Explore Brookhaven
- Information Technology Department
- Community / Event Space

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that no residential property tax revenue is used to fund the construction.

“By beginning construction on our new City Hall, we are building the anchor for something even more important—a City Centre that will belong to the people and further our commitment to integrate and unite our government with the good people of Brookhaven,” said District 1 Councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tempore Linley Jones. “Public input, which has been gathered throughout the master planning processes for years, allows us to manifest the community’s vision for who we are as a City today and in the future.”

“Our new city center is making yet another down payment on our commitment to connectivity. How lucky that we will have our people’s house right on a MARTA rail line, accessible through a network of trails and walkways. I want to thank all the folks who have been watching this closely and raising questions and ideas to make this project stronger and more responsive to community needs, as well as the mayor, members of council and staff who have worked tirelessly on this generation-defining project,” said District 2 Councilmember Jennifer Owens.

“Brookhaven is a beautiful City that deserves a beautiful City Centre,” said District 3 Councilwoman Madeleine Simmons. “The MARTA station is in the heart of the City and has needed a facelift for quite some time. Now, when residents drive, bike and walk down Peachtree Road, they will have an aesthetically pleasing place to enjoy coffee, arts festivals, live music, movie nights and more,” Simmons continued. “Brookhaven’s greatest strength is our neighbors, and I am so excited for a City Centre that will continue to bring us together to

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live, work and play.”

“This City Centre/City Hall project we are about to build will stand as a beacon of hope, a hub of civic engagement, a gathering spot for community events, and a testament to our collective commitment to the growth and prosperity of our city,” said District 4 Councilman John Funny. This construction project is not just about bricks and mortar, it's about building a foundation for a stronger, more vibrant community.



“The architectural design of Brookhaven City Centre celebrates diversity and honors the citizen’s commitment to the community. Anchoring the center of Brookhaven at the crossroads of Peachtree and North Druid Hills, a beautiful transformation is about to occur,” said Bill de St. Aubin, AIA, CEO Sizemore Group. “Brookhaven is creating a place to celebrate all that has been accomplished and living legacy to future generations.”

“The City of Brookhaven has assembled an all-star team to deliver what will be a transformative project for the city, and we are honored to be a part of that legacy,” said Bobby Campbell, Executive Vice President at McCarthy Building Companies. “From the construction and design teams, trade partners, MARTA and the surrounding community, each thoughtful contribution made by these groups during the planning and execution of this exciting development will power the future for the city.”

The Brookhaven City Hall will be located at the corner of Peachtree Road and North Druid Hills Road on the existing long-term MARTA parking lot. The City of Brookhaven acquired the lot from MARTA in 2022 for the purposes of a permanent Brookhaven City Hall.

The current design includes an atrium and adjacent event space that total approximately 6,000 square feet for community gathering and rental. It will be supported by a catering kitchen. The current design also includes a roof top terrace for public event use that will afford beautiful views of Brookhaven, Buckhead, and Stone Mountain.

Peachtree Road is the city’s “Main Street” and the most recognizable thoroughfare in the entire metropolitan area. It was important to locate the Brookhaven City Hall close to mass transit and major mobility corridors to encourage access for all. Finally, the City Centre Master Plan and the 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Update calls for City Hall to be located within the City Centre.

Community engagement is a priority for the City of Brookhaven. Its first-ever Citywide Engagement Plan was approved by the City Council on Nov. 8, 2022, and guides community engagement for capital projects, planning efforts, policy development, daily operations, etc. Specific to the City Hall project, the public was engaged extensively during the City Centre Master Plan process to determine the general location of a City Hall. For the building itself, there have been design charrettes with stakeholders, public meetings with initial building massing, a visual preference survey, two virtual town hall events, and presence at several City events (Paint the Park, Light Up Brookhaven, MLK Dinner, etc.) Additional opportunities include the Brookhaven Cherry Blossom Festival on March 25 & 26, email comments on the project website (www.BrookhavenGA.gov/PublicWorks/page/City-Hall-Project) at CityHallProject@BrookhavenGA.gov, and attending public meetings concerning discussion and approval of the development design on March 28.

The current budget for the Brookhaven City Hall totals \$78 million. Of this amount, \$60 million is for construction cost and \$18 million for soft costs and contingency.

The City Hall is funded with Urban Redevelopment Bonds that will be repaid from the Special Service District. Homesteaded residential property owners are not being taxed for the Brookhaven City Hall.

City Hall by the Numbers:

- Actual Building Area – 58,250 Square Feet
- Site Acreage – 1.08 acres
- Public Space on Ground – 0.27 acres
- North Plaza – 2,700 sq ft
- South Plaza – 6,900 sq ft
- Street Scape – 1,500 sq ft
- Atrium – 2,700 sq ft
- Multipurpose Hall – 4,300 sq ft
- Chamber Space – 2,500 sq ft
- Rooftop Garden – 4,000-5,000 sq ft
- Rentable Board Room – 1,650 sq ft
- Public Rest Rooms – 1,200 sq ft
- Coffee Shop and Kitchen – 750 sq ft
- Explore Brookhaven Store – 600 sq ft
- Total Public Space – 36,000 sq ft (0.83 acres)

Parking Spaces:

- Surface Parking – 33
- Ride Share/Dropoff – 4
- Underground Parking – 56

International Festival

A cultural celebration

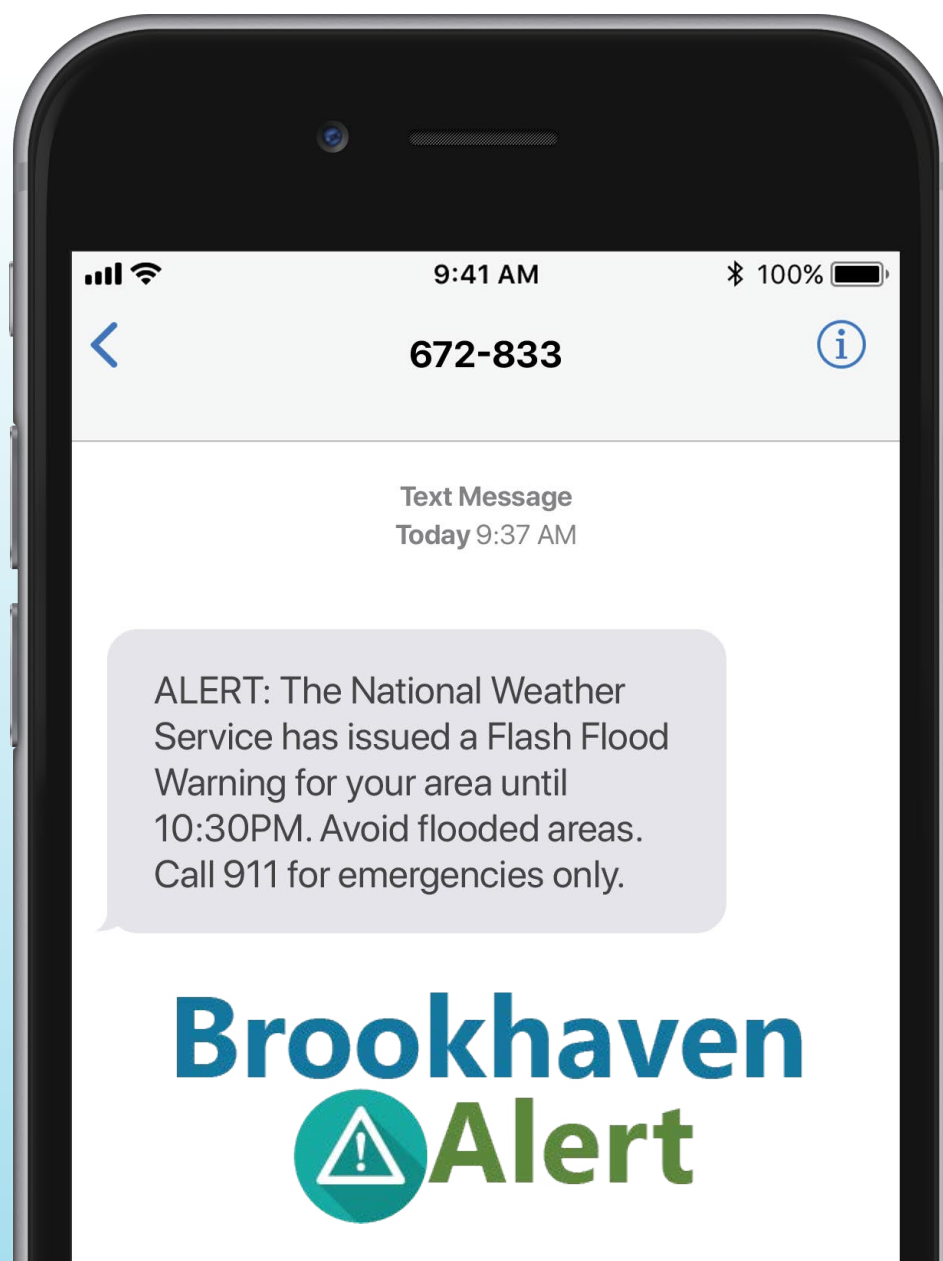
An assortment of cultures came together on Oct. 21 and 22 to create Brookhaven's annual International Festival along the Peachtree Creek Greenway. This festival was the City's first major event along the Buford Highway Cultural Corridor and featured a variety of live cultural performances and music, international cuisine, an art walk, interactive art creation, a Kidz Zone, health screenings and vendors. A 5K walk/run benefited We Love Buford Highway.

"This celebration is something that I have envisioned for a while now, so to watch it come to fruition is remarkable at what a community can do when seeking to strengthen ties along cultural divides. It fosters cross-cultural understanding, promotes unity, and provides an opportunity for people to learn about and appreciate the richness of global heritage," District 4 Councilman John Funny said. "The Buford Highway Cultural Corridor greatly enriches Brookhaven's community. We want to share this culturally enriched community with the state, region, and beyond."



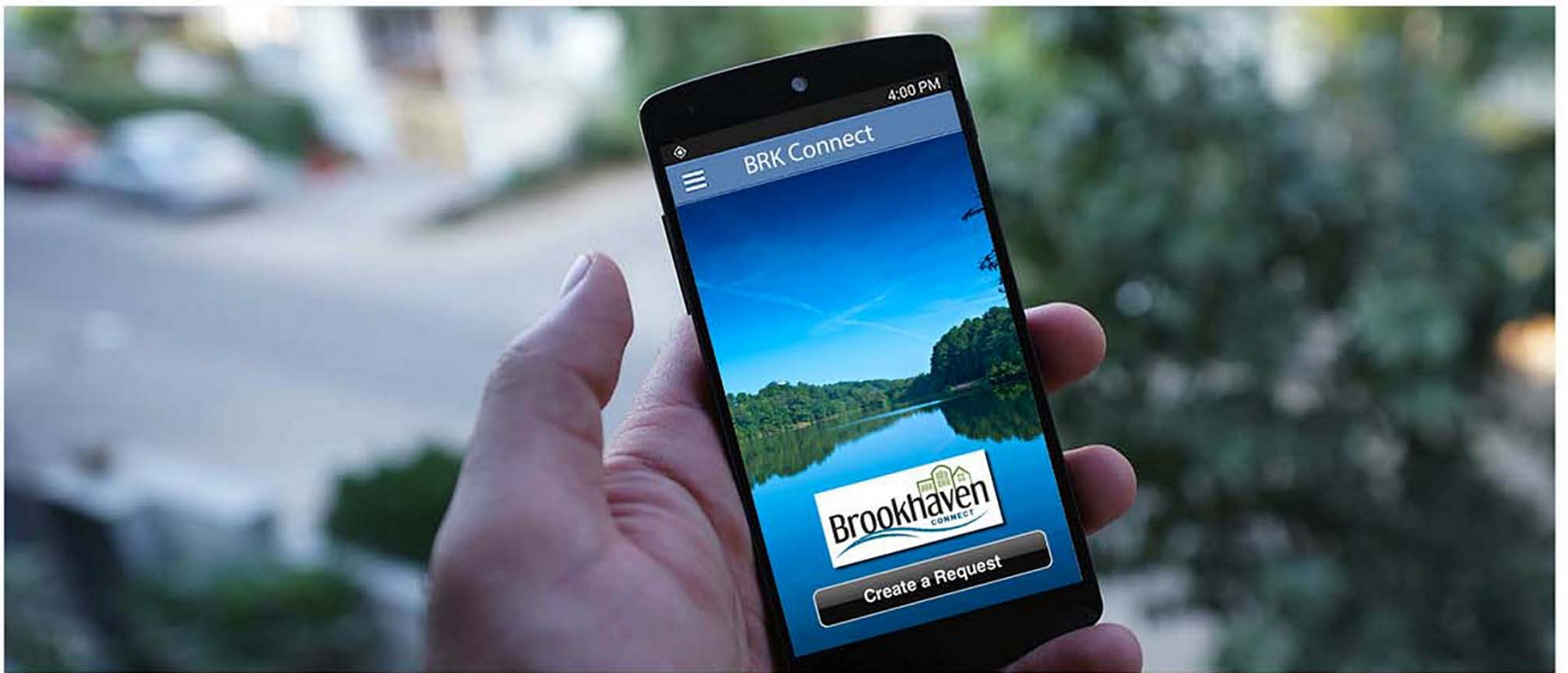
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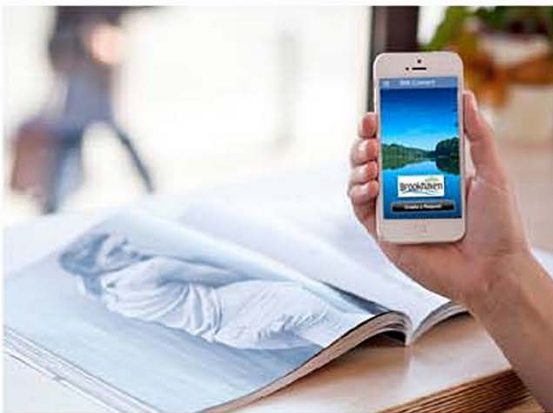
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BROOKHAVEN, GA

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